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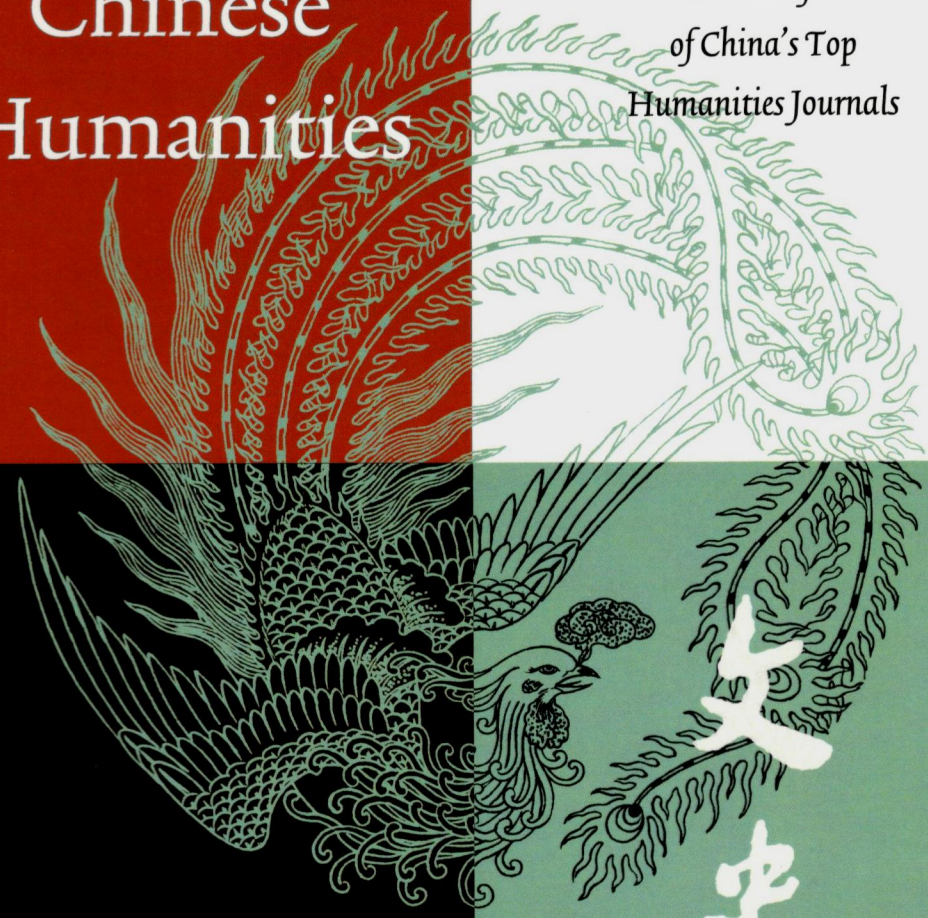

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The "Good" and "The Good Life": Confucius and Christ

David Lyle Jeffrey

Abstract

The Golden Rule is the ethical point most frequently compared in Jesus and Confucius;[1] in each case, what is recommended is preconsideration of one's own actions toward other people in the light of an imaginative projection of how it would be if the roles were reversed. The formulations in both look substantively identical.[2] Yet the positive formulation of Jesus and the negative formulation of Confucius actually shape the substance and import of the precept in distinctive ways. Moreover, there may be a deeper level at which, while they are certainly not contradictory, these two formulations are expressions of an important register of ontological difference. Engaged thoughtfully, they nonetheless afford to ethical modeling an opportunity for "harmony in diversity," complementarity rather than mere equivalence. I argue here that the two traditions can be mutually enhancing, each through knowledge of and sympathy for the other.

Keywords

agape – *Analects* – Beatitudes – *eudaimonia* – Golden Rule – harmony in diversity – reciprocity – *ren*

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1 Luke 6:31; Matthew 7:12. cf. Arthur Waley, trans., *Sacred Writings: Confucianism, The Analects of Confucius* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), 5.11, 15.23.

2 *Analects*, 12.2; Luke 6:31.

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Confucius has famously claimed that when he was seventy years old, so great was his attunement to "the will and decrees of Heaven" that he could follow his heart's desires "without overstepping the lines of rectitude."[3] At almost his age, I have considerably less confidence. With respect to at least one desire, which is in some useful fashion to juxtapose the teaching of Confucius with the teaching of Christ, I am particularly conscious of the inadequacy of my learning to the task. As scholars of Confucian moral thought are keenly aware, the tradition of Chinese wisdom is both prolix and complex; its riches are sufficiently bountiful that Confucius, his successor Mencius, and others have prompted reflection and application in divergent cultural and social contexts. Confucius himself has been variously characterized as the exemplary gentleman, a sage, a religious authority, and a philosopher of political ethics—all of these already between his lifetime in the Spring and Autumn Period (770 BCE-476 BCE) and the end of the Eastern Han period in 220 CE.[4] Confucianism since then is no less variegated and supple as a tradition; as many as five distinctive philosophical epochs have been identified, including Neo-Confucianism, which arose after the Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) dynasties, by which time Daoism had begun to elaborate metaphysical possibilities in the aphorisms of Master Laozi. Accordingly, it seems that the Confucianism rejected at the time of the May Fourth Movement (1919) was not really equivalent to early Confucian thought or to Confucius himself, and a conference in 1962 in Shandong in honor of the 2,440th anniversary of the death of Confucius produced, partially in the light of Marxist thought, many new perspectives.[5] Was *ren* 仁 a kind of virtue of self-transcendence, a universally accessible virtue? Or only a virtue of the "gentleman"? When we add to this long-established record of complexity the "New Confucianism" of the past few decades, we are quite far from a close correspondence with our source texts. New Confucianism, though it was already being advocated before World War II and, indeed, had begun to gather force even as Confucianism was being attacked as anti-modern in the 1920s and 1930s, has morphed and been reformulated in startling ways in the twenty-first century.[6] As a result, it becomes

3 *Analects*, 2:4.

4 Julia Ching, *Confucianism and Christianity: A Comparative Study* (Tokyo: Sophia Institute of Oriental Religions, 1977; New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 43.

5 Ibid., 42, 47, 49.

6 Daniel A. Bell, *China's New Confucianism: Politics and Everyday Life in a Changing Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Leonard Swidler, "Confucianism for Modern Persons in Dialogue with Christianity and Modernity," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 40 (2003).

impossible for anyone to speak of "Confucianism" as a unitary body of ideas. This fact alone is intimidating for a nonexpert.

The same sort of thing, of course, could with justice be said of Christianity. Unlike Confucius, Jesus neither wrote books nor even edited, at least in the textual sense, previous Jewish materials. What we have of his words is, as the New Testament author Luke makes clear, the oral reports of his students; these, in turn, are interpreted and variously applied in different cultural circumstances by the writers of the four gospels. Luke, for example, was a well-educated Greek, familiar with classical Greek writings, and spoke Greek as his first language. Unsurprisingly, he attunes his account to elements and formulations in the sayings of Jesus rather differently than his peers, even in the other synoptic gospels, Mark and Matthew. Because of Luke's announced historical method, *diegesis*, he is in some ways more deliberately attentive to the verbal formulations of his *autoptes*, his eyewitnesses. Consequently, whether through scruple or just a fascination with the linguistic oddity of it, he actually preserves far more oral, idiomatic Hebraisms than do the other gospel writers, even though he had a far more extensive vocabulary in Greek than did any of the others. And this is just the beginning. The Christianity of Mediterranean later antiquity or the European Middle Ages has features of teaching emphasis different from those found in the Reformation or, indeed, in various spheres of modernity. Contemporary African understandings of Christianity diverge sharply from those of European Christians on some issues. It is possible now to question whether American Christianity can be as closely connected to teachings of the Founder as the Christianity of China; it is certain that there are distinct differences in normative practice and that Christianity was originally Middle Eastern culturally may account only in part for some elements in the Asian understanding and practice of the teachings of Jesus. As in Europe and America, syncretism is a persistent factor. Part of the distinct flavor of Christianity in China surely owes to the influence not only of Confucianism and Daoism but also—quite profoundly it seems—of Marxism. That Marxism has served as a kind of John the Baptist for Christianity among the intellectuals in modern China may be one of the reasons that Chinese Christians focus on the social aspects of the teaching of Jesus more authoritatively, or so it seems, than do many Americans who claim a Christian affiliation.

Fortunately, there is an abundant supply of excellent scholarship in both the Confucian and Christian traditions. Unfortunately, for someone like me, while I have access to the texts of Christian Scriptures and the theological tradition in their major original languages, I cannot claim the same for Confucian texts. Dependent as I am on translations of Confucius and the interpretations of only a narrow range of Asian and Western Confucian scholars, I have thought that

the most honest approach I could take in a comparative reflection would be to consider the early textual representation of the teachings of both founders, Confucius and Christ, and to focus on a few prominent aspects of their ethical and what we might call "wisdom" teaching in particular. I want (a) to acknowledge something of the way in which similarities between the two teachers are understood to be so; (b) to suggest that, in certain cases, the similarity may be smaller than it appears; and (c) to indicate how important points of divergence may, despite the divergence, actually suggest a basis for fruitful complementarity. This complementarity in the teaching of Confucius in the *Analects* and the teaching of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke strikes me as among the more promising possibilities for "harmony with diversity and a harmonious world."[7]

Central Teachings of Jesus and Confucius

Neither Jesus nor Confucius, strictly speaking, was a philosopher in the modern sense. Socrates had more claim to the term as we use it and, certainly, so did Aristotle. The formal study of philosophy in the West, especially in the Anglo-American tradition, tends now to be preoccupied by a narrow analytical focus of a sort entirely alien to Confucius—more alien, indeed, than was the Aristotelianism of Thomas and the Scholastics at the time Matteo Ricci tried to apply it to Confucius four centuries ago. Some sense of the continuing pertinence of this factor is suggested by the absence of terms for philosophy (*zhe xue* 哲学) and religion (*zong jiao* 宗教) until late in the nineteenth century, terms that even then appear only in connection with the translation of Western works.[8] These terms are also foreign, it should be acknowledged, to the Jewish context of Jesus' teaching. St. Paul was aware of Hellenistic "philosophy" but treated it as alien to what he calls the "wisdom of God."[9] He points to Jesus, "who became for us the wisdom of God,"[10] as both embodiment and exemplar of this higher wisdom. Early Christian writers, like their Confucian counterparts, speak readily in terms of a social or moral wisdom. Largely because of intellectual exchanges with Greeks, such as those at Corinth, and with the Romans, terms such as "philosophy" and "religion" in reference to foundational

7 I am aware that there are many different traditions represented in *Analects*, and that the later books especially are of distinctly later date and compilation. My argument depends on books 1-15.

8 Ching, introduction to *Confucianism and Christianity*, xxv.

9 1 Corinthians 1:21.

10 1 Corinthians 1:30.

teachings appear much earlier in Christian literature than in China. "Religion" (Gk. *eusebia*) is found in Hellenistic-era Wisdom books of the Hebrew Bible, or Tanakh, and in later New Testament epistles because of the Greek influence (e.g., James 1:26-7) and yet not uniformly in a positive light (e.g., 2 Tim. 3:5). But while neither "philosophy" nor "religion" are terms employed by Jesus or Confucius themselves, there is a kind of determination of scholarly retrospect to superimpose these belated categories on their teachings. Sometimes it has been helpful for later interpreters to have imposed this vocabulary, but more often not, because of a holistic seamlessness in the teachings of both Jesus and Confucius that does not readily admit of compartmentalization of the sort normative to Hellenistic philosophy, it is therefore difficult to apply such categories as "epistemology" and "metaphysics" meaningfully. Ethics, with which both teachers are intimately concerned, is, however, primary; consequently, reflections on what a Greek philosopher might call metaphysics or, indeed, cosmology often arise solely in the context of "ethical wisdom," and it seems to be best be left there, where a primary understanding is to be sought.

The ethical point most frequently compared in Jesus and Confucius, namely, their respective formulations of the Golden Rule,[11] is a case in point: in each case, what is recommended is a thoughtful preconsideration of one's own actions toward other people in the light of an imaginative projection of how it would be if, as we say, the shoe were on the other foot. At first glance, these formulations both look very much like identical ethical principles or precepts: for Confucius, "Do not do to others what you would not like yourself,"[12] and, for Jesus, "Just as you want men to do to you, you do also to them likewise."[13] Yet I think on a closer examination we can see that the positive formulation of Jesus and the negative formulation of Confucius actually shape the substance and import of the precept in distinctive ways.[14] Moreover, there may be a deeper level at which, while they are certainly not contradictory, these two

11 Luke 6:31; Matthew 7:12; cf. *Analects*, 5:11, 15:23.

12 *Analects*, 12:2.

13 Luke 6:31.

14 This is what C.S. Lewis was getting at, I think, in his elevation of Confucius over certain types of social engineering in education after World War II. For Lewis, the formulation of the Golden Rule by Jesus is an advance within a compatible sense of underlying Dao "because no one who did not admit the validity of the old maxim [Confucius] could see reason for accepting the new one [Jesus], and anyone who accepted the old would immediately recognize the new as an extension of the same principle." See C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (London: Macmillan, 1947, 1965), 58; cf. the view of Robert E. Alinson, "The Golden Rule as the Core Value in Confucianism and Christianity: Ethical Similarities and Differences," *Asian Philosophy* 2, no. 2 (1992).

formulations are expressions of an important register of ontological difference and hence suggest in their context a different prospect on how one determines the ultimate nature of wisdom.

In Book 12 of *Analects*, the passage cited, the context is political pragmatism, an expectation of quid pro quo. In Book 14, the principle is repeated, here explicitly indicating a decorum of "reciprocity." Indeed, "reciprocity" is invoked as the "one word upon which the whole life may proceed."[15] When a particular way of wisdom is to be summed up as "a way of life," and in "one word," we know we are getting to a principle more fundamental than matters of method or manners, and we see here that in the *Analects* the essence of this principle of reciprocity expresses a pragmatic concern for harmony based upon thoughtful self-interest. At the simplest level, Confucius is represented on both occasions as engaging questions from his students (e.g., Zi Gong) about "achieving goodness" and "how to become good," a parallel pursuit in this context of what an ancient Greek scholar would call *eudaimonia*, a principal condition of the Good Life.[16] Confucius answers more extensively on this topic of the Good Life than the cryptic formula of the Golden Rule can begin to capture, obviously. Nothing is quite as easy as that rule suggests. For example, pursuit of the Good may cost not less than life itself,[17] and, furthermore, pursuit of the Good is necessarily social but prescriptively so; it may be done only in the company of those who are good.[18] When Zi Gong follows up with his request for a single word that sums up the character of a good life, the answer is "reciprocity" or "consideration," a term that Confucius had earlier identified as the "thread" running through everything in his "Way."[19] This is as much as to characterize his wisdom as preeminently a social wisdom, a decorum of mutual obligation in which good manners make for good morals, not merely as a matter of precept but of habitual and life-long practice. Yet in the context it is also a contingent political wisdom, suitable for princes and for gentlemen-scholars or counselors, as several subsequent sayings show.[20]

When we consider the parallel saying of Jesus,[21] the context is different. Jesus is speaking to disciples who are experiencing political occupation by

15 *Analects*, 15:23.
16 Ibid., 15:8-9.
17 Ibid., 15:8.
18 Ibid., 15:9.
19 Ibid., 4:15.
20 Ibid., 15:31-33.
21 Luke 6:31.

an alien state, and Jesus has been giving them something characteristically contrary to either enlightened self-interest or even, we may suppose, a decorum of social obligation. His disciples are not princes but peasants subject to generally haughty, even hostile princes, and they have no access to any court. They are told: "love your enemies," and "do good to those who hate you."[22] When they receive a blow, they are in no way to resist, and when their material goods are seized from them, they are not to ask for them to be returned.[23] This is clearly not a normative political counsel or a wisdom Jesus ever offers to rulers (a class of people in whom he shows small interest). The Golden Rule here is not, in any sense, a matter of reciprocity or mutual consideration. As Yao Xinzhong correctly puts it, "Jesus rejected any reciprocal intention in love and demanded that one *love* those from whom nothing good could be expected in return, and even those who one knew were ungrateful."[24] But it is precisely by such behavior that his disciples shall become "sons of the Most High," because the Most High is also "kind to the unthankful and evil persons."[25] Accordingly, the difference between the two teachers is that in Jesus' case the category of "others" includes enemies. Thus, while the principles appear similar, each is rooted in a distinctive social framework and ethical context. Yet each, it might also be said, has application in its own context. One advances social harmony by an advocacy of political reciprocity (Confucius); the other advances harmony with the "Most High" or, as Confucius might say, "The biddings of Heaven"[26] by a philosophy of nonresistance, even active benevolence toward an oppressor (Jesus). Yet it would be unfair to Confucius not to recognize that, for him, though in a less theologically defined way perhaps, the pursuit of reciprocity among states or princes is likewise an attempt to be in harmony with Heaven (*Tian* 天). Here, then, is an example of what I mean by "complementarity" rather than mere equivalence; their dialectical relationship suggests a way in which the two traditions of wisdom can be mutually enhancing, each through knowledge of and sympathy for the other.

22 Luke 6:27-28.

23 Luke 6:29-30.

24 Xinzhong Yao, *Confucianism and Christianity: A Comparative Study of Jen and Agape* (Brighton, UK: Sussex Academic Press, 1996), 196.

25 Luke 6:35.

26 *Analects*, 2:4.

The Good (*ren*) and the Good Life (*eudaimonia, makariotês / agathosuné*)

It has been customary to link *ren*, a key term in Confucius, with *agape*, the word describing self-effacing love in Christianity.[27] One reason for this is the similarity of the request for a "summation in one word" of *Analects* 15.23 to the request to Jesus about the greatest point of the Law: his answer is also a summary, and *agape* love is the operative principle: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."[28] In this sense, we may rightly consider *ren* and *agape* as key terms in parallel traditions, as many have. But we should exercise caution so as to avoid elision here also. Both terms are polyvalent—*ren* perhaps especially so. It can imply filial piety, benevolence, and a range of social virtues. Thus, while the Daoist master Zhuangzi thought "perfect *ren*" had no part in notions of human affection,[29] Confucius connected this term with positive human relations in society, and thus with *ren*, a kind of ideal humanity.[30] In some translations, *ren* is rendered reasonably, it seems, as "love," as in "love for our fellow man," in which context, especially for Mencius (4B: 28), affection is a part of the meaning.[31] But in Confucius' *Analects*, it is clear that the formative sources of *ren* are in filial piety and loyalty to one's own clan: it is a community-based notion and pertains to what philosophers elsewhere will refer to as the common good. Confucius himself seems to have found actual pursuit of the common good uncommon, but nonetheless certainly it remained for him a preeminent human virtue-practice, reflective of ultimate Good. This leads me to think that Arthur Waley's consistent translation of *ren* as "Good" or "goodness" in his rendering of the *Analects* (*Lunyu*) is appropriate.[32] It also suggests a point of strategy for comparison with the central teaching of Jesus: rather than comparing *ren* solely with *agape*, it may be more symmetrical also to compare *ren* as "goodness" or "the Good" with the New Testament idea of "blessedness" or "beatitude," a state of being, rather than an emotion. In fact,

27 Ching, *Confucianism and Christianity*; Yao, *Confucianism and Christianity*; but also Yutang Lin, *From Pagan to Christian* (Cleveland: World, 1959).

28 Matthew 22:37-40.

29 Burton Watson, trans., *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 44; cf. 155, 171, 259.

30 Lin, *From Pagan to Christian*, 79.

31 Ching, *Confucianism and Christianity*, 93-96.

32 Waley, *Sacred Writings*.

not only *agape* but also the Greek word *philia* is used frequently in the contexts of parental love and filial piety, even for the disciples' love for Jesus. *Philos* bears a closer connection to some uses of *ren* in the *Analects* itself than the more passionate *agape*/*agapetos*. *Agape* typically refers to an intense, sometimes all-consuming love, such as is recommended in the Great Commandment,[33] while *ren* in Confucius often has an apparently dispassionate though admiring register of appreciation for a state of equanimity and fully realized human flourishing to which one may aspire.

Thus, in *Analects* we may observe that the one who is "really Good can never be unhappy"[34] and that the virtues of the Good are composite features of the worthy or "happy" life.[35] (In this, Confucius agrees with Aristotle.) For all that, practice of these virtues is not necessarily productive of the ultimate Good. In a statement that bears some comparison to the teachings of Jesus (e.g., Luke 18:18-27), Confucius responds to a description of a person as good because "neither love of mastery, vanity, resentment nor covetousness have any hold on him" by commending the achievement but withholding the ultimate category.[36] For Confucius, too, then, it is possible to be virtuous, eloquent, and, indeed, a "true gentleman" and still lack this quality of *ren*, "goodness."[37] To be precise, "the Good man rests content with Goodness; he that is merely wise pursues Goodness in the belief that it pays to do so."[38] Goodness is here a quality of consciousness or state of being, to be distinguished from a pursuit of the good, which is merely instrumental to it (also like Aristotle). For Confucius, the Good must be loved for itself. Achieving the Good is a proper aspiration for the young ruler,[39] who as he matures toward the Good will become a little like Plato's philosopher-king. But it will be a reflection of the Good in one who loves it that action, rather than words, bears witness to this devotion.[40] It is in this light that we may appreciate the Golden Rule for Confucius as the product of a virtuous life of pious practice in generous demeanor, whether at home or abroad: "Do not do to others what you would not like yourself."[41] The "trunk of goodness" is family loyalty and filial piety, in which this practice is

33 Matthew 22:37-40.
34 Ibid., 9:28, 14:30.
35 Ibid., 13:19, 17:6.
36 Ibid., 14:2.
37 Ibid., 14:5, 7; cf. 4:1-7.
38 Ibid., 4:2.
39 Ibid., 12:11; 14:5, 7; 15:32.
40 Ibid., 12:3.
41 Ibid., 12:2.

formed; it would seem that the good life acquires in the family setting both its source of nourishment for full flourishing and the aspiration that maintains this flourishing.[42]

If the connection between love and the Good are thus evident in Confucius, this is perhaps even more explicitly so in the teaching of Jesus, whose exemplary virtue, as John the apostle puts it, is a demonstration that "God is love."[43] This passage reverberates with a longstanding Old Testament connection of the good[44] with nature, what God has done in his creation,[45] and with a state of harmony with God's purpose in creation both of the cosmos and man.[46] The good life for man, accordingly, is harmonious with this creational expression of God's goodness,[47] and gratitude for the goodness of God is what makes possible a realization of the good of mankind in any sphere of life.[48] "The Lord is good" is a frequent reiteration of the Psalms,[49] and much as in Confucius, what is good for mankind is regarded as a harmonious correspondence with God as ultimate "good." The ethical implications, also as with Confucius, are extensive, but in the Old Testament involve not merely obedience to the Law or filial piety but a practice of life in accordance with the totality of the evidence of God's goodness, so that

> He has shown you, O Man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?[50]

Jesus contravenes none of this. Rather, he amplifies it in a way that builds upon the specific social dimension, especially in his relation of love (*agape*) and the "good" (which in Greek nominatively is *agathon*). We see this in one of the few instances in which, for Jesus, a "young ruler" who has admired his teaching, is clearly seeking, much as did Fan Chi of Confucius, to know in what goodness consists,[51] or as did Yan Hui[52] or Ran Yong.[53] The young ruler in his

42 Ibid., 1:2.
43 1 John 4:8, 16.
44 In Hebrew, *tov.*
45 Genenis 1:4, 10, 12, etc.
46 Isaiah 1:19.
47 Isaiah 1:17.
48 Psalms 122:9, 128:5; Proverbs 19:8; Ecclesiastes 3:12-13.
49 Psalms 100:5, 106:1, 107:1, 118:1.
50 Micah 6:8.
51 *Analects*, 6:20.
52 Ibid., 12:1.
53 Ibid., 12:2.

question to Jesus ascribes the Good to Jesus himself, perhaps as a form of flattery: "Good teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"[54] Laying aside for a moment the fact that this notion of ultimate Good is characteristically a Jewish way of considering the ontology of the "Good," we see intriguing elements in Jesus' answer. First, he gently rebukes the young ruler, asking about his use of the term, since for a Jew, "No one is Good but the One, that is God."[55] Jesus then adduces the social commandments of the law: "Do not commit adultery . . . murder . . . theft. . . . Do not bear false witness. Honor your father and your mother."[56] Confucius would agree with all these aspects or approaches to the Good. The young ruler replies that he has adhered to these principles since his youth;[57] for him, we may say, the "trunk of goodness"[58] has branched out appropriately. It is clear that Jesus is pleased so far with the young ruler's response; the account of this event in Mark's gospel goes so far as to say that "Jesus loved him" for it. But in none of the gospel accounts (it is prominently presented in all three synoptic gospels) is Jesus yet content. "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven." Jesus then adds an invitation: if the young ruler also does this more radical deed of generosity to the poor, then he will be freely able to follow in the Way of Jesus.[59] Alas, the young ruler cannot bring himself to do it and goes sadly away. We may be reminded here about what Confucius said to Fan Chi: "Goodness cannot be obtained till what is difficult has been duly done. He who has done this may be called Good."[60] But if it is difficult, as Confucius says elsewhere, really to love (*ren*) undividedly, then it is perhaps at least as difficult to love God with all one's heart, soul and mind and one's neighbor as one's self.[61]

Here, however, we verge upon a point of distinction in Jesus' teaching about the good. I do not refer simply to the matter of benevolence, for Confucius also enjoins benevolence upon rulers and "gentlemen" alike. I refer to a more radical dialectic of riches and poverty in the teaching of Jesus, by which in temporal affairs it is a kind of un-wisdom or folly to ignore what he calls the "treasury of heaven," divine approval in respect of the Good, especially when one has been

54 Luke 18:18.
55 Luke 18:19.
56 Luke 18:20.
57 Luke 18:21.
58 *Analects*, 1:2.
59 Luke 18:22.
60 *Analects*, 6:20.
61 Matthew 22:37-40.

protecting or acquiring material riches. As his parable of the smug, successful farmer in Luke 12 makes even clearer, all such prosperity is transient. The farmer has a bumper crop; his barns cannot hold all he has. Accordingly, he does what business prudence might suggest; he builds bigger barns, so he can hold back his crop and get a better price later, in a less bountiful year. Agribusiness experts typically would commend, in fact, what Jesus in his story condemns. However, at the height of his success, flushed with self-congratulation and taking his ease, the farmer is unwittingly at the end of his life. Jesus is entirely unsentimental about this: "Fool! This night your soul will be required of you."[62] What benefit will his excessive riches be to him then? The point is obvious: to neglect one's obligation to distribute to the poor out of the abundance of one's good fortune is both a rejection of benevolence and an omission to act for the common good—ethical folly where wisdom is most needed.[63] "One's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses,"[64] Jesus says, here and everywhere. It is not the rich farmer's wealth in itself that is condemned but, rather, his self-indulgence, his worship of good fortune rather than God, and inferentially therefore his neglect of a great opportunity to help others less fortunate. Confucius has a saying that to some considerable degree pertains: "an exemplary man deliberates on how he may walk in the Way, not upon how he may make a living."[65]

In the light of this strong caution about confusing temporal goods with the true Good, we can begin to appreciate better, I think, the structuring of the "beatitudes" or sayings about the good life, as we find them in the gospel of Luke.[66] The term for "blessed" is *makarios/makariotes*, and in classical Greek texts from Aeschylus to Aristotle[67] to the later Stoics, it is proximate to the happiness, even the sense of harmony with the divine, that should attend the objectively good life, *eudaimonia.* Blessedness in this sense is the happy condition of living the good life. But that is hardly how it appears in this text. For many, these sayings of Jesus are among the most paradoxical and difficult of the New Testament. Who is blessed? The poor. Why? Because their possession is the kingdom of God. Who is blessed? Those who don't have enough to eat, for they shall be filled. So also those who weep, for they are later

62 Luke 18:20.

63 Luke 12:15-21.

64 Luke 12:15.

65 *Analects*, 15:31.

66 Luke 6:20-23.

67 Richard McKeon, "Nichomachean Ethics," in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. and trans. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941, 1968), 935-1126.

to laugh. So also are those who find themselves socially despised, marginalized because of their identification with the Teacher of the Good. Rather than grieve at their oppressed state, they should rejoice, for by their implied pursuit of a spiritual rather than materialistic Good, they have been laying up an eternal reward. Here then is a kind of discourse on *eudaimonia* or happiness that is counterintuitive, yet it certainly proclaims a notion of the Good. The four Beatitudes in Luke's account are answered by a symmetrical "four woes," a kind of *kakodaimonia* that is, ironically, much closer to the "good life" in its temporal conditions, at least as most of Luke's Hellenistic readers would have understood it.[68] By contrast, Jesus is suggesting that all such notions of the good life have missed the essence of the Good, by confusing mere instrumental goods with the intrinsic Good itself. The effect of the sharp contrast is moral irony: Who ought to see themselves as under judgment? Well, the rich, who have their consolations now but not later; the ones with full bellies who will one day go hungry; the ones who laugh condescendingly at others, for they will *not* have the last laugh.[69] Who ought to see their calamity coming? Those who now have high public esteem. It is this abiding concern for the poor and disadvantaged, from the beginning of his public teaching[70] to the end that perhaps most marks a distinctive emphasis in Jesus' virtue ethics and that, perhaps, on this point at least, gives him a little more in common with Marx than with Confucius. Confucius does, however, say that the exemplary man should "help out the needy; he does not make the rich, richer still."[71] It is thus a matter of emphasis, perhaps, but a strong one, and remains a challenge to notions of "the Good Life" among Christians to which not all respond very well, including notably those in some parts of the world who are inclined to think of such as the wealthy farmer as expressing a reasonable wisdom. The wisdom that is derived from the Good according to Jesus is of quite another kind; it requires a love for the poor, a *ren* that, as in some contexts, Confucius seems, even if less emphatically, to suggest must become universal, not merely restricted

68 Hesiod, in his eclectic wisdom poem *Erga Kai Hemerai,* or *Works and Days,* opposes his own proffered conditions of philosophical *eudaimonia,* behavior that conduces to a good reputation, to contrary conditions which rob one of such happiness, calling these *katadaimonia* (293-341; cf. 170-201)—idleness, deceit of the neighbor, ill-gotten gains, miscreance with another's wife and all such things as lead to shame (317-320), so that the rhetoric of opposing vices is not unprecedented. See Hesiod, *Works and Days,* ed. with prolegomena and commentary, M.L. West (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978, 1982).

69 David Lyle Jeffrey, *Luke: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2012), 92-101.

70 Luke 4:18-21.

71 *Analects,* 6:4.

to one's own family and people. Here there is an "almost parallel": Confucius commends the poor who are happy in "the Way" and also the rich, who study *li* 禮 (propriety);[72] this saying to a degree resembles the beatitudes but without the dimension of ultimate reversal of fortune, or "heavenly reward," and is apparently more accepting of the status quo in society. Confucius nonetheless suggests that it is a kind of moral cowardice to leave undone what one has recognized to be the right thing to do,[73] a point that is entirely appropriate for Christian practice in the light of this parable.[74]

Ancient Wisdom in Contemporary Settings

With any system of virtue ethics founded upon ancient texts and cultural principles, there is a tendency to experience a certain tension between the texts themselves and subsequent traditions of interpretation and their own prompting cultural interests. As the phenomenologists of the last generation have taught us, it is all too easy to find in texts with recognized moral authority what we are looking for, perhaps only to justify our own preferred views, in effect thereby devising a distortion, relocation, or even diminishment of the original or traditional teaching. Some of this temporizing in interpretation may derive from an inevitable anxiety of influence. Some of it may arise from a worthier motive, namely an imperfect attempt to discover truth in the text despite our long distance, but necessarily acknowledging our limitations of linguistic learning and historical understanding. On the first point, Confucius has a saying that may comfort us (or not), depending on how seriously we take him: "When it comes to goodness, one need not avoid competing with his teacher."[75] Jesus has a saying worthy of putting alongside it, and it relates to the second motive: "a disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be *like* his teacher."[76] These sayings address the question of motive in the student and would-be disciple in a way pertinent to our

72 Ibid., 1.15.

73 Ibid., 2.13.

74 Nicholas Wolterstorff argues in his book *Justice in Love* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011) for a distinction between *agape* and reciprocity stronger, if anything, than I have indicated here, and that Christian ideals of justice are fundamentally shaped by the precedence of *agape*, a point on which we certainly agree. See also his provocative *Justice: Rights and Wrongs* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

75 *Analects*, 15:35.

76 Luke 6:40.

conversation. What does it mean to be "Confucian"? What does it mean to be "Christian"? The inevitability of new interpretations[77] makes this a perennial type of question, especially when we are serious about the ideas of the Good Life and the nature of the Good itself in a wisdom tradition.

Various scholars have referred to the Confucian and New Confucian approach to the Good as a kind of "moral metaphysic."[78] If this is understood to mean an identification of the Highest Good with Supreme Reality, there is something of value in this language. It compares to some degree with what John the Apostle meant when he identified God with love (*agape*). In a second-generation of New Confucianism, such as that represented by Mou Tsung-san (Zongsan), there appear to be elements of neo-platonic idealism in this conception of "moral metaphysic," rooted in the idea that the individual in a modern culture must realize in the self the conception of *ren* or authentic personhood. This New Confucian formulation seems also to have some overtones of Christian influence or, more likely, modernist secularizations of that influence. But to seek such a notion of the Good in personal life and practice, as did Confucius and Jesus, the relational element cannot, I think, be ignored. Moreover, a relationship must be authentic. It may be, as An Yanming says, that true Confucianism narrows the relational aspect to a family love so exclusively that "there is no natural foundation for . . . fathers to give equal love to both their own children and the children from other families"[79] and that this hierarchical, patriarchal character places Confucianism beyond a full comparison either to Christianity or to any more universal cultural purpose.[80] On the basis of my reflection, I am less sure that this need be so. *Ren*, said Confucius,

77 Among those studies of which I am thinking here, I include not only of Daniel Bell, but the "American Confucianism" discussed by Degui Cai, *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 32, no. 1 (2005); also Robert Neville's *Boston Confucianism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000). More interesting, I think, are the discussions of particular question regarding the topic under discussion here. Among such is Erin Cline, "Two Senses of Justice: Confucianism, Rawls and Comparative Political Philosophy," *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 6 (2007); and Bryan William Van Norden, *Virtue Ethics and Consequentialism in Early Chinese Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), esp. chap. 2 on Confucius and Confucianism.

78 Pilgrim W.K. Lo, "Human Dignity: A Theological and Confucian Discussion," *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 48 (2009): 169; Young-bae Song, "Conflict and Dialogue Between Confucianism and Christianity: An Analysis of the *Tianzhu shiyi* by Matteo Ricci," *Korea Journal* 39, no. 1 (1999): 235; Swidler, "Confucianism for Modern Persons," 24.

79 Yanming An, "Family Love in Confucius and Mencius," *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 7, no. 1 (2008): 52.

80 Swidler, "Confucianism for Modern Persons," 20.

is to "love humans" and, by this means, to know them.[81] The important thing here may be to eschew identifying so closely with one's immediate family that we are blind to the humanity and needs of anyone else; here, the teaching of Jesus that one should rise above family in pursuit of the kingdom (his high conception of the lived Good) is cautionary.[82] The concept of "the state," as Pilgrim W.K. Lo has observed, is expressed in Chinese by combining two words: "land" and "family."[83] If we remember as well the more universal conception, "family of God"—deriving from the teaching of Jesus that God is our universal Father—it can assist us, perhaps, in eschewing the pursuit of more impersonal state interests in preference to the needs of persons who make up the state as well as the wider world.

Confucius, like Jesus, articulates a strong belief in the moral order of the universe. This is a much stronger element than what Daniel Bell has called "vague metaphysical commitments" in early Confucian thought.[84] Nor does it seem likely that the strong connection between family and the common good as articulated in Confucius is adequately represented in the karaoke bar culture Bell celebrates. Part of the problem for Confucianism now—and for Christianity to some degree also, we must admit—is the dissolution in recent times of any vital notion of family as the basis for a wider community. On this point Confucius is a strong corrective.

Ancient Chinese religion, it has been argued, had a monotheistic religious conception of the divine source of the Good.[85] Clark has argued that this conception of the divine was then more personal, less abstract than what we see in the *Tian* of Confucius. In Christianity, the personal element actually increases in strength through the course of the Old Testament, and Swidler, Ching, and others are surely right to suggest that "the concrete person of Jesus of Nazareth" ("Jeshua ha Notzri") is its apogee and precisely what is attractive to "China in the third millennium."[86] In a similar way, it seems to me, Confucius the teacher is attractive to Westerners influenced by Jesus; they are more likely than most to be positively disposed to be attentive to his wisdom and his tireless pursuit of the Good. "The difference between the Christian and the Confucian

81 *Analects*, 12:22.

82 Luke 14:26, stated in a hyperbolic manner for emphasis.

83 Lo, "Human Dignity," 175.

84 Bell, *China's New Confucianism*, 149.

85 Kelly Clark, "The Gods of Abraham, Isaiah, and Confucius," *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 5, no. 1 (2005).

86 Leonard Swidler, "What Christianity Can Offer China in the Third Millennium," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 40 (2003): 153-154.

understanding of God lies principally, therefore, in the Person of Jesus Christ himself—and in his significance for mankind," if I may quote Julia Ching.[87] But there is much room for mutual appreciation, I think, between dévotées of Confucius and those devoted to Jesus, and I hope this essay may have given some sense of the scope of that aspiration without exaggerating unduly the points of contact and mutual enlightenment. What is required for "harmony in diversity" to be realized, I think, is that we exhibit the category of transcending love modeled by Jesus and endeavor also to become *junzi* 君子, as Confucius encourages us to do, for, as Confucius has said, "Exemplary persons value harmony but not conformity; petty persons value conformity but not harmony."[88] There can be great fruitfulness in our global village if we pursue this mutually appreciative path to becoming exemplary persons.

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87 Ching, *Confucianism and Christianity*, 146.

88 *Analects*, 13:23.

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Shining Ideal and Uncertain Reality: Commentaries on the "Golden Rule" in Confucianism and Other Traditions

Andrew H. Plaks

Abstract

This paper considers a number of problematic issues underlying the seemingly unassailable truth of moral philosophy expressed in the "Golden Rule" in a variety of cultural spheres. These issues include the place of this teaching within its given religious or philosophical context, the defense of this principle as an inviolable tenet of revealed dogma or as a piece of utilitarian advice for the regulation of social life, the manner in which the precise rhetorical structure of a given formulation reflects the specific intellectual underpinnings of its cultural milieu, claims of universal validity as a statement of moral truth for all men and all time or as a culture-specific value understood to apply exclusively within a particular religious community, and modes of commentarial expansion by scriptural exegetes and textual scholiasts seeking to ground this teaching within the logic of philosophical or theological discourse. After outlining several points of uncertainty that emerge in the context of transferring the ideal of human empathy to the messy reality of concrete existence, we then turn to a number of attempts by leading commentators in the Confucian, rabbinic, and other scholastic traditions to grapple with these contradictions and to reconcile them within the framework of their respective value systems.

Keywords

cultural comparison – Confucianism – Golden Rule – Judaism

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In this study, I consider a number of problematic issues lurking beneath the seemingly unassailable truth of moral philosophy expressed in the "Golden Rule" in a variety of cultural spheres. After giving an outline of certain points of uncertainty that emerge in the context of transferring the shining ideal of human empathy to the messy reality of concrete existence, I then consider a number of attempts by leading commentators in the Confucian, rabbinic, and other scholastic traditions to grapple with these contradictions and to reconcile them within the framework of their respective value systems.

Basic Issues

The expression "Golden Rule" has come into use in various modern European languages over the past few centuries as a popular reference to the dictum: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you," best known in Western culture from its formulation in the New Testament.[1] Identical or similar axioms of moral behavior are nearly universal, however, appearing in a wide variety of cultural contexts from oral folk wisdom to ancient scriptural and philosophical writings. The written canonic versions most frequently cited as explicit or implicit examples of golden-rule thinking include those found in early Jewish sources, both in the Mishnaic and Talmudic corpus (Mishna-Avot [Pirqei-Avot] 2:13-17; Babylonian Talmud: Shabbat 31a) and in the apocryphal and pseudepigraphic literature (e.g., Ben Sira 31:15; Jubilees 36:8; Tobit 4:15); additional passages in the New Testament (Romans 13:8-10; Galatians 5:14; Acts 15:20 [Western recension, codex D]); Koranic and post-Koranic Muslim teachings (Sura 83: "The Deceivers" [At-Taṭfif, or Al-Muṭaffifin]; Al-Nawawi, *Forty Hadith* 13; Ibn Al-'Arabi, "Instructions to a Postulant" [*Risāla . . . l'il murīd*]); classical Greek and Latin texts (e.g., Plato, *Republic*, 443d; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 9:8; Isocrates, "To Nicocles" 61b; "To Demonicus" 14, 17); sacred precepts imparted in the Udyoga and Anuṣasana sections of the Sanskrit epic Mahābharata;[2] and comparable pronouncements in the Zoroastrian Avesta[3] the Buddhist Dhammapada,[4] Jain Àgamas: Sutrakritanga[5] and other sutras, the Baha'i scriptures (Kitab-i aqdas 148); as well as striking parallels in the *Analects*[6] and other

1 Luke 6:31; Matthew 7:12.

2 Mahābharata 5:39:57, 13:114:8.

3 Dadestan-i denig 94:5, Shayest na-shayest 37:51.

4 Dhammapada 10:129-130.

5 Àgamas: Sutrakritanga 1:10:13, 1:11:33.

6 *Analects*, 4:15, 5:12, 15:23.

works of the Confucian canon (*Daxue* 10:2, *Mencius* 7:A:4, *Zhongyong* 13:3—to name just a few).

Occurrences in these and other traditions can be multiplied virtually without limit, inasmuch as statements preaching a basic consideration for the feelings of others—in ideal conception, if not in common practice—are all but self-evident in human culture, reflecting both the fundamental imperatives of social organization and a deeply ingrained, though regularly ignored, instinct of empathy for fellow members of the species. However, many apparently parallel statements about elementary human decency are simply too vague or sweeping to support detailed comparison, while others may have been taken out of their original contexts and put forward as equivalent teachings by apologists keen on defending the validity of one ethical system or another. In order to properly assess the cultural and religious significance of various golden-rule formulations, therefore, it is vital to scrutinize them from the perspective of a number of specific variables and issues:

- The place of this teaching within its given religious or philosophical context: does it simply describe a commendable mode of behavior, or is it enshrined as the central pillar of an entire moral edifice?
- The defense of this principle in the face of abundant evidence of its nonobservance in human conduct: is it taken a priori as an inviolable tenet of revealed dogma, or is it proposed as a piece of utilitarian advice for the successful regulation of social life? Does it merely enjoin a correct attitude toward one's fellow man, or does it require one to translate these feelings into the praxis of concrete acts?
- The manner in which the precise rhetorical structure of a given formulation reflects the specific intellectual underpinnings of its cultural milieu: is it presented as an incontestable point of doctrine, or is it put forward as a polemical position or a defensive response within a context of moral disputation? Is its verbal form, especially its framing in either positive or negative grammatical terms, simply an aspect of literary style, or does its linguistic mode of presentation correspond to deep-seated assumptions about the moral ground of the human condition and the possibility of man's spiritual perfection?
- Claims of universal validity: is a certain culture-specific version held to be a statement of moral truth for all men and all time, or is it understood to apply exclusively within a particular religious community or sociohistorical context?
- Mutual influences and borrowing: does a given citation represent an independent enunciation of the principle, or can it be traced back to a chain of inherited sources or to ur-texts shared with other traditions?

- Commentarial expansion: how do scriptural exegetes and textual scholiasts seek to elucidate the message of empathetic self-projection expressed in canonic teachings and to ground this in the logic of philosophical or theological discourse?

The Golden Rule as the Core of Morality

What makes various "Golden Rule" formulations in different cultures not simply shining precepts of moral excellence but truly *golden*—in the sense of setting the highest standard of moral value—is the explicit claim that the exhortation to treat one's fellow man by the same criteria of behavior that one wishes to enjoy oneself constitutes the essential core of an entire system of belief. For example, the unmistakable echo heard in Hillel the Elder's folding of all of Jewish law into one succinct reply, while his questioner "stands on one foot" so to speak, as "What is hateful to you, do not do unto your fellow man,"[7] linking it with the language of slightly later enunciations of the same message in several New Testament passages, may reflect no more than direct borrowing or the use of common oral and written sources drawn from the fount of Eastern Mediterranean wisdom literature. But what gives this parallel its primary significance is the manner in which both the Jewish and the Christian versions go on to cite these gnomic statements as encapsulations of religious truth: "the entire Torah" in Hillel's words and "the law and the prophets" in the Gospel refrain. Significantly, we observe very much the same impulse to elevate the Golden Rule to the status of an all-embracing universal principle in a wide variety of other cultural contexts, including a number of passages among the vast pool of edifying verses in the Mahābharata identifying this teaching as the "essence" or the "summation" of the *dharma* (e.g., 5:15:17: "This is the sum of duty: Do naught unto others that would cause you pain if done to you"), Al-Nawawi's blanket pronouncement that one who fails to observe this precept cannot be called a member of the Muslim community of the faithful,[8] and the set of linked passages in the Confucian *Analects*[9] that use words virtually identical to those of Hillel ("what is not desirable to you yourself do not do . . .") to define the "single thread [binding all of Confucius' thought] into a consistent whole."

7 Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 31a.

8 Hadith 13: "None of you [truly] believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself."

9 *Analects*, 4:15, 5:12, 6:28, 12:2, 15:24.

In all these examples, it is noteworthy that what is claimed to be the "central thread" of the Golden Rule is reduced to a rather unexpected point of doctrine, one that seems to pass in silence over what we would otherwise regard as the indispensable teachings of the respective traditions: the creation of the world and the acceptance of the Lord's commandments in Judaism, the unity and singularity of God in Islam, the ideals of virtuous rule and ritual order in Confucianism, or the metaphysical underpinnings of Hindu and Buddhist thought: spiritual liberation, enlightenment and nirvana, and the universal godhead. In many of these passages, therefore, one suspects that the citation of the Golden Rule as the ultimate ground of an entire body of moral teachings is pointedly intended to be provocative, its stark enunciation designed to shake listeners from complacent belief in their conventional articles of faith, and to force them to contemplate the core principle of primary human empathy underlying all ethical thinking. As a result, it is not surprising that in each of these respective scriptural traditions, legions of commentators—some of whom we consider below—have come forward to meet this intellectual and spiritual challenge, exercising their best exegetical skills in an attempt to reconcile the sublimely simple message of the Golden Rule with finer points of doctrine.

Rhetorical Forms and Contexts

With respect to the rhetorical articulation of golden-rule statements, the most commonly debated issue revolves around the use of positive or negative terms of discourse in different occurrences. Much ink and breath has been expended on arguing that these two alternative grammatical modes reflect profoundly different perspectives on the human condition. According to a widely held view, the framing of the precept in positive terms ("Do unto others . . .") represents at once a more idealistic and a more demanding view of man's capacity for altruistic behavior, setting standards of moral perfection that, if met, would amount to an *imitatio* of divine compassion. By this same reasoning, the negative formulation would seem to set the bar of moral expectation far lower, at the more "realistic" level of a covenant of non-intervention, requiring of people only that they refrain from aggressive and exploitative treatment of their fellows. In some discussions, however, these assumptions are reversed, and the point is made that basing one's behavior toward others on what one wishes to receive in return, in a sense, turns the selfless empathy of the Golden Rule into a form of self-interest, at best; or that it may even give license to impose one's own values and preferences on other people. Conversely, it may

be argued that the idea of mutual non-aggression, far from enjoining simple inaction or restraint, may be understood to sanction an even more open-ended commitment to the inviolability of individual rights.

Regardless of which of these views is upheld, when one surveys the full range of canonic golden-rule statements, one discovers that, typically, the selection of positive or negative verbal form is not set in stone, as a choice between mutually exclusive approaches to the principle of reciprocity in human relations. This observation becomes immediately clear when we note the inseparable connection drawn between the Golden Rule and the command to "love thy neighbor" in both testaments of the Bible (linked in the Gospels by direct textual contiguity[10] and in the rabbinic tradition by virtually automatic exegetical association)—a point underlined by the fact that the original source text for this shared ideal of love for one's fellow man at the heart of both testamental traditions, in Leviticus,[11] presents these words as the culmination of a series of negative ethical injunctions.[12] Moreover, even the uplifting note of positive exhortation in the Gospel versions of this teaching, often held to embody the purest expression of Christian love, did not prevent the early Church fathers from transposing the words recorded in Mark and Luke into negative formulations in certain other early Christian writings, e.g., Acts [Western recension, Codex D] 15:20, Didache 1:2 ("The way of life is this: First, you shall love God who made you. And second, *love your neighbor* as yourself, and do not do to another what you would not want done to you."), and the *Apologia* of Aristides 15 ("whatsoever they would not that others should do unto them, they do not to others"). In the same spirit, we find in post-biblical Jewish texts such as the Mishna Avot (various implicit references) and Ben Sira 31:15 ("Recognize that your neighbor feels as you do, and keep in mind everything you dislike") a fairly free alternation between positive and negative wording. The same is true of the terms of the Golden Rule enunciated in the Confucian *Analects*. The near-replication here of Hillel's negative formulation may tend to lead certain Western observers to hasty conclusions regarding the practical, or "this-worldly," character of traditional Chinese religious thinking—until one notices that this statement is conspicuously counterbalanced by a crucial passage in the *Mencius* 7A:4 ("If one acts with a vigorous effort at the law of reciprocity, when he seeks for the realization of perfect virtue, nothing can be closer than his approximation to it"), where a very positive rhetorical exhortation is used to enjoin concerted efforts to live by the ideal of reciprocal empathy (*shu* 恕).

10 Luke 13:37; Matthew 7:1-6.

11 Leviticus 19:18.

12 Leviticus 18:3-30, 19:4-17.

In weighing the significance of this point of textual analysis, therefore, it is crucial to distinguish between the purely linguistic choice of this or that mode of assertion and the deeper semantic grounding of positive and negative propositions regarding human perfectibility. Just as the negative language in certain Old Testament and Confucian versions in no way precludes a very positive moral signification, so, too, the parallels cited in Hindu texts as the "essence" of the *dharma* can be construed in this latter term's double sense of both a set of restrictive laws and rules of behavior and also a positive evocation of the entire structure of meaning in human existence. In all these examples, the notion that the "evil inclination," sinful nature, or aggressive impulses of man require the coercive force of moral sanction to prevent mutual injury is in no way inconsistent with a concomitant faith in the spiritual power of primary human empathy. This is particularly clear in the later Confucian development of Mencius's vision of human interrelatedness, within which the all-embracing framework of prescriptive ritual observances is conceived as a modality for recovering and bringing to realization the inborn core of man's essential moral nature (*jinxin* 盡心 or *jinxing* 盡性).

A second rhetorical factor conditioning expressions of the wisdom of the Golden Rule in different cultures concerns the precise positioning of a given formulation within the broader context of intellectual discourse in which it figures. Thus, where the best known Judeo-Christian and Hindu-Buddhist versions present this precept as the foundation of universal moral law, we find a number of classical Greek and Latin sources statements of more or less equivalent import that tend to be uttered within the framework of discussions on the ideal fulfillment of human character, especially in connection with the classical ethical conceptions of temperance and moderation (*sophrosyne*) and spiritual well-being (*eudaimonia*). For example, expressions of the principle of reciprocity in Plato's *Republic*[13] and *Gorgias*,[14] and Aristotle's *Rhetoric*[15] and *Nicomachean Ethics*[16] are oriented more toward the perfection of the individual self than toward the reciprocal relation between man and man. In major works of Stoic philosophy, such as the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius (e.g., 5:20, 7:19, 9:4, 11:1), this ideal of altruistic self-transcendence is cited, in a manner reminiscent of Mencius, as the mark of an individual's fullest attainment of harmony with nature.

13 *Republic*, 443d.

14 *Gorgias*, 507b.

15 *Rhetoric*, 1166-1167.

16 *Nicomachean Ethics*, 9:8.

In many passages, the wisdom of the Golden Rule seems to carry a markedly utilitarian message with reference to the ordering of specific sets of human relationships, as, for example, in the citation of this principle in the writings of Seneca[17] with respect to the treatment of slaves ("But this is the kernel of my advice: Treat your inferiors as you would be treated by your betters"), in the context of punishment in the Buddhist Dhammapada 10:129-130 ("All tremble at violence; all fear death. Putting oneself in the place of another, one should not kill nor cause another to kill"), and honest measurement in the Koran,[18] and in the preaching of kingly virtues in the "Letter to Aristeias" 207 included within the corpus of the Jewish apocrypha ("As you wish that no evil should befall you, but to be a partaker of all good things, so you should act on the same principle towards your subjects and offenders, and you should mildly admonish the noble and good"). Indeed, discussions of the "practical" implications of such teachings for the maintenance of primary social order constitute a central focus of more recent golden-rule discourse, from the classic analysis of the essential structure of power in works such as Hobbes' *Leviathan*[19] to Freud's scathing critique of man's hypocritical sacralization of his own self-interest in *Civilization and Its Discontents*.[20]

Within the Greek vision of the maximum fulfillment of human capacity, this issue is commonly linked to the concept of justice, in the sense of the interpersonal balancing of conflicting needs and desires. In this light, certain negative formulations of the Golden Rule may be understood as mirror images of the concept of retributive justice, prescribing a sort of proactive or reactive payment in kind for undesirable behavior. In its starkest form, this type of interpretation may even be reduced to the unforgiving terms of the *lex talionis*, "an eye for an eye"—in apparent opposition to the doctrine of compassionate forgiveness suggested by the textual contiguity of the Golden Rule to the Sermon on the Mount in its Gospel manifestations. But just as the literal application of the principle of retributive justice was replaced early on in Jewish law by the concept of mutual responsibility, "requiting love for love" (*gemilut chasadim*),

17 Epistles, 47:11.

18 Sura 83: "Woe to those who give less [than due], Who, when they take a measure from people, take in full. But if they give by measure or by weight to them, they cause loss. Do they not think that they will be resurrected?"

19 *Leviathan*, chap. 15.

20 Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, in *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1961), 21: 108-116.

so, too, in a famous passage in the *Analects*,[21] Confucius is pictured as rejecting the idea of repaying injustice with justice (lit., "requiting injury with virtue") on the grounds that this would constitute a breach of equity, preaching instead that one repay only virtuous behavior in kind, and respond to injury with the "correctness" of justice (*zheng* 正).

Metaphysical and Theological Implications

In a number of important canonic enunciations of the Golden Rule, both in scriptural and in commentarial writings, thinkers go beyond simply positing its wisdom as the central pillar of their respective ethical systems espousing consideration and justice toward one's "neighbor" (variously construed as one's fellow Jew, fellow members of the Muslim community of the faithful, and the like, or, in the broadest sense, all of one's fellow human beings), and ascribe to this precept significance of a metaphysical or theological character. Thus, for example, an authoritative rabbinic commentary on the Leviticus injunction to "Love thy neighbor"[22] cites this single verse as comprising the entire "book of the creation of man" (*sefer tol'dot ha'adam*). In certain formulations (e.g., the Jain Sūtrakritānga) the scope of application of the principle of universal empathy is expanded to a cosmic level, to take in all one's fellow creatures, indeed all of creation, as coterminous with one's own eternal self. This same exegetical impulse also finds expression in the philosophical writings of a number of later Confucian thinkers, among them Wang Yangming (王陽明, 1472-1529), who see in the moral message of the Golden Rule enunciated in the *Analects* a metaphysical identification with the "single body" (*yiti*一體) of the entire universe. This understanding gives new meaning to Mencius' attachment of his own positive formulation of the Golden Rule in chapter 7A to the startling proposition that "the ten thousand things are all within myself," here not an expression of the vaunt of unbounded ego but, rather, a soaring affirmation of the innate moral core lodged within every human heart. This leap of faith, from basic human interrelatedness to a spiritual identification with all creation, may also help to explain the textual linkage in both Jewish and Christian scripture between the parallel commands to "love thy neighbor" and to "love thy God," the same theological conception that finds expression in Ibn 'Arabi's mystical extrapolation from the wisdom of the Golden Rule to the submission of man to the infinity of the divine will.

21 *Analects*, 14:34.

22 Palestinian Talmud, Nedarim 9:4.

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Under Western Eyes: Critical Reflections on the Confucius Revival

Richard Wolin

Abstract

The economic opening up of China has paved the way for a renaissance of thought and scholarship, and Confucianism, while still not considered the "national religion," has regained its place as the heart of Chinese humanities and academic debate. It has even transcended the academic arena and has become a social phenomenon. But to what extent is this resurgence a natural response to a changing society, the response of a populace that is possibly growing averse to looking toward the West for answers, and to what extent is it politically driven? When put in its proper historical and cultural context, we can see that this revival of Confucian thought and of Confucius as a national idol is very much a tool wielded by the government to promote its own goals, namely, to foster a stronger sense of national identity, unity, and obedience under the name of harmony. Now that China's modernization has become a fact, many questions remain regarding how its government and its society will reconcile modernization and Westernization with its rich Confucian heritage. This paper aims to elucidate some of these questions.

Keywords

Confucianism – revival – modernization – ideology

The Confucius Revival is undoubtedly one of the most noteworthy features of contemporary Chinese cultural and intellectual life. In China today, the signs of Confucius' popularity are omnipresent. Yu Dan's nonscholarly

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popularization of Confucian themes, *Lunyu xin de* 論語心得 (*Insights Gleaned from the Analects*), published in 2006 (really, little more than a Confucian-influenced "self-help" book geared toward mass consumption) has turned into something of a cultural phenomenon, selling 10 million copies; of all the works published in the postrevolutionary era, only Mao's *Little Red Book* has sold more copies. Whereas interest in Marxism seems to be dwindling, enrollments are soaring on Chinese college campuses for courses on Confucianism. During the early 2000s, the then—Chinese Communist Party leader Hu Jintao began to infuse his speeches with unmistakably Confucian themes, stating on one occasion, "Harmony is something to be cherished." Hu's remarks implicitly acknowledge the fraying of China's traditional social fabric amid the rush to modernize as well as the role that Confucian values might play in redressing the attendant imbalances and disruptions. Similarly, in 2007, then—Prime Minister Wen Jiabao made a strikingly similar declaration: "From Confucius to Sun Yat-sen, the traditional culture of the Chinese nation has numerous precious elements, many positive aspects regarding the nature of the people and democracy. For example, it stresses love and humanity, community, harmony among different viewpoints, and sharing the world in common."[1]

One should also recall the memorable spectacle of the opening ceremonies at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, at which drummers clad in ancient dress chanted the opening lines of the *Analects* before a television audience of millions. With similar aims in view, since 2004 the Chinese government has sponsored the opening of numerous Confucius Institutes throughout the world in order to facilitate Chinese language instruction as well as increased familiarity with Chinese cultural traditions. At present, they number over 300. In 2010, a 30-foot statue of Confucius mysteriously appeared adjacent to Tiananmen Square, only to disappear inexplicably a few months later. As this particular incident suggests, the Communist Party leadership is itself highly conflicted about the ease—or difficulty—with which one might reconcile a modernizing creed such as Marxism with Confucianism's steadfast traditionalism. However, one could also make the argument—as several commentators already have—that Mao's political voluntarism is related to the Confucian values of self-reliance and self-improvement. However, when all is said and done, one is very much left to wonder whether the great mass of Chinese citizens is more likely to view such attempts at cultural reconciliation between Confucianism and Marxism as conveying mixed signals—hence, ultimately, as more confusing than clarifying.

1 Daniel Bell, *China's New Confucianism: Politics and Everyday Life in a Changing Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 8-9.

Viewed historically, one can date the Confucian revival from the onset of the "culture craze" of the 1980s, a remarkable period of cultural ferment that emerged in response to the Cultural Revolution, launched by Mao Zedong in 1966.

In retrospect, the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) represented a politically motivated modernization drive that Mao and his followers initiated in order to extirpate the remaining vestiges of Chinese feudalism. Accordingly, one of its prominent themes was the struggle against the "Four Olds": old culture, old customs, old habits, and old ideas. Since Confucianism was synonymous with traditional Chinese values, during this ten-year period of cultural and political ferment, it became one of the primary targets of criticism. Incalculable damage was done to Confucian relics, artifacts, manuscripts, and cultural sites. These anti-Confucian tendencies became even more acute during the early 1970s, as Mao launched his "Pi-Lin, pi-Kong" (Criticize Lin Biao, Criticize Confucius) campaign.

Conversely, the "culture craze," which began in about 1980, allowed for a flowering of cultural diversity that stood in stark contrast to the Cultural Revolution's political didacticism. On the one hand, under the banner of the "Obscure Poetry" movement, a new interest in Western-inspired aesthetic experimentation flourished. On the other hand, a broad swath of Chinese intellectuals felt compelled to disregard the Western cultural canon, which often proved extremely difficult to reconcile with indigenous Chinese values and traditions. Thus after the constraints of the Cultural Revolution era had been loosened, the possibility of a reassessment of Chinese traditions re-emerged: an exploration of the "national essence."

In October 1978, a historic conference took place at Shandong University to reassess Confucius' legacy. Confucius' defenders argued that the wholesale rejection of his legacy during the Cultural Revolution had been too extreme. It was now time for a more fair-minded evaluation of his contributions, an assessment that took into consideration positive as well as negative aspects. Six years later, in 1984, another momentous conference took place in Qufu, Confucius' hometown, to commemorate the 2,535th anniversary of his birth. The culminating event was the unveiling of a statue of Confucius that had been damaged during the Cultural Revolution. With the establishment of the Academy of Chinese Culture and the Chinese Confucian Research Institute the following year, the study of Confucius' legacy and ideas once again became an acceptable avenue of Chinese cultural life.[2]

2 For a good account of these developments, see Xianlin Song, "Reconstructing the Confucian Ideal in 1980s China: The 'Culture Craze' and New Confucianism," in *The New Confucianism: A Critical Examination*, ed. John Makeham (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

Since the onset of the opening-up policy, China has felt compelled to borrow cultural and political ideas from the West—an imperative, it seemed, if the Middle Kingdom wished to catch up with its colonial adversaries and prosperous neighbors. However, in recent years the tables have begun to turn. For example, the reevaluation of indigenous Chinese traditions set the stage for the "national studies movement" of the 1990s. Increasingly, Chinese intellectuals and opinion leaders have begun turning to Confucius' doctrines in their quest for an effective counterweight to the social and moral disequilibrium produced by China's breakneck pace of modernization. Thus, in recent decades, a broad stratum of Chinese thinkers and literati have similarly concluded that practical remedies for contemporary social ills might be found in political ideals derived from indigenous Chinese traditions, as opposed to Western approaches. In this connection, considerations of cultural nationalism have also played a prominent role. As the political scientist Daniel Bell observes: "China is a rising economic power, and with economic might comes cultural pride. . . . Poised to become a global power, it's China's turn to affirm its cultural heritage."[3] The Confucian revival is "motivated by a sense of cultural pride and sometimes also by a concern about a moral or spiritual crisis in today's China."[4]

In addition, the Confucian Renaissance has also been fueled by widespread disillusionment with China's reigning political ideology, Marxism. After all, Marx was a fervent advocate of modern industrialism. In many instances, he supported Western imperialism, since, as an heir to the Enlightenment, he believed that the ethos of "development" contained the key to human betterment. In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx famously praised capitalism's propensity for dissolving all traditional social relationships, which he viewed as obstacles to the implacable march of progress and Enlightenment:

> The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. . . . Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air,

3 Bell, *China's New Confucianism*, x-xi.

4 Stephen Angle, *Contemporary Confucian Political Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2012), 11.

> all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.[5]

Thus as a man of the nineteenth century, Marx readily adopted the values of scientism and social evolutionism, as is evidenced by the fact that he sought to dedicate *Das Kapital* (*Capital*) to Charles Darwin. In retrospect, it is safe to say that Marx radically underestimated the excesses of modern industrialism—above all, the catastrophic environmental consequences likely to accrue from capitalism's rapacious exploitation of nature. Instead, under the sway of apostles of technocratic utopianism, such as St. Simon and Auguste Comte, he believed that the untrammeled development of the "forces of production" contained the key to human happiness.

All these prejudices caused him to seriously undervalue the benefits of tradition, community, affective solidarity, and "nature," as a source of beauty and solace, as opposed to a source of "raw material" for the maw of the modern factory system. For all these reasons, Marxism's future as the reigning ideology in China has become patently dubious. As one influential commentator has pointedly noted:

> Hardly anybody really believes that Marxism should provide guidelines for thinking about China's political future. The ideology has been so discredited by its misuses that it has lost almost all legitimacy in society. In reality, even the "communist" government won't be confined by Marxist theory if it conflicts with the imperative to remain in power and to provide stability and order in society. For practical purposes, *it's the end of ideology in China*. Not the end of all ideology, but the end of Marxist ideology. To the extent there's a need for a moral foundation for political rule in China, it almost certainly won't come from Karl Marx.[6]

Herein lies one plausible explanation for the revival of "political Confucianism." One of Confucianism's unequivocal merits is that, by embracing a "communitarian" ethos, it stands as a potential corrective to the excesses of modernization qua "development"—a cultural palliative with the capacity to set limits on the mentality of possessive individualism that has accompanied China's enthusiastic embrace, in the aftermath of Mao's demise, of the entrepreneurial spirit. (As Deng Xiaoping is alleged to have observed during the 1980s: "To become rich is glorious!") Because of the premium it places on traditional

5 Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 2008).

6 Bell, *China's New Confucianism*, 8. (Emphasis added.)

values, such as family, respect for one's superiors, honesty, duty, and wisdom, Confucianism clearly seems to merit a fresh look.

To be sure, there is something almost quaint, when viewed in a modern context, about Confucianism's reverence for the classics, the Six Disciplines (the *Book of Changes, Rites, Odes, History*, the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, and *Music*), and the joys of itinerant scholarship. This very disjunction raises serious questions about the inherent practicability of "Confucian Socialism" or a "Confucian Socialist Republic," as a viable path for China's political future.[7] There exists the concomitant risk that, because of Confucianism's emphasis on the pivotal role of a knowledgeable elite—that is, a mandarin caste of qualified scribes or administrators—its political thrust will conflict with or curtail China's tentative efforts toward participatory citizenship.

This limitation of the Confucian political tradition has been an object of concern among prominent representatives of the New Confucianism, such as the influential Taiwanese philosopher Mou Tsung-san (Zongsan; 1905-1994), who sought to reconcile a traditional Confucian perspective with Western approaches, mainly the ethical doctrines of Immanuel Kant. In Mou's view, Kant's moral philosophy, which is guided by the maxim that "The good will is the will which acts from *freedom* and respect for the *moral law*," preserves the dimension of individual autonomy that, in authoritarian political traditions, tends to be subsumed by the demands for social conformity or the "general will." Thus in *Contemporary Confucian Political Philosophy*, Stephen Angle remarks appositely that New Confucianism's "combination of historical reinterpretation, openness to and engagement with Western philosophers like Kant and Hegel, and commitment to democracy and the rule of law has . . . made a major impact on the Sinophone academic world." Mou's idea of "self-restriction . . . allows for a reorientation of the relation between individual ethical insight and publicly agreed-upon norms."[8]

Of course, making comparisons between Confucius' doctrines and the central ideas of prominent Western political philosophers is hardly novel. Since Confucius shunned metaphysics and speculative approaches to knowledge in favor of a practical concern with the way that philosophy influences life conduct, his thought has often been compared to that of Western practitioners of "virtue ethics," such as Socrates and Aristotle. In contrast to Plato, both thinkers, like Confucius, held that an excessive preoccupation with philosophical abstractions would befog, rather than clarify, the goals of human practical

7 For example, this idea has been set forth by the New Left thinker Gan Yang. For a discussion, see Bell, *China's New Confucianism*, 178.

8 Angle, *Contemporary Confucian Political Philosophy*, 10.

life. Hence, Confucius' aversion to metaphysics, as well as to magical practices, bespeaks his commitment to the values of "humanism"—another one of his noteworthy affinities with Western intellectual practices. To invoke only one example: Confucius' humanism is represented by his oft-cited claim: "One cannot consort with birds and beasts. If I do not associate with humankind, with whom shall I associate? If the Way prevailed in the world, there would be no need for me to change it."[9] In other words, wisdom is not an end in itself. Instead, its sole purpose is to benefit and improve the human condition. Its uses above and beyond this goal are, for the most part, idle and superfluous.

One way of understanding the Confucius Revival is that, having successfully made the transition to modernity, China is now seeking to reconnect with its venerable historical roots and traditions. In other words, now that the achievements of the Revolution have been consolidated, it is "ok" to be authentically Chinese once more. Yet in view of the rapid pace of China's modernization in the post-Mao era, one wonders: might not Confucianism serve as welcome and much-needed mollifying cultural influence, reaffirming social bonds and traditions pertaining to family, community, and piety that, in recent decades, have seriously unraveled, as China's one-sided pursuit of Western models of economic and vocational success has threatened to marginalize traditional cultural ideals? By the same token, in the end, how viable and realistic is a return to Confucian values in light of the considerable investment that contemporary China has made in modern patterns of socioeconomic organization? Has a point of no return been reached? And, if so, can the Confucius revival do more than provide window-dressing—in the form of a pleasing cultural veneer—for a breathtaking social and economic transformation that is now irreversible?

Regardless of how one answers these questions, there can be no getting around the fact that, in contemporary China, Confucianism possesses the status of an "invented" rather than an "organic" tradition. Since a direct link to the past has been irreparably severed, Chinese writers, scholars, and political leaders must actively confront the problem of what it might mean to redeploy and adapt Confucian ideals under radically new circumstances. We have already seen how the idea of Confucianism as an "invented tradition" has played a role in Mou Zongsan's efforts to fuse Confucianism with aspects of Western political thought; but it has also played a role in the Communist Party's efforts to selectively employ Confucian slogans in order to cement national unity.

By the same token, we also know that at the time of the Han Dynasty (202 BC-220 AD), as the epoch of the Warring States came to a close, Confucianism had forfeited much of its vitality as a living tradition. Instead, it threatened to

9 *Analects*, 18:6.

become a doctrine of conformity in its role as an ideological handmaiden to the feudal-administrative state. As one contemporary of the Han court observed: "the Emperor was greatly pleased with the fact that Kung-Sun [an influential Confucian scholar] 'could use Confucian doctrines to adorn the administration of the laws and of official business.'" Thus during the early Han period, "in the actual administrative measures of the state, [the emperors] reverted to the execrated policies of the legalist statesmen of Qin, [and] for purposes of prestige they erected a façade of conformity to 'Confucianism.'"[10]

Hence, the essential question remains: what would it mean today to revive Confucianism as a *living tradition*, as opposed to the commonplace, official sloganeering about "harmony," or, conversely, Yu Dan's spurious attempts to dismiss the profundity of traditional Confucian wisdom in favor of the anodyne platitudes and homilies of a modern self-help movement?

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10 H.G. Creel, *Confucianism and the Chinese Way* (New York: Harper Torch, 1949), 240.

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Confucian Tradition, Modernization, and Globalization

Yao Xinzhong

Abstract

Drawing on important theories on tradition and modernization that developed in the past few decades, this article is intended to argue against two extreme views concerning tradition and modernity, one propagating that modernization intrinsically precludes tradition and the other claiming that, to uphold tradition, we must reject modernity. Applying the "circular model" of tradition and modernity and the paradigm of "long tradition," we contend that tradition and modernity comprise and supplement each other and that, together, they form a continuum in the process of modernization, in contrast to the widespread view that modernization breaks away from tradition. We further examine critically various proposals on the usefulness of tradition for modern life and on the value of Confucian ethics for modernization in China. By arguing that tradition must not be separated from modernity and must be seen as part of modernization, this article concludes that only by including tradition will modernization be sustainable and that Confucian ethics can play an important role in reshaping the moral landscape of China in the rapidly modernized and globalized age.

Keywords

Confucian ethics – globalization – modernization – tradition

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Since the initiation of "the reform and opening up policy" in the late 1970s, China has been in great transformation, facilitated primarily by dramatic economic development and its wider repercussions in social and cultural spheres. These changes have inevitably reshaped the ethical perspectives of the Chinese people and have implicitly or explicitly altered the moral values, beliefs, norms, and thinking styles that we long took for granted in the past. In other words, ethical traditions, either old or new, have changed in the process of modernization and in the context of globalization.

What does it mean for ethical traditions to change along with modernization? To answer this question, we must examine what we mean by tradition, what role the "changing tradition" can play in modernization, and how modernization actively absorbs rather than totally rejects tradition. Drawing on various theories concerning tradition and modernization, this article argues against two extreme views concerning tradition and modernity, one propagating that modernization intrinsically precludes tradition and the other claiming that, to uphold tradition, we must reject modernity. Applying the "circular model of tradition and modernity" and the "paradigm of long tradition," this article contends that instead of a conventional view of total contradiction, tradition and modernity comprise each other and together form a continuum in the process of modernization. It further examines various proposals on the usefulness of tradition for modern life and investigates how Confucian traditions and modernizing powers interact intensively to shape contemporary ethics in China and beyond.

Value of Tradition

The word "tradition" in English stems from the Latin *traditio* and *tradere*, the latter of which has the original meaning of "deliver, betray." After the Renaissance, it came to refer more broadly to processes of handing over or handing down. In ordinary language, "tradition" involves a wide range of contents including all cultural heritages from the past, both material and spiritual. However, in this article it is used in a much narrower sense, referring to the transmission of beliefs, values, practices, and lifestyles, as defined in dictionary as "the transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation."[1]

1 Judy Pearsall, ed., *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 10th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1519. In Chinese, the meaning of "tradition" can be seen in a passage of the *Mencius*: 苟為善，後世子孫必有王者矣。君子創業垂統，為可繼也。若夫

As a body of beliefs and practices and so forth, tradition is often found in written materials, a collection of surviving texts that are handed down over history and by which we know the beliefs and practices of the past. However, apart from the written tradition, there are also oral traditions that are passed to us through oral narratives. Regardless of the means by which tradition is maintained, people tend to differentiate a "living tradition" (e.g., Confucian virtues among the Chinese) from a "dead tradition" (e.g., the customs in ancient Egypt relating to the pharaohs). A dead tradition refers to the beliefs, values, and practices that can be found only in museums, archaeological excavations, or forgotten texts that are no longer meaningful in contemporary life. In contrast, a "living tradition" is transmitted through both the texts and the minds and bodies of the people and is alive in our life and functions in social/moral/religious practices and conventions.

Although tradition can be viewed from different perspectives, separation of the actual tradition from written tradition or the living from the dead is applicable only in theoretical research. In fact, these elements are often intermingled, mutually supported, and strengthened. There are many ways for the written tradition to become actually held beliefs and values. For example, orthodox texts at a particular point in time could have been imposed on a population by imperial decree, and the popularization of certain ideas in the texts could have been accomplished through drama, storytelling, primary education, and family rituals. Popular practices and beliefs can also influence how texts were and are written and make their way into orthodox texts. One of the most famous examples is that the popular poems during the Zhou dynasty (1045? BCE-256 BCE) were selected and collected into the *Book of Poetry* (*Shi Jing*), which subsequently became accepted as one of the Confucian classics and since then has influenced the Chinese way of life for thousands of years.

Although the word "tradition" is often used by scholars as well as ordinary people, few of them have clearly defined the word before using it. "There has been very little analysis of the properties of tradition," according to Edward Shils. This prompts him to examine the word and describe what "properties" it has:

成功，則天也。(If a man does good deeds, then among his descendants in generations to come there will surely rise one who will become a king. All a gentleman can do in starting an enterprise [*chuang ye* 創業] is to leave behind a tradition [*chui tong* 垂统] which can be carried on [*ke ji* 可繼]. Heaven alone can grant success" (1B:14; D.C. Lau, trans., *Mencius* [London: Penguin Books, 1970], 71).

> "Tradition" and "traditional" are among the most commonly used terms in the whole vocabulary of the study of culture and society. The terms "tradition" and "traditional" are used to describe and explain the recurrence in approximately identical form of structures of conduct and patterns of belief over several generations of membership or over a long time within single societies . . . and within corporate bodies as well as over regions which extend across several bounded territorial discrete societies.[2]

This short paragraph includes four key phrases—"identical forms," "conduct and belief," "recurrence," and "bodies and regions"—that are important in understanding the properties of tradition. The first one refers to the particular nature of "tradition," namely, the existence of any tradition lies in the "approximately identical" things that exist and are being transmitted. If things are totally different or are only remotely similar, they cannot form a tradition. The second refers to the actual contents of a tradition: any tradition must be related to clearly identifiable patterns of beliefs and conducts that form certain structures. A tradition is sustained by common memories, emotions, and beliefs; it is also identified by the "approximately identical" structures of behavior and way of living. The beliefs and conduct form the two sides of a tradition, the internal contents and the external contents. The third one refers to the time dimension of tradition: a tradition accumulates through the recurrence of the same or similar patterns of beliefs and conduct, namely certain kinds of beliefs and conduct occur again and again over a long time or at least for several generations before being regarded as a tradition. The last one indicates that tradition has a spatial dimension, often confined to particular social organizations or geographic regions. Tradition is, in essence, the way of life followed by people with a common origin or purpose. Abiding by certain ways of life, people tend to follow the same or similar customs or fall into a similar structure of behavior within a particular group or society, which are then distilled into a common history and a shared code of conduct.

The properties of a tradition tell us that tradition is the recurrence of more or less stable structures and patterns of beliefs and conduct that formed in the past but are successively handed down. What is handed down often appears in various forms, such as ritual, codes, conventions, customs, beliefs, practices, and memories. Are these forms of tradition inherited from the past still useful to us today? Traditional beliefs and practices create the authority that sets boundaries on how people think and how they act, and legitimize actions by reference to their having occurred in the past. However, this does not mean

2 Edward Shils, "Tradition," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 13, no. 2 (1971): 124.

that they are no longer useful. On the contrary, tradition does have an instrumental value, working toward solving certain recurrent problems in societies, such as how to ensure relative peace and order and how to strengthen the sense of belonging. A related point is made by Inglehart and Baker, who argue that traditional (preindustrial) societies are fundamentally concerned with *survival* or what they call the "game against nature." Hence traditional values are those that are believed better for ensuring survival in a harsh natural and social environment. These values include "male dominance in economic and political life," "deference to parental authority," and "the importance of family life." Although "survival" is no longer an urgent need in modern societies, it is nevertheless still in demand from time to time, albeit much less in developed and therefore affluent countries than in developing and poor regions.[3]

The basis most frequently cited for the rejection of tradition is that tradition no longer fits newly acquired beliefs and practices. However, this is a biased view. For Edward Shils, "All existing things have a past. Nothing which happens escapes completely from the grip of the past"; and at the same time, "All novelty is a modification of what has existed previously."[4] The persistence of traditional beliefs and practices in all modern countries defeats any claim that tradition has been replaced or totally rejected. Tradition survives in part because tradition is still of practical use and in part because tradition can function as a mirror for us to see what the modern life is missing and as an additional cure to the ills that modernization has accumulated.[5]

Contrary to the static view of tradition that regards tradition as a fixed form, tradition is kept alive by constantly transforming itself. A tradition that does not accommodate itself to the new environment most likely will die out. Therefore we have a contrast between the "old tradition" and the "new tradition": "'New' traditions emerge as modifications of already existing traditions."[6] Of course, changes in tradition over history have occurred through evolution more than through revolution, as the latter often marked a break with continuity. Through gradual modification to certain kinds of customs and rituals or through placing a new emphasis on certain beliefs and practices while rejecting or downgrading others, tradition can successfully launch itself as something new in the

3 Ronald Inglehart and Wayne E. Baker, "Modernization, Cultural Change, and the Persistence of Traditional Values," *American Sociological Review* 65, no. 1 (2000).

4 Shils, "Tradition," 122.

5 Most scholars disagree with the assertion that "The cure for modernity is simply more modernity." See David Gross, "Rethinking Tradition," in *The Past in Ruins: Tradition and the Critique of Modernity* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 87.

6 Shils, "Tradition," 144.

changed environment. The changing nature of tradition has brought us to the issue of the relationship between tradition and modernization.

Tradition as Part of Modernization

Defined as the body or bodies of beliefs and practices inherited from the past, tradition has naturally raised a question as to whether it can fit in with modernization, which for some people means creating a new way of life by rejecting the old. To understand how this anti-tradition view has gained ground in the modern age, we start with "modernization theory." Modernization theory can be traced to the writings of Karl Marx (1818-1883), Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), and Max Weber (1864-1920). In this theory, modernization is referred to as major social changes that occur when a preindustrial society develops economically and the workplace shifts from the home to the factory (industrialization), people move from rural areas into cities, where jobs are available (urbanization), and large-scale formal organizations emerge (bureaucratization). These three components of modernization—namely industrialization, urbanization, and bureaucratization—cause further changes in such major social institutions as the family, community, religion, education, and the government. These changes, in turn, affect distribution and power relations among people in a society.[7]

In light of this fundamental thesis, various more recent scholars have drawn us pictures of what modernization is or should be. Rozman and Bernstein, for example, emphasize the scientific revolution as the primary moving power behind modernization, defining modernization as "the process by which societies have been and are being transformed under the impact of the scientific and technological revolution."[8] Other people give priority to the underlying philosophical principles, arguing that modernization is a revolutionary process made possible primarily by the modern spirit emerged in sixteenth-to nineteenth-century Europe, which became known as "modernity." In opposition to theocracy, collectivism, and looking backward, which typified "traditionalism," modernity is said to be composed of three elements: (1) rationalism—critically seeing anything from a rational point of view; (2) individualism—placing a focus on the well-being, equality, and independence of individuals rather

7 For a more detailed description of modernization theory, see www.studymode.com/essays/Karl-Marx-Durkheim-And-Weber-826710.html, accessed April 29, 2014.

8 Gilbert Rozman and Thomas P. Bernstein, *The Modernization of China* (New York: Free Press, 1981), 3.

than the collective, which, in the form of either political or religious entities, are the means with which to serve the former; (3) progressivism—everything is renewable and the past will be replaced, not only in terms of science and the economy but also in terms of ideology and culture.

Modernization theorists claim that modernization is comprehensive and should be measured in all aspects of social, cultural, and personal life, as changes in technology, productivity, and commerce will surely bring about changes in all these areas. One key point almost all modernization theorists tend to make is that modernization is a sweeping process that does not allow exceptions. Inglehart and Baker claim:

> Evidence from around the world indicates that economic development tends to propel societies in a roughly predictable direction: Industrialization leads to occupational specialization, rising educational levels, rising income levels, and eventually brings unforeseen changes—changes in gender roles, attitudes toward authority and sexual norms; declining fertility rates; broader political participation; and less easily led publics. Determined elites in control of the state and the military can resist these changes, but in the long run, it becomes increasingly costly to do so and the probability of change rises.[9]

Modernization is not only a change in the traditional way of life but also a comprehensive transformation of the past. For some theorists, it is "a post-traditional, post-medieval historical period, one marked by the move from feudalism (or agrarianism) toward capitalism, industrialization, secularization, rationalization, the nation-state and its constituent institutions and forms of surveillance."[10] Other scholars place particular emphasis on its forwardness and claim that modernity is characterized, above all, by "the idea of 'progress' as the driving force in human affairs."[11] For example, Antony Giddens suggests that it is "a shorthand term for modern society, or industrial civilization . . . modernity is vastly more dynamic than any previous type of social order. It is a society—more technically, a complex of institutions—which, unlike any preceding culture, lives in the future, rather than the past."[12] Still

9 Ibid.

10 Chris Barker, *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice* (London: Sage, 2005), 444.

11 Rana Mitter, *Modern China: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 12.

12 Antony Giddens, *Conversations with Anthony Giddens: Making Sense of Modernity* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1998), 94.

others view economic development as a transformative power changing all traditional ways of life: "The central claim of modernization theory is that economic development is linked with coherent and, to some extent, predictable changes in culture and social and political life."[13]

Despite the overall retreat of tradition in the modern era, it is not true to say that the relationship between tradition and modernization is merely a single-dimensional succession, namely, that modernization is the process of replacing or rejecting tradition. Tradition and modernization form a multidimensional complex, in which they are coexistent, interdependent, and mutually supportive. Contrary to claims by modernization theorists, tradition not only survives in the rapidly modernized world but also remains powerful and important: "It is important because . . . tradition provides a sense of place and therefore a certain amount of ontological security . . . because tradition is the locus of a wealth of non-renewable, nonrepeatable values . . . because it lends depth and richness to experience."[14] While recognizing that the modern spirit arose in rebellion against certain traditional values and thinking styles—for example, the theological worldview and the collectivist structure of social organizations, we must also see that the resilience of these as well as many other values and beliefs proves that tradition still is a powerful force in guiding people's lives and in shaping modern life. Tradition and modernization are therefore two sides of the same coin.

From this new perspective, we believe that modernization must not be seen as a phenomenon simply of the "modern age." The "short modernization" view often breaks the link between tradition and modernization and views them in opposition to each other rather than as supplements to each other. Seeing the shortcomings of short modernization, many scholars have argued for a "long modernization," which in a gradual and comprehensive way incorporates tradition into modernization, manifesting a consistent assimilation of primitive civilizations, "Axial Age" civilizations, the Enlightenment, and the Industrial Revolution into modernization and globalization.[15] According to this view, no line can be drawn clearly between the traditional and the modern; the seeds of all modern elements already exist in traditions, one way or another, albeit defined and applied differently. By the same token, modernization is not synonymous with scientific and technological revolution or with Westernization, the two concepts used widely as symbols for modernization.

13 Inglehart and Baker, "Modernization," 21.

14 Gross, "Rethinking Tradition," 83.

15 Joseph B. Tamney and Linda Hsueh-Ling Chiang, *Modernization, Globalization, and Confucianism in Chinese Societies* (New York: Praeger, 2002).

If we accept the theory of "long modernization," then we have to say that between tradition and modernization, there is not only a tension but also a kind of "affection." In fact, we are most likely to misinterpret the spirit of the changes if we always use the phrase "from the traditional to the modern" to define or describe the relationship between the former and the latter. As argued above, the traditional and the modern mutually supplement, reciprocally affect, and dynamically change each other. On the one hand, tradition is under dramatic transformation through modernization and is repeatedly "invented" and "reinvented" so that what we speak of as tradition today is not really as "traditional" as it sounds.[16] On the other hand, the modern has also been "traditionalized" and "indigenized" in the sense that the procedures and processes of modernization have been impressed with the hallmark of a particular culture or civilization. In other words, the traditional has become part and parcel of modern life. All types of modernization make use of at least certain aspects of tradition, and all traditions are not simply passively changed by modernization. The mutual transformation between tradition and modernization is both the vitality of a particular civilization and the context in which a particular way of life is both preserved and transformed.

Rethinking the Confucian Tradition

Because of their different experiences in transforming traditions, China and the West have formed two different interactive models of tradition and modernity. In the West, modernity emerged in the process of the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and the Reformation, which rebelled, in one way or another, against traditional mentality and social structure and were nourished by the innovative spirit of rationalism, individualism, and progressivism. It is essentially marked by the confrontation with tradition. However, even in the context of Western Europe, tradition is never totally submerged. After experiencing transformation and reinvention, tradition is constantly renewed and revived, continuing to work on and modify modernity; at the same time, modernity is also modified by its own forces and those of traditions, and begets its own opposite in the form of postmodernism. Under criticism by religion and philosophy, the cold side of modernity is warmed up by postmodern theology, care ethics, and feminism. The evolution from tradition to modernity to

16 Traditional views and practices are often invented and reinvented in modern contexts to make them appealing to contemporary people. See Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

postmodernity in Western Europe was a linear one. In contrast to this linear model of tradition and modernity, China experienced a different model of tradition and modernity. Unlike in Europe, modernity in a narrow sense did not evolve directly from tradition in China; rather, it was imposed on Chinese tradition by the Western powers and it subsequently superseded tradition through various revolutions. Since then, modernity from the West has fundamentally shaped and reshaped Chinese traditions and driven the Chinese to reassess and reconstruct their own traditions, either to find useful elements that meet the needs of modern life or to search for new interpretations of modernization that differ from those generated from the perspective of Western modernity. Either way, tradition is transformed, and the transformed tradition, in turn, acts on the perceived Western modernity. Chinese characteristics were added to the imported modernity by which a new sense of modernity emerges. Tradition and modernity are thus locked in a circular model as they work on each other.

Although both the Western and the Chinese models do not exclude tradition from modernity, it is apparent that the Chinese models allows more room for tradition than does its Western counterpart. More and more people have noted the significance of tradition for modernity, regarding tradition not as antagonistic to modernity but as the fertile soil for a new kind of modernity that absorbs nutrition from various traditions. In this view, modernity is no longer a breaking away from history; it is the continuity of tradition. Therefore the short, rigid, and linear view of modernization that contradicts tradition is no longer appropriate. In contrast, "long modernization" is being accepted as a new paradigm for China, where, long before the "short modernization," Confucianism had already embraced rational thinking, a state-sponsored industry developed, metropolitan cities appeared, and a powerful central government and bureaucratization through civil service examinations emerged. The paradigm of long modernization rejects the Orientalist views of tradition and modernization and integrates the traditional and the modern, allowing different models of tradition and modernization and leaving room for different nations and countries to follow their own paths to modernization. This has made possible the interaction between tradition and modernity throughout history, each point part of an interconnected link in a long and circular chain.

Naturally, the circular model and the long modernization paradigm can pave the way for us to have a new vision about Confucianism and its role in the rapidly globalized world. In the context of long modernization and the circular model, Confucianism is not merely central to tradition in the past but should also be essential to modernization and transformation in the present. The dual nature of Confucianism serving both the traditional and the modern makes it

possible for its beliefs, values, and practices to play an important part in renewing traditional virtues and informing new ways of living in the modern world.

The circular model and long modernization paradigm also make it possible for us to see how Confucianism can fit in with globalization. Confucianism is both local and global in the sense that it has manifested the unique spirit of Chinese civilization, spread to other parts of East Asia and the world, and participated in the reshaping of global civilization. True globalization is not and cannot be the process of universalizing the short and linear model of modernization. It can only be a meeting place for old and new elements from different cultures and different ages. Globalization and cultural diversity are both parallel and intermingled. As Gary Hamilton has strongly argued, "What we witness with the development of a global economy is not increasing uniformity, in the form of a universalization of Western culture, but rather the continuation of civilizational diversity through the active reinvention and reincorporation of non-Western civilizational patterns."[17] Civilizational diversity adds new dimensions to globalization and provides a platform for Confucianism to function through interaction between tradition and modernization. Emphasizing rational individuals, moral freedom, conscious responsibility, and interactive relations, Confucian ethics can be said to be "pro-modern" by nature as it has endorsed theoretically and practically rational thinking, moral autonomy and effective governance.

Despite all these, under the influence of the short and linear model of tradition and modernity, the Chinese as well as Western interpreters in the past did not properly interpret Confucianism and its role in modernization. Confucian ethics in general was used as a weapon to fight against Western ideology among Chinese intellectuals in most of the nineteenth century, who regarded Chinese learning, of which Confucianism was the core, as the substance (*ti* 體) while Western learning was adopted for practical use (*yong* 用). Seeing Confucianism as fundamentally in opposition to modernity, conservative Confucians attempted to preserve Confucian virtues as the core of Chinese civilization. They failed badly in this "defensive modernization," which eventually led to Western-style modernization and embracing some scientific thinking and technology. In spite of strong voices calling for self-strengthening, the Manchu Qing rulers resisted changing the overall structure of governance until the beginning of the twentieth century. The revolution led by Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925), who saw it as his mission to overthrow the Qing dynasty, moved

17 Gary G. Hamilton, "Civilizations and Organization of Economies," in *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*, ed. N.J. Smelser and R. Swedberg (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 184.

definitively in the direction of republicanism while rejecting the backward-looking Confucian thinking. The closely bound relationship between Confucianism and the conservative political powers brought disaster to both.[18] The wave of the calls for "science and democracy," as the two symbols of modernization, was too powerful for Confucians to withstand, and Confucian infrastructure, ideological, social, and political, was rapidly wiped out, at least symbolically, in the New Culture movement of the 1920s.

With ups and downs to a limited extent, Confucianism continued to be regarded as a negative force that opposed the rising of a modern China until the 1980s and the 1990s, when Confucianism was brought to the fore by scholars as well as by some politicians. It was formally recognized as the core of Chinese culture and therefore as part of the revived Chinese civilization. This turn has accelerated in the twenty-first century, as a self-reflexive discourse (political, academic, or cultural) with increasing popular appeal in academic, literary, and educational arenas and as supplementing the current political ideology to provide legitimacy for governance. Debates are conducted over the living or dead elements of the Confucian ethics in order to revive the excellent Chinese culture in China, which has undergone substantial modernization. What is good or excellent and what is bad or outdated within Confucianism are carefully examined from different perspectives, concerning how tradition can be used instrumentally to remedy the deficiencies of modernity, modernization, and globalization.

Changing Values in Contemporary China

Contemporary China is complicated by radical modernizers and stubborn traditionalists: it is forced to modernize but, at the same time, the grip of tradition never fades away. "China is a profoundly modern society, but the way in which its modernity has been manifested is indelibly shaped by the legacy of its premodern (a term preferable to 'traditional') past."[19] By failing to see this, revolutionaries and conservatives tend to separate tradition and modernity, going to diametrically opposite directions when determining which course it should follow. This explains most of the difficulties that China has experienced thus far.

18 Xinzhong Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 246-249.

19 Mitter, *Modern China*, 12.

To address these difficulties, we must see tradition and modernity as a continuum, not as two unrelated or opposing cultural powers. In fact, good progress has recently been made in ethical fields, demonstrating that tradition and modernity are joining forces to shape the new moral landscape of Chinese life. As China is rapidly globalized, Chinese values are predictably changing. However, we must not interpret these changes as a total departure from tradition or as a total negation of the modern spirit. Instead, they reflect the influence of both tradition and modernization. Traditional values are changed in the reinterpreted modernity, and modern values are modified in the renewed tradition. A new hybrid of tradition and modernity is taking shape. In his article, Guy Faure examines twelve main areas of changes in values that he believes have taken place in contemporary China.[20] All of them comprise legacies of the traditional, in which we see a mixture of "older" traditional influences, such as Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, and "newer" traditional sources, such as Marxist and Maoist leftism, and "modern" values. Inspired by his work, I have constructed a table of changing values to show how modern life continues to be under the sway of Confucian tradition as well as modernity (see Table 1).

While these changes draw both on tradition and modernity, it seems apparent that changing values are prompted more by a desire to return to tradition than by a longing for more modernity. What the table shows is that most changes in values already have roots in Confucian traditions. This further strengthens the belief that there is no intrinsic contradiction between Confucian ethics and modernization. In the new wave of looking back at traditional resources to reshape the core values of contemporary China, Confucius has once more become the symbol of "being Chinese," as portrayed in many popular media presentations, helpful for solving anomies that accumulated in the past thirty years or so. Confucius is seen not only as the living model of Chinese culture but also as the "modern" manifestation of one of the oldest civilizations. He is recognized as a forerunner of cultural reconstruction as he identified what was traditional, evaluated it, and made arguments for its restoration. He is said to be able to bring comfort to people when they feel agony, tension, and anxiety; at the same time, he is believed to push forward China in the direction of modernization and globalization. Confucian ethics is thus successfully renewed as a modernity friendly tradition, serving all purposes in China as it changes.

20 Guy Olivier Faure, "Chinese Society and Its New Emerging Culture," *Journal of Contemporary China* 56, no. 17 (2008).

TABLE 1 *Changes in Chinese Values*

Values changing to	Values changing from	Informing traditional and modern values
Valuing an individual's self	collectivist mentality	Confucian moral self and modern individualism
Emphasizing materialistic importance	Anti-bourgeois & anti-materialist life styles	Confucian strives for affluent life and modern longing for lifting up living standard
Appreciating family relations and affection	A total subordination of the family to state	Confucian family virtues and modern efforts in reducing loneliness of individuals
Engaging business with social responsibilities	Ruthlessly pursuing profits at the expense of others and society	Confucian propagation of responsibility and modern restrict of egoism
Accepting differentiated equality	Absolute equality as social and political ideal	Confucian moral stratification and modern strive for opportunity and distributive equality
Pro-globalization attitudes and values	Total self-reliance	Confucian belief in grand commonwealth and modern global village

Among the reasons it is necessary for Confucianism to be revived or invented is that contemporary China needs Confucian ethics to fight against moral ills. Discourses on Confucian ethics are deeply concerned with the question of a perceived crisis of values, moral decline, or indifference to moral judgment in all strata, or with the creation of new values, to bring about a more equal world in which the gap between rich and poor decreases rather than increases. Some people tend to view modernity as the cause of rising individualism,

materialism, and moral indifference toward others and as the root of moral problems. However, this is only one side of the story. In the view of Yan Yunxiang, despite the emergence of collective immorality, we must also see the rise of philanthropy and collective responsibility.[21] This proves again that even when fighting moral ills, tradition and modernity cannot be totally separated.

Confucian Ethics for Sound Globalization

A revived Confucianism is being mobilized as the motivating force for constructing a new social, ethical, and political order. In the process, Confucianism is no longer the same tradition as it existed hundreds of years ago; although many people claim that they would go back to the original Confucianism, and some opt for a fundamentalist approach to Confucian teachings and practices, at least some Confucian values and virtues are being "modernized" or "remodernized" into something new and useful in life today,[22] as in the case of the Confucian unity of the individual-family-state as the foundation for peace, order, and harmony. The classical values of "self-cultivation, family regulation, ordering of the state, and bringing tranquility and order under heaven" elaborated in the *Great Learning* (*Daxue* 大學), have been elaborated as a new toolkit for facilitating the new world order. It has been argued that "remodernized" Confucian values can serve multiple purposes, not only for providing legitimacy for political activities and structures but also for creating new ethical norms and moral virtues. The revival of Confucian ethics is intended to bring people together, mediate the variations in economic, social, and cultural progress, and lead people to create a world community. Confucian ethics is therefore openly or discreetly incorporated into the educational curriculum in the name of learning traditional culture and educating students in traditional values. As an ethical tradition, Confucian virtues are believed to help in recreating social and moral networks that provide individuals and groups with a sense of security and belonging.

In reviving Confucianism, we must maintain the balance between tradition and modernity. Any attempt to embrace one while rejecting the other

21 Yunxiang Yan, "The Changing Moral Landscape," in *Deep China*: *The Moral Life of the Person, What Anthropology and Psychiatry Tell Us About China Today*, ed. Yunxiang Yan and Arthur Kleinman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

22 W.C.R. Chu and C.T. Cheng, "Cultural Convulsions: Examining the Chineseness of Cyber China," in *Online Society in China: Creating, Celebrating, and Instrumentalising the Online Carnival*, ed. David Herold (London: Taylor & Francis, 2011).

will surely bring about failure rather than success. What, then, can Confucian ethics contribute in the age of globalization? We answer this question from the following three perspectives. First, by bringing tradition and modernity together, Confucian ethics can serve the purpose of building up a sense of cultural continuity, by which a true type of modernization characteristic of traditionality is realized. As argued above, what is truly modern must first be traditional, not only in the sense that tradition is being transformed into the modern but also that the modern is modified to fit traditional expectations. Confucian ethics is the core value of the Chinese moral conscience. What Confucius calls "to know what is new by keeping fresh in his mind what he is already familiar with"[23] has prepared us for maintaining a continuing link between the past and the present and between tradition and modernity.

Second, Confucian ethics can cultivate true globalness by enhancing communication and exchange between nations and peoples through economic and commercial globalization. Although globalization is driven primarily by business cooperation and economic integration, globalization of cultures and values must follow. Revived Confucianism reminds us that the most important task of modernization and globalization is that through communication and exchange all peoples benefit from the conscientious pursuit of both diverse cultural expression and globally applicable norms and values. Various value surveys have told us that the success of globalization depends on whether we can rebuild the values of one culture into the values of another. To do this, we must not totally disregard specific cultural values; instead, we should preserve and transform Chinese "indigenous values," such as harmony in value orientations, a strong sense of responsibility, filial love for parents and grandparents, benevolence for others, and propriety in one's behavior. In the formation of the core values for the Chinese people in the age of globalization, Confucian ethics can act as the genetic structure of the people by which Chinese values will surely interact and combine with global values.

Third, Confucian ethics enables globalization to have a rich inner dimension. In the Confucian context, "human quality" is regarded as a force for realizing a modern society of the right order or for the creation of a harmonious modernity, rooted in collective memories of the past.[24] In this process, tradition and modernization are interlinked through a system of social controls

23 温故而知新. D.C. Lau, trans., *Confucius: The Analects* (*Lun yu*) (London: Penguin Books, 1979), 64.

24 Børge Bakken, *The Exemplary Society: Human Improvement, Social Control, and the Dangers of Modernity in China* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 1.

in which "tradition" is seen as serving transforming purposes and "modernization" as serving stability and order.[25] Global stability and order cannot be built up through external coercion. They must emerge from human awareness and sense of responsibility. Confucian ethics requires us to look at our inner selves and inserts a sense of moral responsibility into relationships between individuals, communities, and countries. It can be an important resource for counterbalancing the strong sense of individual rights, which is deeply rooted in Western modernity. The inner dimension of globalization, a proper rebalancing between rights and responsibilities, will, in the long run, determine whether we can have a stable globalization in economy, politics, education, and communication.

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25 Ibid., 4-5.

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Confucian Tradition, Modernization, and Globalization

Yao Xinzhong

Abstract

Drawing on important theories on tradition and modernization that developed in the past few decades, this article is intended to argue against two extreme views concerning tradition and modernity, one propagating that modernization intrinsically precludes tradition and the other claiming that, to uphold tradition, we must reject modernity. Applying the "circular model" of tradition and modernity and the paradigm of "long tradition," we contend that tradition and modernity comprise and supplement each other and that, together, they form a continuum in the process of modernization, in contrast to the widespread view that modernization breaks away from tradition. We further examine critically various proposals on the usefulness of tradition for modern life and on the value of Confucian ethics for modernization in China. By arguing that tradition must not be separated from modernity and must be seen as part of modernization, this article concludes that only by including tradition will modernization be sustainable and that Confucian ethics can play an important role in reshaping the moral landscape of China in the rapidly modernized and globalized age.

Keywords

Confucian ethics – globalization – modernization – tradition

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Since the initiation of "the reform and opening up policy" in the late 1970s, China has been in great transformation, facilitated primarily by dramatic economic development and its wider repercussions in social and cultural spheres. These changes have inevitably reshaped the ethical perspectives of the Chinese people and have implicitly or explicitly altered the moral values, beliefs, norms, and thinking styles that we long took for granted in the past. In other words, ethical traditions, either old or new, have changed in the process of modernization and in the context of globalization.

What does it mean for ethical traditions to change along with modernization? To answer this question, we must examine what we mean by tradition, what role the "changing tradition" can play in modernization, and how modernization actively absorbs rather than totally rejects tradition. Drawing on various theories concerning tradition and modernization, this article argues against two extreme views concerning tradition and modernity, one propagating that modernization intrinsically precludes tradition and the other claiming that, to uphold tradition, we must reject modernity. Applying the "circular model of tradition and modernity" and the "paradigm of long tradition," this article contends that instead of a conventional view of total contradiction, tradition and modernity comprise each other and together form a continuum in the process of modernization. It further examines various proposals on the usefulness of tradition for modern life and investigates how Confucian traditions and modernizing powers interact intensively to shape contemporary ethics in China and beyond.

Value of Tradition

The word "tradition" in English stems from the Latin *traditio* and *tradere*, the latter of which has the original meaning of "deliver, betray." After the Renaissance, it came to refer more broadly to processes of handing over or handing down. In ordinary language, "tradition" involves a wide range of contents including all cultural heritages from the past, both material and spiritual. However, in this article it is used in a much narrower sense, referring to the transmission of beliefs, values, practices, and lifestyles, as defined in dictionary as "the transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation."[1]

1 Judy Pearsall, ed., *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 10th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1519. In Chinese, the meaning of "tradition" can be seen in a passage of the *Mencius*: 苟為善，後世子孫必有王者矣。君子創業垂統，為可繼也。若夫

As a body of beliefs and practices and so forth, tradition is often found in written materials, a collection of surviving texts that are handed down over history and by which we know the beliefs and practices of the past. However, apart from the written tradition, there are also oral traditions that are passed to us through oral narratives. Regardless of the means by which tradition is maintained, people tend to differentiate a "living tradition" (e.g., Confucian virtues among the Chinese) from a "dead tradition" (e.g., the customs in ancient Egypt relating to the pharaohs). A dead tradition refers to the beliefs, values, and practices that can be found only in museums, archaeological excavations, or forgotten texts that are no longer meaningful in contemporary life. In contrast, a "living tradition" is transmitted through both the texts and the minds and bodies of the people and is alive in our life and functions in social/moral/religious practices and conventions.

Although tradition can be viewed from different perspectives, separation of the actual tradition from written tradition or the living from the dead is applicable only in theoretical research. In fact, these elements are often intermingled, mutually supported, and strengthened. There are many ways for the written tradition to become actually held beliefs and values. For example, orthodox texts at a particular point in time could have been imposed on a population by imperial decree, and the popularization of certain ideas in the texts could have been accomplished through drama, storytelling, primary education, and family rituals. Popular practices and beliefs can also influence how texts were and are written and make their way into orthodox texts. One of the most famous examples is that the popular poems during the Zhou dynasty (1045? BCE-256 BCE) were selected and collected into the *Book of Poetry* (*Shi Jing*), which subsequently became accepted as one of the Confucian classics and since then has influenced the Chinese way of life for thousands of years.

Although the word "tradition" is often used by scholars as well as ordinary people, few of them have clearly defined the word before using it. "There has been very little analysis of the properties of tradition," according to Edward Shils. This prompts him to examine the word and describe what "properties" it has:

成功，則天也。(If a man does good deeds, then among his descendants in generations to come there will surely rise one who will become a king. All a gentleman can do in starting an enterprise [*chuang ye* 創業] is to leave behind a tradition [*chui tong* 垂统] which can be carried on [*ke ji* 可繼]. Heaven alone can grant success" (1B:14; D.C. Lau, trans., *Mencius* [London: Penguin Books, 1970], 71).

> "Tradition" and "traditional" are among the most commonly used terms in the whole vocabulary of the study of culture and society. The terms "tradition" and "traditional" are used to describe and explain the recurrence in approximately identical form of structures of conduct and patterns of belief over several generations of membership or over a long time within single societies . . . and within corporate bodies as well as over regions which extend across several bounded territorial discrete societies.[2]

This short paragraph includes four key phrases—"identical forms," "conduct and belief," "recurrence," and "bodies and regions"—that are important in understanding the properties of tradition. The first one refers to the particular nature of "tradition," namely, the existence of any tradition lies in the "approximately identical" things that exist and are being transmitted. If things are totally different or are only remotely similar, they cannot form a tradition. The second refers to the actual contents of a tradition: any tradition must be related to clearly identifiable patterns of beliefs and conducts that form certain structures. A tradition is sustained by common memories, emotions, and beliefs; it is also identified by the "approximately identical" structures of behavior and way of living. The beliefs and conduct form the two sides of a tradition, the internal contents and the external contents. The third one refers to the time dimension of tradition: a tradition accumulates through the recurrence of the same or similar patterns of beliefs and conduct, namely certain kinds of beliefs and conduct occur again and again over a long time or at least for several generations before being regarded as a tradition. The last one indicates that tradition has a spatial dimension, often confined to particular social organizations or geographic regions. Tradition is, in essence, the way of life followed by people with a common origin or purpose. Abiding by certain ways of life, people tend to follow the same or similar customs or fall into a similar structure of behavior within a particular group or society, which are then distilled into a common history and a shared code of conduct.

The properties of a tradition tell us that tradition is the recurrence of more or less stable structures and patterns of beliefs and conduct that formed in the past but are successively handed down. What is handed down often appears in various forms, such as ritual, codes, conventions, customs, beliefs, practices, and memories. Are these forms of tradition inherited from the past still useful to us today? Traditional beliefs and practices create the authority that sets boundaries on how people think and how they act, and legitimize actions by reference to their having occurred in the past. However, this does not mean

2 Edward Shils, "Tradition," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 13, no. 2 (1971): 124.

that they are no longer useful. On the contrary, tradition does have an instrumental value, working toward solving certain recurrent problems in societies, such as how to ensure relative peace and order and how to strengthen the sense of belonging. A related point is made by Inglehart and Baker, who argue that traditional (preindustrial) societies are fundamentally concerned with *survival* or what they call the "game against nature." Hence traditional values are those that are believed better for ensuring survival in a harsh natural and social environment. These values include "male dominance in economic and political life," "deference to parental authority," and "the importance of family life." Although "survival" is no longer an urgent need in modern societies, it is nevertheless still in demand from time to time, albeit much less in developed and therefore affluent countries than in developing and poor regions.[3]

The basis most frequently cited for the rejection of tradition is that tradition no longer fits newly acquired beliefs and practices. However, this is a biased view. For Edward Shils, "All existing things have a past. Nothing which happens escapes completely from the grip of the past"; and at the same time, "All novelty is a modification of what has existed previously."[4] The persistence of traditional beliefs and practices in all modern countries defeats any claim that tradition has been replaced or totally rejected. Tradition survives in part because tradition is still of practical use and in part because tradition can function as a mirror for us to see what the modern life is missing and as an additional cure to the ills that modernization has accumulated.[5]

Contrary to the static view of tradition that regards tradition as a fixed form, tradition is kept alive by constantly transforming itself. A tradition that does not accommodate itself to the new environment most likely will die out. Therefore we have a contrast between the "old tradition" and the "new tradition": "'New' traditions emerge as modifications of already existing traditions."[6] Of course, changes in tradition over history have occurred through evolution more than through revolution, as the latter often marked a break with continuity. Through gradual modification to certain kinds of customs and rituals or through placing a new emphasis on certain beliefs and practices while rejecting or downgrading others, tradition can successfully launch itself as something new in the

3 Ronald Inglehart and Wayne E. Baker, "Modernization, Cultural Change, and the Persistence of Traditional Values," *American Sociological Review* 65, no. 1 (2000).

4 Shils, "Tradition," 122.

5 Most scholars disagree with the assertion that "The cure for modernity is simply more modernity." See David Gross, "Rethinking Tradition," in *The Past in Ruins: Tradition and the Critique of Modernity* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 87.

6 Shils, "Tradition," 144.

changed environment. The changing nature of tradition has brought us to the issue of the relationship between tradition and modernization.

Tradition as Part of Modernization

Defined as the body or bodies of beliefs and practices inherited from the past, tradition has naturally raised a question as to whether it can fit in with modernization, which for some people means creating a new way of life by rejecting the old. To understand how this anti-tradition view has gained ground in the modern age, we start with "modernization theory." Modernization theory can be traced to the writings of Karl Marx (1818-1883), Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), and Max Weber (1864-1920). In this theory, modernization is referred to as major social changes that occur when a preindustrial society develops economically and the workplace shifts from the home to the factory (industrialization), people move from rural areas into cities, where jobs are available (urbanization), and large-scale formal organizations emerge (bureaucratization). These three components of modernization—namely industrialization, urbanization, and bureaucratization—cause further changes in such major social institutions as the family, community, religion, education, and the government. These changes, in turn, affect distribution and power relations among people in a society.[7]

In light of this fundamental thesis, various more recent scholars have drawn us pictures of what modernization is or should be. Rozman and Bernstein, for example, emphasize the scientific revolution as the primary moving power behind modernization, defining modernization as "the process by which societies have been and are being transformed under the impact of the scientific and technological revolution."[8] Other people give priority to the underlying philosophical principles, arguing that modernization is a revolutionary process made possible primarily by the modern spirit emerged in sixteenth-to nineteenth-century Europe, which became known as "modernity." In opposition to theocracy, collectivism, and looking backward, which typified "traditionalism," modernity is said to be composed of three elements: (1) rationalism—critically seeing anything from a rational point of view; (2) individualism—placing a focus on the well-being, equality, and independence of individuals rather

7 For a more detailed description of modernization theory, see www.studymode.com/essays/Karl-Marx-Durkheim-And-Weber-826710.html, accessed April 29, 2014.

8 Gilbert Rozman and Thomas P. Bernstein, *The Modernization of China* (New York: Free Press, 1981), 3.

than the collective, which, in the form of either political or religious entities, are the means with which to serve the former; (3) progressivism—everything is renewable and the past will be replaced, not only in terms of science and the economy but also in terms of ideology and culture.

Modernization theorists claim that modernization is comprehensive and should be measured in all aspects of social, cultural, and personal life, as changes in technology, productivity, and commerce will surely bring about changes in all these areas. One key point almost all modernization theorists tend to make is that modernization is a sweeping process that does not allow exceptions. Inglehart and Baker claim:

> Evidence from around the world indicates that economic development tends to propel societies in a roughly predictable direction: Industrialization leads to occupational specialization, rising educational levels, rising income levels, and eventually brings unforeseen changes—changes in gender roles, attitudes toward authority and sexual norms; declining fertility rates; broader political participation; and less easily led publics. Determined elites in control of the state and the military can resist these changes, but in the long run, it becomes increasingly costly to do so and the probability of change rises.[9]

Modernization is not only a change in the traditional way of life but also a comprehensive transformation of the past. For some theorists, it is "a post-traditional, post-medieval historical period, one marked by the move from feudalism (or agrarianism) toward capitalism, industrialization, secularization, rationalization, the nation-state and its constituent institutions and forms of surveillance."[10] Other scholars place particular emphasis on its forwardness and claim that modernity is characterized, above all, by "the idea of 'progress' as the driving force in human affairs."[11] For example, Antony Giddens suggests that it is "a shorthand term for modern society, or industrial civilization . . . modernity is vastly more dynamic than any previous type of social order. It is a society—more technically, a complex of institutions—which, unlike any preceding culture, lives in the future, rather than the past."[12] Still

9 Ibid.

10 Chris Barker, *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice* (London: Sage, 2005), 444.

11 Rana Mitter, *Modern China: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 12.

12 Antony Giddens, *Conversations with Anthony Giddens: Making Sense of Modernity* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1998), 94.

others view economic development as a transformative power changing all traditional ways of life: "The central claim of modernization theory is that economic development is linked with coherent and, to some extent, predictable changes in culture and social and political life."[13]

Despite the overall retreat of tradition in the modern era, it is not true to say that the relationship between tradition and modernization is merely a single-dimensional succession, namely, that modernization is the process of replacing or rejecting tradition. Tradition and modernization form a multidimensional complex, in which they are coexistent, interdependent, and mutually supportive. Contrary to claims by modernization theorists, tradition not only survives in the rapidly modernized world but also remains powerful and important: "It is important because . . . tradition provides a sense of place and therefore a certain amount of ontological security . . . because tradition is the locus of a wealth of non-renewable, nonrepeatable values . . . because it lends depth and richness to experience."[14] While recognizing that the modern spirit arose in rebellion against certain traditional values and thinking styles—for example, the theological worldview and the collectivist structure of social organizations, we must also see that the resilience of these as well as many other values and beliefs proves that tradition still is a powerful force in guiding people's lives and in shaping modern life. Tradition and modernization are therefore two sides of the same coin.

From this new perspective, we believe that modernization must not be seen as a phenomenon simply of the "modern age." The "short modernization" view often breaks the link between tradition and modernization and views them in opposition to each other rather than as supplements to each other. Seeing the shortcomings of short modernization, many scholars have argued for a "long modernization," which in a gradual and comprehensive way incorporates tradition into modernization, manifesting a consistent assimilation of primitive civilizations, "Axial Age" civilizations, the Enlightenment, and the Industrial Revolution into modernization and globalization.[15] According to this view, no line can be drawn clearly between the traditional and the modern; the seeds of all modern elements already exist in traditions, one way or another, albeit defined and applied differently. By the same token, modernization is not synonymous with scientific and technological revolution or with Westernization, the two concepts used widely as symbols for modernization.

13 Inglehart and Baker, "Modernization," 21.

14 Gross, "Rethinking Tradition," 83.

15 Joseph B. Tamney and Linda Hsueh-Ling Chiang, *Modernization, Globalization, and Confucianism in Chinese Societies* (New York: Praeger, 2002).

If we accept the theory of "long modernization," then we have to say that between tradition and modernization, there is not only a tension but also a kind of "affection." In fact, we are most likely to misinterpret the spirit of the changes if we always use the phrase "from the traditional to the modern" to define or describe the relationship between the former and the latter. As argued above, the traditional and the modern mutually supplement, reciprocally affect, and dynamically change each other. On the one hand, tradition is under dramatic transformation through modernization and is repeatedly "invented" and "reinvented" so that what we speak of as tradition today is not really as "traditional" as it sounds.[16] On the other hand, the modern has also been "traditionalized" and "indigenized" in the sense that the procedures and processes of modernization have been impressed with the hallmark of a particular culture or civilization. In other words, the traditional has become part and parcel of modern life. All types of modernization make use of at least certain aspects of tradition, and all traditions are not simply passively changed by modernization. The mutual transformation between tradition and modernization is both the vitality of a particular civilization and the context in which a particular way of life is both preserved and transformed.

Rethinking the Confucian Tradition

Because of their different experiences in transforming traditions, China and the West have formed two different interactive models of tradition and modernity. In the West, modernity emerged in the process of the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and the Reformation, which rebelled, in one way or another, against traditional mentality and social structure and were nourished by the innovative spirit of rationalism, individualism, and progressivism. It is essentially marked by the confrontation with tradition. However, even in the context of Western Europe, tradition is never totally submerged. After experiencing transformation and reinvention, tradition is constantly renewed and revived, continuing to work on and modify modernity; at the same time, modernity is also modified by its own forces and those of traditions, and begets its own opposite in the form of postmodernism. Under criticism by religion and philosophy, the cold side of modernity is warmed up by postmodern theology, care ethics, and feminism. The evolution from tradition to modernity to

16 Traditional views and practices are often invented and reinvented in modern contexts to make them appealing to contemporary people. See Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

postmodernity in Western Europe was a linear one. In contrast to this linear model of tradition and modernity, China experienced a different model of tradition and modernity. Unlike in Europe, modernity in a narrow sense did not evolve directly from tradition in China; rather, it was imposed on Chinese tradition by the Western powers and it subsequently superseded tradition through various revolutions. Since then, modernity from the West has fundamentally shaped and reshaped Chinese traditions and driven the Chinese to reassess and reconstruct their own traditions, either to find useful elements that meet the needs of modern life or to search for new interpretations of modernization that differ from those generated from the perspective of Western modernity. Either way, tradition is transformed, and the transformed tradition, in turn, acts on the perceived Western modernity. Chinese characteristics were added to the imported modernity by which a new sense of modernity emerges. Tradition and modernity are thus locked in a circular model as they work on each other.

Although both the Western and the Chinese models do not exclude tradition from modernity, it is apparent that the Chinese models allows more room for tradition than does its Western counterpart. More and more people have noted the significance of tradition for modernity, regarding tradition not as antagonistic to modernity but as the fertile soil for a new kind of modernity that absorbs nutrition from various traditions. In this view, modernity is no longer a breaking away from history; it is the continuity of tradition. Therefore the short, rigid, and linear view of modernization that contradicts tradition is no longer appropriate. In contrast, "long modernization" is being accepted as a new paradigm for China, where, long before the "short modernization," Confucianism had already embraced rational thinking, a state-sponsored industry developed, metropolitan cities appeared, and a powerful central government and bureaucratization through civil service examinations emerged. The paradigm of long modernization rejects the Orientalist views of tradition and modernization and integrates the traditional and the modern, allowing different models of tradition and modernization and leaving room for different nations and countries to follow their own paths to modernization. This has made possible the interaction between tradition and modernity throughout history, each point part of an interconnected link in a long and circular chain.

Naturally, the circular model and the long modernization paradigm can pave the way for us to have a new vision about Confucianism and its role in the rapidly globalized world. In the context of long modernization and the circular model, Confucianism is not merely central to tradition in the past but should also be essential to modernization and transformation in the present. The dual nature of Confucianism serving both the traditional and the modern makes it

possible for its beliefs, values, and practices to play an important part in renewing traditional virtues and informing new ways of living in the modern world.

The circular model and long modernization paradigm also make it possible for us to see how Confucianism can fit in with globalization. Confucianism is both local and global in the sense that it has manifested the unique spirit of Chinese civilization, spread to other parts of East Asia and the world, and participated in the reshaping of global civilization. True globalization is not and cannot be the process of universalizing the short and linear model of modernization. It can only be a meeting place for old and new elements from different cultures and different ages. Globalization and cultural diversity are both parallel and intermingled. As Gary Hamilton has strongly argued, "What we witness with the development of a global economy is not increasing uniformity, in the form of a universalization of Western culture, but rather the continuation of civilizational diversity through the active reinvention and reincorporation of non-Western civilizational patterns."[17] Civilizational diversity adds new dimensions to globalization and provides a platform for Confucianism to function through interaction between tradition and modernization. Emphasizing rational individuals, moral freedom, conscious responsibility, and interactive relations, Confucian ethics can be said to be "pro-modern" by nature as it has endorsed theoretically and practically rational thinking, moral autonomy and effective governance.

Despite all these, under the influence of the short and linear model of tradition and modernity, the Chinese as well as Western interpreters in the past did not properly interpret Confucianism and its role in modernization. Confucian ethics in general was used as a weapon to fight against Western ideology among Chinese intellectuals in most of the nineteenth century, who regarded Chinese learning, of which Confucianism was the core, as the substance (*ti* 體) while Western learning was adopted for practical use (*yong* 用). Seeing Confucianism as fundamentally in opposition to modernity, conservative Confucians attempted to preserve Confucian virtues as the core of Chinese civilization. They failed badly in this "defensive modernization," which eventually led to Western-style modernization and embracing some scientific thinking and technology. In spite of strong voices calling for self-strengthening, the Manchu Qing rulers resisted changing the overall structure of governance until the beginning of the twentieth century. The revolution led by Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925), who saw it as his mission to overthrow the Qing dynasty, moved

17 Gary G. Hamilton, "Civilizations and Organization of Economies," in *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*, ed. N.J. Smelser and R. Swedberg (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 184.

definitively in the direction of republicanism while rejecting the backward-looking Confucian thinking. The closely bound relationship between Confucianism and the conservative political powers brought disaster to both.[18] The wave of the calls for "science and democracy," as the two symbols of modernization, was too powerful for Confucians to withstand, and Confucian infrastructure, ideological, social, and political, was rapidly wiped out, at least symbolically, in the New Culture movement of the 1920s.

With ups and downs to a limited extent, Confucianism continued to be regarded as a negative force that opposed the rising of a modern China until the 1980s and the 1990s, when Confucianism was brought to the fore by scholars as well as by some politicians. It was formally recognized as the core of Chinese culture and therefore as part of the revived Chinese civilization. This turn has accelerated in the twenty-first century, as a self-reflexive discourse (political, academic, or cultural) with increasing popular appeal in academic, literary, and educational arenas and as supplementing the current political ideology to provide legitimacy for governance. Debates are conducted over the living or dead elements of the Confucian ethics in order to revive the excellent Chinese culture in China, which has undergone substantial modernization. What is good or excellent and what is bad or outdated within Confucianism are carefully examined from different perspectives, concerning how tradition can be used instrumentally to remedy the deficiencies of modernity, modernization, and globalization.

Changing Values in Contemporary China

Contemporary China is complicated by radical modernizers and stubborn traditionalists: it is forced to modernize but, at the same time, the grip of tradition never fades away. "China is a profoundly modern society, but the way in which its modernity has been manifested is indelibly shaped by the legacy of its premodern (a term preferable to 'traditional') past."[19] By failing to see this, revolutionaries and conservatives tend to separate tradition and modernity, going to diametrically opposite directions when determining which course it should follow. This explains most of the difficulties that China has experienced thus far.

18 Xinzhong Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 246-249.

19 Mitter, *Modern China*, 12.

To address these difficulties, we must see tradition and modernity as a continuum, not as two unrelated or opposing cultural powers. In fact, good progress has recently been made in ethical fields, demonstrating that tradition and modernity are joining forces to shape the new moral landscape of Chinese life. As China is rapidly globalized, Chinese values are predictably changing. However, we must not interpret these changes as a total departure from tradition or as a total negation of the modern spirit. Instead, they reflect the influence of both tradition and modernization. Traditional values are changed in the reinterpreted modernity, and modern values are modified in the renewed tradition. A new hybrid of tradition and modernity is taking shape. In his article, Guy Faure examines twelve main areas of changes in values that he believes have taken place in contemporary China.[20] All of them comprise legacies of the traditional, in which we see a mixture of "older" traditional influences, such as Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, and "newer" traditional sources, such as Marxist and Maoist leftism, and "modern" values. Inspired by his work, I have constructed a table of changing values to show how modern life continues to be under the sway of Confucian tradition as well as modernity (see Table 1).

While these changes draw both on tradition and modernity, it seems apparent that changing values are prompted more by a desire to return to tradition than by a longing for more modernity. What the table shows is that most changes in values already have roots in Confucian traditions. This further strengthens the belief that there is no intrinsic contradiction between Confucian ethics and modernization. In the new wave of looking back at traditional resources to reshape the core values of contemporary China, Confucius has once more become the symbol of "being Chinese," as portrayed in many popular media presentations, helpful for solving anomies that accumulated in the past thirty years or so. Confucius is seen not only as the living model of Chinese culture but also as the "modern" manifestation of one of the oldest civilizations. He is recognized as a forerunner of cultural reconstruction as he identified what was traditional, evaluated it, and made arguments for its restoration. He is said to be able to bring comfort to people when they feel agony, tension, and anxiety; at the same time, he is believed to push forward China in the direction of modernization and globalization. Confucian ethics is thus successfully renewed as a modernity friendly tradition, serving all purposes in China as it changes.

20 Guy Olivier Faure, "Chinese Society and Its New Emerging Culture," *Journal of Contemporary China* 56, no. 17 (2008).

TABLE 1 *Changes in Chinese Values*

Values changing to	Values changing from	Informing traditional and modern values
Valuing an individual's self	collectivist mentality	Confucian moral self and modern individualism
Emphasizing materialistic importance	Anti-bourgeois & anti-materialist life styles	Confucian strives for affluent life and modern longing for lifting up living standard
Appreciating family relations and affection	A total subordination of the family to state	Confucian family virtues and modern efforts in reducing loneliness of individuals
Engaging business with social responsibilities	Ruthlessly pursuing profits at the expense of others and society	Confucian propagation of responsibility and modern restrict of egoism
Accepting differentiated equality	Absolute equality as social and political ideal	Confucian moral stratification and modern strive for opportunity and distributive equality
Pro-globalization attitudes and values	Total self-reliance	Confucian belief in grand commonwealth and modern global village

Among the reasons it is necessary for Confucianism to be revived or invented is that contemporary China needs Confucian ethics to fight against moral ills. Discourses on Confucian ethics are deeply concerned with the question of a perceived crisis of values, moral decline, or indifference to moral judgment in all strata, or with the creation of new values, to bring about a more equal world in which the gap between rich and poor decreases rather than increases. Some people tend to view modernity as the cause of rising individualism,

materialism, and moral indifference toward others and as the root of moral problems. However, this is only one side of the story. In the view of Yan Yunxiang, despite the emergence of collective immorality, we must also see the rise of philanthropy and collective responsibility.[21] This proves again that even when fighting moral ills, tradition and modernity cannot be totally separated.

Confucian Ethics for Sound Globalization

A revived Confucianism is being mobilized as the motivating force for constructing a new social, ethical, and political order. In the process, Confucianism is no longer the same tradition as it existed hundreds of years ago; although many people claim that they would go back to the original Confucianism, and some opt for a fundamentalist approach to Confucian teachings and practices, at least some Confucian values and virtues are being "modernized" or "remodernized" into something new and useful in life today,[22] as in the case of the Confucian unity of the individual-family-state as the foundation for peace, order, and harmony. The classical values of "self-cultivation, family regulation, ordering of the state, and bringing tranquility and order under heaven" elaborated in the *Great Learning* (*Daxue* 大學), have been elaborated as a new toolkit for facilitating the new world order. It has been argued that "remodernized" Confucian values can serve multiple purposes, not only for providing legitimacy for political activities and structures but also for creating new ethical norms and moral virtues. The revival of Confucian ethics is intended to bring people together, mediate the variations in economic, social, and cultural progress, and lead people to create a world community. Confucian ethics is therefore openly or discreetly incorporated into the educational curriculum in the name of learning traditional culture and educating students in traditional values. As an ethical tradition, Confucian virtues are believed to help in recreating social and moral networks that provide individuals and groups with a sense of security and belonging.

In reviving Confucianism, we must maintain the balance between tradition and modernity. Any attempt to embrace one while rejecting the other

21 Yunxiang Yan, "The Changing Moral Landscape," in *Deep China*: *The Moral Life of the Person, What Anthropology and Psychiatry Tell Us About China Today*, ed. Yunxiang Yan and Arthur Kleinman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

22 W.C.R. Chu and C.T. Cheng, "Cultural Convulsions: Examining the Chineseness of Cyber China," in *Online Society in China: Creating, Celebrating, and Instrumentalising the Online Carnival*, ed. David Herold (London: Taylor & Francis, 2011).

will surely bring about failure rather than success. What, then, can Confucian ethics contribute in the age of globalization? We answer this question from the following three perspectives. First, by bringing tradition and modernity together, Confucian ethics can serve the purpose of building up a sense of cultural continuity, by which a true type of modernization characteristic of traditionality is realized. As argued above, what is truly modern must first be traditional, not only in the sense that tradition is being transformed into the modern but also that the modern is modified to fit traditional expectations. Confucian ethics is the core value of the Chinese moral conscience. What Confucius calls "to know what is new by keeping fresh in his mind what he is already familiar with"[23] has prepared us for maintaining a continuing link between the past and the present and between tradition and modernity.

Second, Confucian ethics can cultivate true globalness by enhancing communication and exchange between nations and peoples through economic and commercial globalization. Although globalization is driven primarily by business cooperation and economic integration, globalization of cultures and values must follow. Revived Confucianism reminds us that the most important task of modernization and globalization is that through communication and exchange all peoples benefit from the conscientious pursuit of both diverse cultural expression and globally applicable norms and values. Various value surveys have told us that the success of globalization depends on whether we can rebuild the values of one culture into the values of another. To do this, we must not totally disregard specific cultural values; instead, we should preserve and transform Chinese "indigenous values," such as harmony in value orientations, a strong sense of responsibility, filial love for parents and grandparents, benevolence for others, and propriety in one's behavior. In the formation of the core values for the Chinese people in the age of globalization, Confucian ethics can act as the genetic structure of the people by which Chinese values will surely interact and combine with global values.

Third, Confucian ethics enables globalization to have a rich inner dimension. In the Confucian context, "human quality" is regarded as a force for realizing a modern society of the right order or for the creation of a harmonious modernity, rooted in collective memories of the past.[24] In this process, tradition and modernization are interlinked through a system of social controls

23 温故而知新. D.C. Lau, trans., *Confucius: The Analects* (*Lun yu*) (London: Penguin Books, 1979), 64.

24 Børge Bakken, *The Exemplary Society: Human Improvement, Social Control, and the Dangers of Modernity in China* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 1.

in which "tradition" is seen as serving transforming purposes and "modernization" as serving stability and order.[25] Global stability and order cannot be built up through external coercion. They must emerge from human awareness and sense of responsibility. Confucian ethics requires us to look at our inner selves and inserts a sense of moral responsibility into relationships between individuals, communities, and countries. It can be an important resource for counterbalancing the strong sense of individual rights, which is deeply rooted in Western modernity. The inner dimension of globalization, a proper rebalancing between rights and responsibilities, will, in the long run, determine whether we can have a stable globalization in economy, politics, education, and communication.

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25 Ibid., 4-5.

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Competing Paradigms in the Dialogue Among Civilizations: Core Values vs. Universal Values

Xie Wenyu
Translated by Colleen Howe

Abstract

The model of universal values and civilizational transformation, on the one hand, and the model of core values and self awareness, on the other, represent two fundamentally opposing paradigms of dialogue among civilizations. In practice, the former represents an attempt to present the core values of Western civilization as universal values and to demand that non-Western civilizations assimilate to these so-called universal values. Thus the promotion of universal values runs the risk of exacerbating intercivilizational conflict and preventing non-Western civilizations from achieving a deep understanding of the core values of their cultures, even concealing the shortcomings of their own value systems. The paradigm of core values and self awareness, by contrast, emphasizes the importance of retaining innate values and ethics, allowing civilizations to evaluate and update their own value systems as needed. We would therefore do well to adopt core values and self-awareness as the dominant model for dialogue among civilizations.

Keywords

core values – dialogue among civilizations – responsibility consciousness – universal values

Intercultural contact refers to the process of interactions initiated as soon as two different cultures come into contact with each other. This interaction comes in many different forms, ranging from violent conflict to mutual influence, unidirectional influence, and even cultural genocide. In a broad sense,

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these different forms of interaction can be termed dialogue among civilizations. This paper does not intend to address these interactions at an individual level. It is important to realize, however, that in recent centuries Western civilization has employed its scientific and technological prowess to effectively decrease the distance between civilizations, lending new significance to the outcomes of their interactions.

After the Cold War, it became popular to analyze dialogue among civilizations using the paradigm of universal values and civilizational transformation. Within the linguistic context of Western dominance, non-Western civilizations began, intentionally or otherwise, to accept certain presuppositions as fact: namely, that the world's civilizations should develop along a common path and that universal values should be the guiding principles of that path. This would necessitate the voluntary transformation of non-Western civilizations according to the specifications of universal values. Failing this, Western civilizations must realize the transformation through forcible intervention. This remains the dominant paradigm of dialogue among civilizations, which raises the question: how does this paradigm affect dialogue among civilizations?

This paper aims to trace the history of the universal values paradigm as well as the more problematic aspects of the paradigm that have come to light in recent years. It proposes a new paradigm for intercultural dialogue: that of core values and self awareness. It argues that the driving force behind the emergence and maturation of a civilization is its specific consciousness of responsibility. Differing conceptions of responsibility consciousness are the root cause of value differences, and so to destroy the core values of a civilization is to destroy its responsibility consciousness and, in doing so, destroy the civilization itself. Therefore, the crucial mandate for dialogue is that civilizations understand their own core values, work to achieve a more objective understanding of their civilization, and continually engage in self-evaluation and self-improvement.

Origin of the Concept of Universal Values

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked the end of an era-long standoff between communism and capitalism, called the Cold War. After that, the United States filled the vacuum of power to become the world's only superpower, and Western civilization and values then became the dominant, if not uncontested, worldview. This particular view of the history of the past two decades, however, was written by the victors. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia faced an existential crisis. Rather than accepting responsibility

for the collapse, it distanced itself from the recent history of the Soviet Union. Western commentators, however, analyzed the victory of the West ad nauseum. Through their writings, the triumph of Western culture became the triumph of universal values, and the benefits of promoting universal values throughout the world became a consensus.

The term "universal values" began to be used after World War II and gained in prominence after the end of the Cold War. It became, and remains, one of the core tenets of Western-dominated international relations theory. For many non-Western cultures, the process of engaging with universal values proved to be an opportunity for soul searching and identifying erroneous perceptions. But the theory of universal values requires not just reform but political transformation, and therefore it has the potential to destabilize countries and jeopardize peaceful international relations. In this light, it is important to examine the origins, evolution, and shortcomings of the theory of universal values in order to better understand its role in modern international relations as well as the inconsistencies that have arisen from its application.

The evolution of universal values began with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on December 10, 1948. The atrocities of World War II exposed a lack of regard for basic human rights, and it fell to the newly formed United Nations to establish the existence of and provide safeguards for the most basic human rights. The declaration consisted of thirty articles, each of which relates, either directly or indirectly, to the right to life. The document makes no mention of universal values, but the basic rights it mentions have been interpreted as having universal relevance.

Articles with particular relevance to modern international relations are:

Article 1: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act toward one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2: Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person.

Article 13: Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 17: Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18: Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship, and observance.

Article 19: Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20: Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

The document uses language such as "everyone" and "all people" to make clear that these are universal values that apply to any person living in any nation. It is understandable, then, that some Chinese translations inadvertently refer to the document as the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" rather than its official Chinese translation, the "World Declaration of Human Rights." In 1966, the United Nations adopted two additional documents relating to human rights: the Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In 1976, these three documents were combined into the International Human Rights Law, intended to serve as a foundation for the United Nations' position on human rights as well as a requirement for all member states.

The Chinese government was not involved in the drafting of these documents, as China became a permanent member of the Security Council only in 1971. In 1980, the Chinese government signed the International Human Rights Law. The law, however, is not binding within China's borders. In fact, from a legal standpoint, the International Human Rights Law is a political rather than a legal framework. Because there is no authority responsible for its explanation and interpretation, it cannot be implemented as law. Several countries have adopted the International Human Rights Law within their domestic legal framework, but this requires relying on the domestic legal system rather than the United Nations for interpretation. In all other countries, the law serves solely as a directive since the United Nations has no enforcement authority.

However, the collapse of the Soviet Union served as ideological reinforcement for the Western world, which soon came to be viewed as the interpreting authority of the International Human Rights Law. In Western political science, democratic elections, freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and so on are basic human rights and are considered universal values. Consequently, in countries that are unable to design their political systems according to their recommendations, Western countries use their significant economic, cultural, and military power to force political change. Under the pressure of these ideological influences, dialogue among civilizations has become extremely unidimensional: it now consists largely of the promotion

of universal values and the efforts of Western countries to move toward the ideal of a stateless world. Having considered this, Columbia University historian Samuel Moyn writes: "The phrase [human rights] implies an agenda for improving the world, and bringing about a new one in which the dignity of each individual will enjoy secure international protection. . . . Human rights in this sense have come to define the most elevated aspiration of both social movements and political entities—state and interstate, they evoke hope and provoke actions."[1]

I refer to this model of intercultural dialogue as one of "universal values and civilizational transformation."

Rights and Responsibilities

Enjoying human rights is a prerequisite for decision-making and, thus, for survival. But survival does not refer simply to an isolated individual at a particular moment but, rather, to that person's continued survival in a community. Therefore, existence naturally also implies responsibility: decision-making entails assuming responsibility for one's own future and the future of other community members. It follows that decisions are made within the context of a specific responsibility consciousness. The rights consciousness that give rise to universal values, then, is only one manifestation of responsibility consciousness. To look at it another way: assume, for example, that some "rights" are irrelevant to a person's existence—that is, a person will not exercise them even if he or she possesses them. For example, freedom of movement is immaterial for someone who does not wish to move. If we believe that such rights that lie outside the day-to-day consciousness of some citizens are universal rights, then we have the responsibility to publicize them to ensure that those who lack rights consciousness are made aware of their rights. It follows that rights are the formal expression of responsibility consciousness. Put another way, the basic prerequisite for survival is the right to make decisions, and such rights exist within the context of a specific responsibility consciousness.[2]

1 Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 1.

2 More discussion about the relationship between right-consciousness and responsibility consciousness can be found in Xie Wenyu, "Zi you yu ze ren: yi zhong zheng zhi zhe xue de fen xi 自由與責任：一種政治哲學的分析 [Liberty and Duty: An Analysis by Political Philosophy]," *Journal of Zhejiang University* 浙江大學學報, no. 1 (2010).

Western society's predilection for human rights is, likewise, a product of its responsibility consciousness. Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights reads: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act toward one another in a spirit of brotherhood." Clearly, reason, consciousness, and brotherhood are not rights but, rather, forms of responsibility consciousness. In what sense can we say that a person is rational and conscientious? Consider a person who enjoys committing murder. If that person formulates a plan to commit murder, can we call this a rational act? Is the spirit of brotherhood innate, or must it be taught? How do we determine whether someone has acted in a spirit of brotherhood? Different understandings of responsibility consciousness will invariably lead to different interpretations of these questions.

Historically, the differences between civilizations have originated from differences in their respective conceptions of responsibility consciousness. Understanding the innate responsibility consciousness of a civilization is a complicated task, involving an understanding of the lived environment, oral culture, and numerous other factors. In many cases, a civilization's responsibility consciousness is borne out of a random or insignificant element. For example, a mother who has twins might arbitrarily, regardless of their actual birth order, designate one as the older twin and one as the younger twin. Even this small decision can lead to their different understandings of responsibility consciousness and different life paths. The emergence of an innate responsibility consciousness of a culture occurs in a similarly subtle way. As responsibility consciousness emerges, people begin, consciously or unconsciously, to take it as a guiding principle, using it to understand the world around them, make decisions, engage in social relations, and plan their future lives. For people, having different conceptions of responsibility consciousness lead to different modes of existence, while for civilizations it leads to different cultural personalities and different modes of development. Weighty though it is, responsibility consciousness is also fluid: it can become a basis for decision-making only insofar as it is formalized through a value system. A civilization expresses its responsibility consciousness through multiple facets of community life: its virtues, its rules, its heroes, and its desires. We will call those values through which the responsibility consciousness of a culture is manifested core values. Conflicts between civilizations are typically expressed in terms of these core values. While conflicts involving secondary values can be solved through negotiation, conflicts involving the core interests or values of a country often prove irreconcilable.

Any decisions that we make as human beings in society are inevitably influenced by our civilization's core values, which in turn are the product of

a specific responsibility consciousness. Members of a civilization inevitably conform to its basic responsibility consciousness. We are unable to question the legitimacy of our civilization's responsibility consciousness, since this consciousness itself is the basis of that legitimacy. This leads us to two conclusions. The first is that the development of an isolated civilization is driven entirely by its responsibility consciousness. Such a culture, however, has no basis with which to evaluate this consciousness, because it is the sole means of viewing the world; a closed society is unable to recognize its own perception errors. The second is that it is important to recognize that altering or destroying the responsibility consciousness of a civilization amounts to no less than destroying the civilization.

In sum, we believe that emphasizing the fundamental importance of responsibility consciousness and core values is key to our pursuit of a model of dialogue among civilizations.

In Pursuit of a Model of Dialogue Among Civilizations

In today's world, globalization is rapidly breaking down economic barriers, resulting in more opportunities for direct contact between countries. Now, isolated cultures are few and far between. As contact between countries grows deeper, it is inevitable that conflicts will erupt over core values. Ensuring that countries reap the benefits of interaction while avoiding such conflicts is the basis of international relations.

The Western intellectual world became aware of this issue early on and hoped that models of dialogue among civilizations could offer a solution. But Western thinkers have been unable to cast off the Eurocentric narrative of universal values and civilizational transformation, and their models have fallen short of explaining dialogue among civilizations. Examples include John Hick's (1922-2012) theory of religious pluralism and interreligious dialogue, the Second Axial Age theory of cross-cultural dialogue, and Samuel Huntington's theory of the clash of civilizations—all of which demonstrate the difficulties inherent in reconciling the theory and practice of universal values and civilizational transformation.

In the 1970s, Hicks put forth a theory of religious pluralism, which can be extended to dialogue among civilizations. He argued that all religions appeal to a claim of possessing the ultimate reality (the Real). These competing claims lead to the problem of discerning who actually possesses the ultimate reality. In the end, strong civilizations come to believe that the oppression of weaker civilizations justifies their claim to possessing the ultimate reality, even in the

absence of concrete evidence. But Hicks believed that it was impossible for a single religion to have a monopoly on truth; rather, each possesses an element of truth. If the world's religions fully understood this, they could put aside their arrogance and begin to learn from one another. Only when religions put aside their posturing and recognize that the truth claims of all faiths are equally valid will they be able to successfully engage in dialogue, he believed. Hicks, a theologian, hoped that the banner of religious pluralism could open a channel for interreligious dialogue.[3] His hopes, however, proved empty. The theory of dialogue among civilizations tells us that every civilization has core demands to which it will steadfastly hold, lest it abandon its innate responsibility consciousness. The situation is even bleaker from the perspective of weak civilizations, which experience relatively more pressure to conform to the demands of pluralism. This requires that weak civilizations abandon their core demands, which is tantamount to ordering their destruction.

Conscious of the shortcomings of pluralism, Western thinkers including Ewert Cousins, Raimon Panikkar, and Paul F. Knitter put forth a revised version of pluralism known as the Second Axial Age.[4] In order to affirm the equality of all religions, the requirement that religions alter their core demands is replaced with the requirement that all religions seek the ultimate truth. The Second Axial Age emphasizes a global consciousness and common interests and encourages different religions (or cultures or civilizations) to avoid war and conflict and engage in peaceful dialogue. In order to achieve this goal, some people must adhere to multiple religions. For example, Panikkar is simultaneously a Catholic priest, a Hindu guru, a Buddhist monk, and a secularist. In this way, he is able to gain intimate knowledge of a number of different religions. Of course, this may not be realistic for the majority of the world's believers, who often are limited to the confines of a single religion (or culture or civilization). Therefore, the Second Axial Age is a utopian construction with little bearing on the daily realities of most of the world's population.

In 1993, Harvard professor Samuel P. Huntington (1927-2008) published his now-infamous thesis "The Clash of Civilizations?" in *Foreign Affairs*.[5]

3 Cf. John Hick, *God and the Universe of Faiths* (Oxford: One World Publications, 1973); idem, *Dialogues in the Philosophy of Religion* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

4 Cf. Paul F. Knitter, *One Earth, Many Religions: Multifaith Dialogue and Global Responsibilities* (New York: Orbis Books, 1995).

5 Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* (Summer 1993). The theme of the article was later expanded into a book: Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

Huntington was aware of the negative aspects of the theory of universal values and civilization transformation. The thesis of chapter 4 in his book was that "the West's universalist pretensions increasingly bring it into conflict with other civilizations, most seriously with Islam and China." In chapter 5, he argued that "the survival of the West depends on Americans affirming their Western identity and Westerners accepting their civilization as unique, not universal, and uniting to renew and preserve it against challenges from non-Western societies. Avoidance of a global war of civilizations depends on world leaders accepting and cooperating to maintain the multi-cultural character of global politics."[6]

As Huntington wrote these words, the theory of self-awareness had already begun to take root: it was a time of crisis for universal values. Huntington, however, believed that the downfall of the West was in its tendency to be overly antagonistic. This, he argued, was what had caused such negative reactions from non-Western civilizations. It was not the theory of universal values that he took issue with but, rather, its execution. In chapter 12, he writes, "Western universalism is dangerous to the world because it could lead to a major intercivilizational war between core states and it is dangerous to the West because it could lead to defeat of the West."[7] Huntington believed that the West had to win the clash of civilizations by asserting its own exceptionalism rather than the universality of its values; this was the only way that it could enjoy continued dominance.

As previously mentioned, every civilization develops in the context of an innate responsibility consciousness in which the chief principle is that of survival. When civilizations engage in dialogue, each civilization has only its own worldview with which to judge others. Value judgments and rational judgments alike have universalist and egocentric tendencies, and it is impossible to discuss dialogue among civilizations without acknowledging these tendencies. Ignoring these tendencies—if it stems from an ulterior motive, as in the case of Huntington's Western exceptionalism—is tantamount to abandoning one's innate responsibility consciousness and, indeed, the existence of one's own civilization.

Again, an innate responsibility consciousness can be born out of even the most subtle elements. In the above-mentioned example of twin siblings, their seniority (despite actual birth order) might be decided by a whim of the mother, yet cause them to follow two completely different paths. Likewise,

6 See Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations.*

7 Ibid.

a civilization's responsibility consciousness can spring from a chance element. Every civilization is built on the foundation of a certain responsibility consciousness, so that different understandings of responsibility consciousness will lead to different values, different worldviews, and, eventually, different means of perceiving reality. Operating under the restrictions of responsibility consciousness means that every civilization will have perception errors. For example, if a given issue is judged to be completely insignificant in the context of one responsibility consciousness but crucially important in another, perception errors will be exposed. If the two civilizations view each other with hostility and a lack of trust, the resulting tensions could lead to violent conflict. If there is mutual trust, however, the revealing of perception errors can be seen in a positive light, resulting in a mutual widening of perspectives.

Basic Principles of Dialogue Among Civilizations

Analyzing dialogue among civilizations, then, has two key elements: innate responsibility consciousness and perception errors. In an ideal world, furthermore, relations between civilizations would be based on a foundation of mutual trust. Any civilization exhibits certain universalist tendencies, but with this foundation of mutual trust, civilizations will be made aware of their own perception errors and will be compelled to further develop their own responsibility consciousnesses, leading to a mutual widening of perspectives and cultural renewal. Weak civilizations will need to reflect on and gain a deep understanding of their own responsibility consciousness in order to correct perception errors. Strong civilizations must do the same: only in an atmosphere of mutual trust can civilizations maintain close relations while staying true to their core values. We call this type of dialogue among civilizations the "core values and self-awareness" model. In this model, civilizational self-awareness is envisioned as a tool for dealing with the clash of civilizations by building a platform for dialogue, emphasizing equality, alerting one another to perception errors, and encouraging civilizations to gain a deep understanding of their core values, leading to peaceful coexistence and harmony without uniformity.

The core values and self-awareness paradigm and the concept of harmony without uniformity are steeped in Chinese intellectual tradition. The *Book of Rites* (*Li Ji*) says the following: "Ten thousand plants can grow together without harming one another. Following parallel paths is not contradictory. Small acts of virtue are like a forked river, flowing without end. Large acts of virtue are like deep roots and luxurious foliage, with no discernible beginning or end. This is

the reason of heaven and earth."[8] Every civilization is a "plant," growing within its own responsibility consciousness, but plants can "grow together without harming one another." Every civilization follows its own path, but "following parallel paths is not contradictory." This philosophy is the only means to peaceful coexistence. To universalists, the core values and self-awareness paradigm may be too conservative, but it is the only truly feasible model for dialogue among civilizations.

The core values and self-awareness paradigm has five main principles. First, we must respect the equality and the voice of all civilizations. Often the perspectives, concerns, cognitive styles, and social and behavioral norms of other civilizations are utterly strange to us, and this strangeness can lead to discomfort and a rejection of the opposing perspective. This discomfort, however, does not have to be negative. The impulse to impose our own ideals upon others is natural and can be a motivation for dialogue. But however well-intentioned this desire, it will only lead to conflict unless it is carried out with the other's consent.

Second, it is imperative that all civilizations gain a deep understanding of their own core values and work to further develop these values. To simply ignore or obliterate the differences between civilizations would be destructive for weak civilizations. It is important to remember that the perspective of every civilization is limited and that dialogue among civilizations presents an opportunity for engaging in self-reflection and moving beyond these limits. This can be a source of tension and even institutional collapse, but it will never destroy the core values of a civilization. Instead, institutional collapse functions as an impetus for reorganization, leading to continued growth and development.

Third, civilizations should follow a policy of noninterventionism by allowing other states to implement the political systems to which they are most suited. Only those individuals belonging to a particular civilization are fully able to grasp its innate responsibility consciousness. Of course, diverse individuals will have diverse and even mutually contradictory interpretations. In the end, whose interpretation is the correct one? Only the civilization itself can answer this question. Outside observers, equipped as they may be to offer an objective perspective, are not in a position to make decisions on behalf of others. Strong civilizations often take advantage of the universal values and civilizational transformation paradigm to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries,

8 Lv Youren, ed., Zheng Xuan, and Kong Yingda, *Liji zheng yi* (*The Orthodox Interpretation of Book of Rites*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 2008), 2043.

but long experience has shown that such interference is at best ineffective in promoting dialogue and, at worst, destructive to weak civilizations. Instead, a country's political structure should emerge organically from its responsibility consciousness. Noninterventionism should be the most fundamental principle of dialogue among civilizations.

The fourth consideration is related to the rise of economic globalization. Countries interact for many reasons: geographic proximity, trade, cultural, or intellectual exchange, and so forth. For most of human history, geographic distance formed a significant barrier to these types of interaction. In the past few decades, however, rapid advances in transportation technology have dramatically decreased the distance between countries. Economic ties have already reached a point of mutual interdependence. Now that we depend on other countries for the most basic necessities of life, cutting off ties would be incompatible with our own interests. This, then, is the essential driving force behind dialogue among civilizations, and it requires a deeper level of mutual understanding than ever previously sought or achieved.

Fifth, dialogue among civilizations can be a platform for interreligious dialogue. The yearning for higher understanding is an intrinsic part of human nature, and religion is an expression of this desire. It is not a practical desire but, rather, a transcendental one. However, different expressions of this desire are the basis for many of the differences in lifestyles among the world's civilizations. Religion, then, is not solely an abstract concern; rather, it has a direct bearing on people's lives. Therefore we must proceed with the utmost caution in order to ensure that we respect religious sentiment in all its forms while building a platform for interreligious dialogue.

These five principles are mere guidelines. Implementing the paradigm of core values and self-awareness requires further discussion, cooperation, and exchange. But what is already clear is that replacing the unrealistic paradigm of universal values with the paradigm of core values will benefit the future development of all the world's civilizations.

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A Comparison of Filial Piety in Ancient Judaism and Early Confucianism

Fu Youde and Wang Qiangwei
Translated by Noah Lipkowitz

Abstract

Filial piety is one of the most comparable ethical elements in the Jewish and Confucian traditions, both of which possess a clear overall ethical orientation. Ancient Judaism and early Confucianism advocate extremely similar expressions of filial piety, such as providing for and respecting one's parents, inheriting their legacy, properly burying and mourning them, and tactful remonstration of elders. However, ancient Judaism and early Confucianism differ on the degree to which one should be filial, the scope of filial piety, and its status within each respective ethical system. Confucianism advocates a more comprehensive and nuanced version of respect for parents than Judaism, while both systems hold distinctive views regarding the extent and scope of filial piety. Both traditions advocate similar kinds of filial piety primarily because they are based on bonds of familial affection and gratitude, and their differences are cultural in nature. Two such decisive cultural factors are Judaism's theocentrism and Confucianism's humanism. Furthermore, the different social institutions and systems of governance brought about by these cultural differences account for the dissimilarities in Jewish and Confucian filial piety. The transcendent nature and emphasis on equality between individuals inherent in Judaism can play an informative role in the revival and reestablishment of Confucian ethics.

Keywords

Confucianism – filial piety – Judaism

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Professor Yu Yingshi recently pointed out that "comparing and contrasting China and the West has been an issue of great concern for Chinese scholars since the end of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911)" and that "the question that most interested [him] is how to understand the cultural similarities between China and the West through the lens of history."[1] Ancient Judaism—the Judaism of the Old Testament and the Talmud—is not merely part of Western culture but, rather, is one of its widely recognized roots. Due to certain historical factors, the Chinese and Jewish cultures developed in isolation from each other, and these two long-standing and magnificent cultures were barely aware of each other's existence for many centuries. This state of affairs continued until the end of the twentieth century with the introduction of certain Jewish scholarly works in China. In keeping with Yu's statements, we as scholars of Jewish studies feel a responsibility to clarify the similarities, differences, and origins of these two civilizations so as to illuminate what is common to both civilizations and what is unique to these two traditions. We must do this while introducing Jewish thought and culture and comparing it with our own, in particular, China's mainstream culture, Confucianism. Finally, we hope to draw on this foundation of knowledge to enrich our own values.

Early Confucian society, which was agricultural, and ancient Jewish society, which was both nomadic and agricultural, have more in common with each other than with the world's other civilizations and are thus more comparable. In particular, both cultures exhibit a strong ethical orientation, within which filial piety is a large area of common ground. In order to further the recognition and understanding of Jewish ethics within Chinese academia, and in light of modern China's need for social reform, especially where filial piety is concerned, this article conducts comparative research into the ethics of filial piety in ancient Judaism and early Confucianism.[2] We first observe the significance of filial piety and behavior in ancient Judaism and Confucianism through an examination of their texts to determine the "what." We compare and contrast both traditions and then clarify the familial, domestic, social, and government

1 Yu Yingshi 余英時, "Zhongguo wenhua yu ziyou minzhu bu shi jianrui duili 中國文化與自由民主不是尖銳對立 [Chinese Culture and Liberal Democracy Are Not Diametrically Opposed]," September 19, 2014, http://news.ifeng.com/a/20140919/42032257_0.shtml.

2 Here, "ancient Judaism" refers to biblical and rabbinical Judaism—that is, the Judaism embodied in the Old Testament and the Talmud. "Early Confucianism" refers roughly to the development of Confucian thought beginning during the Western Zhou Dynasty, through Confucius' life, and up to the beginning of the Han Dynasty. This primarily includes pre-Qin Dynasty Confucian classics, particularly the *Book of Filial Piety* and the filial ethics contained therein.

structures underlying these similarities and differences so as to determine the "why." Finally, we hope to use the foundation of our analysis to provide a Jewish perspective that can be of use to modern Confucian ethics, in particular to the revival and reestablishment of filial ethics.

Common Conceptions of Filial Piety

In Chinese, the character for "filial piety" (孝 *xiao*) is arranged from top to bottom. At the top is an abbreviated version of the character for "old" (老 *lao*), and at the bottom is the character for "child" (子 *zi*). The Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE) *Dictionary of Words and Expressions* (說文解字*Shuowen jiezi*) provides the following explanation: "Filial—one who is good to his parents. From the characters for 'old' and 'child.' The 'child' carries the 'old.'"[3] Bronze inscriptions from the Western Zhou Dynasty (1046-771 BCE) depict the character for filial piety as symbolizing the old and the young supporting each other. In ancient texts, the character for filial piety is often used in concert with the character for "offering" (享 *xiang*). Examples include the *Book of Changes* (周易 *Zhou yi*), which states: "The king will go to his temple, and there he will present offerings with the utmost filial piety"[4] and the *Book of Songs* (詩經 *Shijing*), in which is written "With joyful auspices and purifications, you bring the offerings."[5] It is clear that during the Shang (c.1600-1046 BCE) and Zhou Dynasties (1046-256 BCE), the character for filial piety often referred to ritual sacrifices to ancestors and spirits and consequently had a distinctly religious dimension. After the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BCE), Confucius and his disciples used this foundation to create a set of moral concepts and behavioral norms that revolved around filial duty. These norms would later become an important component of Confucian doctrine.

The fundamental concepts of Confucian filial piety are care and respect. "Care" refers mainly to material support. The *Book of Filial Piety* (孝經 *Xiaojing*) dictates that even if one is a commoner, one must still work hard and live frugally so that one can provide food, clothing, and shelter for one's parents.[6]

3 Xu Shen 許慎 and Duan Yucai 段玉裁, *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注 [*The Annotated Dictionary of Words and Expressions*] (Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1988), 173.

4 王假有廟，致孝享也.

5 吉蠲為饎，是用孝享.

6 用天之道，分地之利，謹身節用，以養父母。此庶人之孝也. Li Longji 李隆基 and Xing Bing 邢昺, *Xiaojing zhushu* 孝經注疏 [*Annotations of the Book of Filial Piety*] (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 2000), 19.

Providing material support for parents is the minimum standard for filial piety. However, Confucius believed that providing merely material support could not constitute genuine filial behavior. Rather, a more essential component of filial piety was respect (敬 *jing*), which for him encompassed respect, love, and reverence. In responding to a question regarding filial piety from one of his disciples, Ziyou, he once said, "Dogs and horses require care as well. Without respect, what is the difference [between caring for animals and parents]?"[7] Here, Confucius differentiates between the standard of care for people and animals. Furthering Confucius' view, Zengzi delineates three levels of filial behavior: "In filial piety, respect is paramount. Second is to not bring shame upon one's parents, followed by the ability to support them materially."[8] He believed that respecting one's parents was the highest level of filial behavior, while material provision remained the lowest. Thus, we find that "care" is the most basic form of filial behavior, while "respect" carries greater importance. If one were to provide for one's parents but lack the necessary disposition in doing so, then the level of one's filial behavior would descend to that of an animal.

Ancient Judaism likewise advocates filial piety in its religious texts. In the Old Testament, Judaism's most important text, God issues the commandment "Honor thy father and mother" in three different places.[9] Honoring one's father and mother is thus considered one of biblical Judaism's core commandments. The original text of the Old Testament uses two separate terms to refer to filial behavior. In the Ten Commandments, first seen in Exodus, the fifth commandment states, "Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God given thee."[10] In this section of the text, the Hebrew word for filial behavior is *kabed* (דִּבֵּכַ), which corresponds to the English word "honor."[11] In contrast, the related text in Leviticus, "Every one of you is to revere his father and mother, and you are to keep the Sabbath,"

7 至於犬馬，皆能有養。不敬，何以別乎. He Yan 何晏 and Xing Bing, *Lunyu zhushu* 論語注疏 [*Annotations of the Analects*] (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 2000), 18.

8 大孝尊親，其次不辱，其下能養. Wang Pinzhen 王聘珍, *Da dai liji jie gu* 大戴禮記解詁 [*Interpretation of Dai Senior's Book of Rites*] (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1983), 82.

9 These three iterations can be found successively in the Chinese and Complutensian Polyglot Bibles in Exodus 20:11, Leviticus 19:3, and Deuteronomy 5:15. In the Hebrew Bible, they can be found in Exodus 20:12, Leviticus 19:3, and Deuteronomy 5:16.

10 Exodus 20:11.

11 Deuteronomy 5:15 also states, "Honor your father and mother, as Yahweh your God has ordered you to, so that you will live long and have things go well with you in the land Yahweh your God has given you." This sentence is a reaffirmation of Moses' fifth commandment, and the Hebrew used here is again "דִּבֵּכַ."

employs the word *tirau* (תִּירָאוּ. root: ירא), which corresponds to the English "fear" or "revere."[12] It is evident that while the Old Testament uses different expressions to communicate the concept of filial piety, it places great emphasis on the emotion of respect.

In the post-biblical rabbinical text, the Talmud, one rabbi distinguishes honor from fear through concrete examples: "As for fear, I mean that a son may not stand where his father stands, sit where his father sits, contradict his father in speech, nor may he be on equal footing with his father. In contrast, honor means that a son must feed and clothe his father and assist him in leaving and coming home."[13] In this sense of the word, "fear" emphasizes emotions of reverence and respect, and "honor" refers primarily to the provision of material support. In his Mishnah Torah, Maimonides, the famous Jewish legal scholar of the Middle Ages, employed a similar lexicon to echo the views expressed by the rabbi above.[14] Thus we can see that the filial obligations expounded in rabbinical Judaism coincide largely with those of early Confucianism in that both traditions include the material and emotional duties of care and respect.

The reverence implied in the Jewish commandment of honoring one's parents is also an element of Confucian filial piety, which is embodied in the practice of "ritual" (禮 *li*). Chapter 1 of the Confucian classic the *Book of Rites* states that in a traditional Chinese house, certain areas are the exclusive domain of the father, and his children are not to set foot in these areas, lest they overstep their authority and disrespect their father.[15] This manner of respect is the same as that expressed in the above-mentioned rabbi's declaration that a child must not stand in his father's place nor sit in his seat. Chapter 12 of the *Book of Rites* also explicitly dictates standards of care that a son and his wife must maintain for both of their parents. Such care includes rising as soon as the chickens crow to clothe and brush their parents' hair. Moreover, parents' cousins are to be "treated only with respect," and it is forbidden for the younger

12 Leviticus 19:3.

13 Babylonian Talmud, Kiddushin, 31b. Unless otherwise specified, the version of the Babylonian Talmud referenced in this paper is *The Babylonian Talmud* (London: Soncino Press, 1935-48).

14 Moses Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Sefer Shoftim, Hilchot Marim 6:3; ibid., Eliyahu Touger, trans., *Mishneh Torah: A New Translation with Commentaries* (New York/Jerusalem: Moznaim, 2001), 376-378. Maimonides' Mishneh Torah comprises 14 books. Holchot Marim is the third chapter in Sefer Shoftim, the last book. This chapter discusses filial piety in the Bible.

15 人子者，居不主奥，坐不中席，行不中道，立不中門. Zheng Xuan 郑玄 and Kong Yingda 孔颖达，礼记正义 [*Notes and Commentaries on the Book of Rites*] (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 2000), 33.

generation to hiccup, cough, sneeze, yawn and stretch, spit, or shiver in their presence. Nor may the younger generation display any bias or look askance at their parents' cousins.[16] Thus, the image is formed of the dutiful son who walks with caution in the presence of his father.

In addition to caring for and respecting their parents, children are also expected to inherit and advance their parents' legacy. This is both an expression of filial piety and an inherent requirement. Confucian filial piety explicitly includes carrying on the affairs and beliefs of one's parents. Chapter 31 of the *Book of Rites* states that a son's filial sentiment should be expressed by his inheriting his father's ideals and aspirations.[17] A father and son should remain of one heart and one mind even after the father is deceased. The Confucian dictum "When the father is alive, watch the son's aspirations. When the father is deceased, watch the son's behavior. He can be deemed filial if he does not deviate from his father's way three years after his death"[18] is not only about remaining faithful to the "father's way," but even includes the obligation that the son take on his father's occupation and "not change his father's ministers, nor his father's mode of government."[19] In the Song Dynasty (960-1279), the Confucian scholar Zhu Xi demonstrated how one should carry on the affairs and beliefs of one's parents with an example: "The Duke of Zhou honored his ancestors by perfecting the virtue of King Wen and King Wu. This is what it means to carry on the legacy of one's predecessors."[20] Judaism expresses a similar conception of continuing the legacy of one's predecessors. One rabbi writes that a father "must be respected in life and in death." For example, while a father is alive, if a son goes somewhere at the behest of his father, he must say he has come because of his father. After his father is deceased, a son must say "my father, my teacher" when referring to his father. A son must regard his father as a teacher both because he has benefited from his personal instruction and because after his father's death, he is the heir and vessel of his father's teachings.[21]

As an ethical sentiment, filial piety transcends the limitations of time and even mortality. In both Confucianism and Judaism, filial obligations remain

16 Ibid., 973.

17 夫孝，善繼人之志，善述人之事者也.

18 父在，觀其志。父沒，觀其行。三年無改於父之道，可謂孝矣. He and Xing, *Annotations of the Analects*, 11, 57.

19 不改父之臣與父之政. Ibid., 296.

20 周公成文、武之德以追崇其先祖，此繼志述事之大者也. Zhu Xi 朱熹, *Si shu zhangju jizhu* 四書章句集注 [*Collected Commentaries on the Four Books*] (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983), 27.

21 Babylonian Talmud, Kiddushin 31b; Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Mamrim 6:4-5, 378.

constant whether parents are living or dead. Confucius once said that "a filial child must honor his parents with the proper ritual and treatment whether they are alive or dead. Only in this way can he remain filial."[22] The *Doctrine of the Mean* (中庸 *Zhongyong*) states, "When they are alive, serve them according to ritual propriety; when they are dead, bury them according to ritual propriety and sacrifice to them according to ritual propriety. This is the ultimate expression of filial behavior."[23] The *Book of Filial Piety* tells us that "the love and reverence of parents when alive, and the grief and sorrow following their death—these are the duties of the living. Having carried out this righteous conduct during his parents' life and death, a filial son has fulfilled his duty to his parents."[24] Judaism also advocates honoring parents after their death. For example, whether he is alive or dead, children may never directly call out their father's name.[25] Judaism requires eleven months of mourning for parents, after which a son says to his deceased father, "I wish you life in the next world."[26] This bears great similarity to Confucian practice. It is evident that both traditions place great value on funeral rites and perpetuating the will of the deceased.

Although Confucianism dictates that a child must obey, respect, and revere his parents, this does not mean a child must unconditionally accept his father's mistakes. In fact, while Confucianism emphasizes obedience, concession, and deference to parents, it also has a tradition of being critical of one's superiors. This "critical" aspect may be considered another important kind of filial behavior alongside care, respect, inheriting one's parents' legacy, and seeing to their funeral rites. In the *Analects*, Confucius advises children to "Remonstrate with parents gently."[27] Zengzi likewise instructs that the gentleman should "criticize according to what is right."[28] This notion is given further weight in *Xunzi*, where it is written, "Follow the Way and not the ruler. Follow what is just and not the father."[29] Here Xunzi contrasts "the Way" and what is "just" with the will of a ruler or father, thereby making moral rationality the utmost

22 生，事之以禮。死，葬之以禮，祭之以禮. He and Xing, *Annotations of the Analects*, 17.

23 事死如事生，事亡如事存，孝之至也. Zheng and Kong, *Notes and Commentaries of the Book of Rites*, 1681.

24 生事愛敬，死事哀慼，生民之本盡矣，死生之義備矣，孝子之事親終矣. Li and Xing, *Annotations of the Book of Filial Piety*, 72.

25 Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Mamrim 6:3, 376.

26 Ibid., 6:5, 378.

27 事父母幾諫. He and Xing, *Annotations of the Analects*, 56.

28 以正致諫.Wang, *Interpretation of Dai Senior's Book of Rites*, 80.

29 從道不從君，從義不從父. Wang Xianqian 王先謙, *Xunzi jijie* 荀子集解 [*Collected Interpretations of Xunzi*] (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 1986), 347.

expression of filial piety. The *Book of Filial Piety* addresses the true meaning of correcting one's superiors: if one is aware that his father is guilty of "unjust" conduct and blindly follows him despite such awareness, this is no longer filial behavior.[30] However, Confucianism holds a harmonious relationship between father and son in the highest esteem, and so when a son does criticize his father, he must do so appropriately, taking care to remain respectful. This was Confucius' intention when he said, "Heed but do not follow. Respect but do not transgress."[31] Zengzi advocated that a child "remonstrate but not contradict" the errors of a parent.[32] The *Book of Rites* further explains how one should act in this manner of circumstance: "When a son is critical of his parents, he must adopt a respectful tone and gentle diction. If his parents do not listen to him, a son should remain respectful as ever and wait until they are in high spirits or there is a suitable moment before broaching the subject again."[33] Because the rationale behind remonstrating a parent is helping that parent avert an injustice, such criticism may still be considered filial behavior.

Rabbinical Judaism resolves this issue in a manner similar to Confucianism. If a son discovers that his father's behavior violates any holy law, he is supposed to correct his father in a timely fashion. Even so, the son must remain tactful in his reproach. Here, Maimonides provides a practical example: "When one discovers that his father has violated a law, he cannot say 'Father, you have violated the Torah's laws.' Rather, he should say, 'Father! Is it not written that we should act in such and such a way?' as if he were asking a question and not admonishing him."[34] In this way, the son can uphold the sanctity of the law and, at the same time, maintain his father's dignity through skillful means. This is also a flexible kind of filial piety.

In summary, Confucianism and Judaism have a great deal of common ground when it comes to the basic content of filial piety. Where Confucianism tells us to respect our parents, Judaism has a corresponding commandment. Confucianism's most basic form of filial behavior comprises material care, respect, and reverence, and Judaism advocates the same. Confucian filial piety

30 父有諍子，則身不陷於不義，故當不義，則子不可以不爭於父，. . . 故當不義則爭之. Li and Xing, *Annotations of the Book of Filial Piety*, 57.

31 見志不從，又敬不違. He and Xing, *Annotations of the Analects*, 56.

32 諫而不逆. Wang, *Interpretation of Dai Senior's Book of Rites*, 84; Zheng and Kong, *Notes and Commentaries of the Book of Rites*, 1556.

33 父母有過，下氣怡色，柔聲以諫。諫若不入，起敬起孝，說則復諫。不說，與其得罪於鄉黨州閭，寧孰諫. Zheng and Kong, *Notes and Commentaries of the Book of Rites*, 976-977.

34 Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Mamrim 6:11, 380-382.

includes inheriting and carrying out the legacy of one's father and forefathers, and Judaism imposes similar requirements. Confucian filial piety emphasizes respect for parents in both life and death, and Judaism largely does the same. Finally, Confucianism and Judaism both promote tactful criticism of parents when they transgress. Consequently, ancient Judaism and early Confucianism may be said to have sets of filial ethics that are identical or at least fundamentally in agreement.

Differing Versions of Filial Piety

If we conduct a more detailed analysis of Jewish and Confucian filial piety, we find that they do, in fact, diverge. These traditions differ in three main respects: the degree of filial behavior, the extent and scope of such behavior, and the relative status of filial piety within each society, which differs widely between the two cultures.

The difference in degree of filial behavior required is evident first in the nature of the care accorded to parents. Confucian filial piety necessitates not only material care but also that children please their parents with their behavior. When Zixia asked Confucius about filial piety, Confucius replied, "The difficulty lies with one's countenance." (色難) He continued, "For the young to handle the affairs of the old, and when there is food and drink, for them to serve their elders first. Is *this* filial?"[35] In Confucianism, although the young doing labor for the old or serving them food and drink may be filial expressions, they do not constitute authentic filial piety. True filial behavior, which is more difficult, requires that parents always be treated with an amiable demeanor so as to maintain their own positive disposition. The *Book of Rites* mandates: "When a filial son cares for his parents, he delights their hearts and does not go against their will. He delights their ears and eyes and makes it so that they may sleep peacefully. He serves them faithfully with his own food and drink."[36] Thus, in Confucianism, "care" is not limited to providing food and clothing but, rather, includes ensuring one's parents' peace of mind.

In comparison, although the Old Testament also says to "Make your father and mother glad. Let those who gave birth to you rejoice," this kind of guidance

35 有事，弟子服其勞；有酒食，先生饌，曾是以為孝乎. He and Xing, *Annotations of the Analects*, 19.

36 孝子之養老也。樂其心，不違其志，樂其耳目，安其寢處，以其飲食忠養之. Zheng and Kong, *Notes and Commentaries of the Book of Rites*, 995.

is rare.[37] Moreover, there is no concrete guidance regarding how to please one's parents while serving them. The Talmud discusses the degree to which one must respect one's parents in several places, including the following story. There was once a filial son named Dama, son of Nethinah, who had the opportunity to earn 600,000 gold coins as a merchant. However, because the key he needed to do so was stored beneath his sleeping father's pillow, he did not disturb his father's rest. Another rabbi wrote the story with a prize of 800,000 gold coins with the same outcome. Yet another rabbi commented that this Dama once sat among Roman aristocrats and adorned himself with gold-embroidered silk robes. During this time, his mother arrived, tore his robes, beat him on the head, and spit in his face. Yet Dama never lost his temper and did not embarrass his mother.[38] Another story speaks of a very filial rabbi named Tarfon. Whenever his mother went to bed, he would kneel so that she could use him as a stepstool. Because of this, Tarfon would boast at school of his filial behavior. However, his peers admonished him, saying, "This does not even constitute half-filial behavior! True filial piety is when your mother throws a bulging coin purse into the sea and you do not blame her for any wrongdoing. Could you do this?"[39] These stories demonstrate that, from a Jewish perspective, reverence for one's parents cannot be measured in gold. Filial behavior is more valuable than money. At the same time, we can see that while Judaism regards respect and reverence for parents as more important than one's individual material and emotional comforts, its discussion of filial behavior stops at the point of comparing material benefits. This falls short of the Confucian standard of "delighting" parents.

Confucianism and Judaism also exhibit different degrees of mourning and remembering deceased parents. Confucianism places tremendous emphasis on death through its emphasis on required attitudes and behaviors surrounding the death of a parent and its aftermath. In order to emphasize the importance of according parents a proper funeral, the *Mencius* instructs that "Supporting one's parents while they are alive is not enough to be considered a grand affair. Only performing the proper rites when they die can constitute a grand affair."[40] What, then, constitutes a proper funeral? According to the *Book of Filial Piety*, when a parent dies, the children must weep bitterly and loudly in a way that is unpleasant to the ears. They must lie prostrate while crying,

37 Proverbs 23:25.

38 Babylonian Talmud, Kiddushin 30a.

39 Ibid., 31b.

40 養生者不足以當大事，唯送死可以當大事. Zhao Qi 趙岐 and Sun Shi 孫奭, *Mengzi zhushu* 孟子注疏 [*Annotations of Mencius*] (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 2000), 260.

and when they speak, their speech must be simple and austere. They may only wear mourning clothes and must remain unmoved by music. When they eat, it must be as if their food has no taste.[41] In other words, one's sorrow must come from within and be made manifest in one's grieving.

The *Book of Filial Piety* also clearly regulates funeral rites. The deceased must be given a shroud and placed within two coffins, an inner one and an outer one, and sacrifices must be made before their memorial tablet. Mourners must wail uncontrollably and sorrowfully send off the dead. Burial sites must be chosen via divination. Even after the funeral, relatives must "Prepare the temple and offerings for them to enjoy."[42] This is a memorial ceremony that consists of placing a tablet inscribed with the name of the deceased in the family's ancestral shrine.[43] After this, relatives are further obligated to occasionally recall the deceased: "In the Spring and Autumn they offer sacrifices, and periodically think of the deceased."[44] Confucianism dictates that a son must mourn his father for three years. This rule can be found in the *Book of History* (*Shangshu* 尚書) the *Zuo Commentary* (左傳 *Zuo Zhuan*), the *Analects*, *Mencius*, *Xunzi*, the *Book of Rites*, and the *Book of Filial Piety*.[45] Mencius was aware of this rule and believed it to be a tradition in place for some three dynasties: "Three years of mourning, wearing rough mourner's garb, and eating gruel. From the emperor to the common people, everyone has observed this practice for three dynasties."[46] While mourning, a son must observe certain protocols. In particular, he must don coarse, crudely sewn mourner's clothing, carry a mourner's staff of unworked bamboo, and live in a temporary thatched cottage constructed outside his house. He must also eat gruel and sleep on a straw mat with a headrest made of earth. Even later conquerors of China

41 Li and Xing, *Annotations of the Book of Filial Piety*, 67.

42 為之宗廟，以鬼享之.

43 Ibid., 70.

44 春秋祭祀，以時思之. The *Doctrine of the Mean* also states: "In Spring and Autumn, they cleaned the ancestral temple, laid out the sacrificial vessels, dressed in the ceremonial clothing, and prepared the seasonal foods [春秋修其祖廟，陳其宗器，設其裳衣，薦其時食]." See Zheng and Kong, *Notes and Commentaries of the Book of Rites*, 1680.

45 See He and Xing, *Annotations of the Analects*, books 1 and 17; Zhao and Sun, *Annotations of Mencius*, books 3A and 5A; Xunzi's *Lilun* 禮論; Zheng and Kong, *Notes and Commentaries of the Book of Rites*, chaps. 3 and 38; Li and Xing, *Annotations of the Book of Filial Piety*, chap. 18.

46 三年之喪，齋疏之服，飦粥之食，自天子達於庶人，三代共之. Zhao and Sun, *Annotations of Mencius*, 156.

ensured that the ancient rite of a three-year mourning period remained institutionalized in China.[47]

The death of a parent is also a significant life event in Judaism. Judaism requires relatives to be present at the moment of the individual's passing and to bury them as soon as possible after death. Unless the death takes place on the Sabbath or another holiday, the body is usually buried that day. Relatives attending the funeral must rend their clothing to show their emotion. The period of *shiva* lasts for seven days after the funeral, during which the children of the deceased are forbidden to work so that they may focus on the memory of the deceased. Friends and relatives come to offer their condolences, comfort the family, and pray. Lamps and candles are lit constantly.[48] After *shiva*, there are no further strict mourning obligations other than a prohibition against celebration for eleven months after the parent's funeral.[49] Evidently, although Judaism and Confucianism both advocate intense mourning and recollection of the deceased, as well as proper funeral rites, Judaism places fewer requirements upon mourners. The solemnity of funeral and burial rites, the duration of mourning, and the number of taboo behaviors during the mourning period are all fewer in number than their Confucian counterparts.

In characteristically ethical cultures, it is common to regulate behavior through prohibition. For example, the Torah has 613 commandments, of which 248 are positive obligations and 365 are negative prohibitions.[50] Judaism and Confucianism are of one mind when it comes to using this method to discuss filial piety. That is, they often define what is *not* filial in an attempt to better illustrate what is. In this sense, discussion of unfilial behavior is discussion of filial piety nonetheless. We must also note that, while the Jewish and Confucian traditions both include discussions of unfilial behavior, a clear disparity exists between their views on what constitutes such behavior.

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47 Zheng and Kong, *Notes and Commentaries of the Book of Rites*, 1816. For additional details on the origins of the "three years of mourning" practice, see Ding Ding 丁鼎, " 'San nian zhi sang' yuanliu kao lun "三年之喪"源流考論 [Determining the Origins of the 'Three Years of Mourning']," *Collected Papers of History Studies* [史學集刊], no. 1 (2001).

48 Xu Xin 徐新 and Ling Jiyao 凌繼堯, eds., *Youtai baike quanshu* 猶太百科全書 [*The Jewish Encyclopedia*] (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House, 1993), 572.

49 Shlomo Ganzfried, *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*: *A New Translation and Commentary on the Classic Guide to Jewish Law*, trans. Rabbi Avrohom Davis (New York: Metsudah, 1996), 2: 1181-1189; David J. Goldberg and John D. Rayner, *The Jewish People, Their History and Their Religion* (London: Penguin Books, 1989), 380-381.

50 Maimonides lists the Torah's 613 commandments in the introduction of his *Mishneh Torah* as preparation for the reader study the Torah as oral law. For a complete list of these laws, see Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, 38-91.

The *Mencius* lists "three offenses against filial piety" and "five offenses against filial piety." It is written in book 4 of the *Mencius*: "There are three offenses against filial piety, the gravest of which is to fail to produce a male heir."[51] According to the explanation written by the Han Dynasty scholar Zhao Qi (趙岐), the first of the three offenses is not to obey one's parents, to go against their will, or to lure them into committing an injustice. The second is, when one's parents are old, to lack the resources to care for them, to fail to provide them with nourishment and warmth, to lack the funds necessary for their medical care, or to fail to obtain an official rank, salary, and good reputation. The third is to fail to take a wife and bear a son or to continue lighting incense for the ancestors. Having no male heir is considered the gravest of the three offenses against filial piety.[52] Book 4 of the *Mencius* also enumerates five offenses against filial piety.[53] Here, the aforementioned three offenses are partially repeated, this time more meticulously differentiated. There are some new additions as well. To summarize, one need only look to the *Mencius* to discover that Confucianism's treatment of unfilial behavior is rather detailed.

The Old Testament also provides examples of unfilial behavior. For example, Exodus names those who hit or scold their parents.[54] Deuteronomy mentions those who disrespect their parents.[55] Proverbs refers to those who "mistreat" and "cast out" parents and "mock the father, and despise the mother's instructions."[56] On the whole, these forms of unfilial behavior—insolence, scorn, beating, and scolding—can be reduced to disrespectful attitudes and mistreatment. When compared with Confucianism's three and five offenses, Judaism's offenses rest within a much narrower scope and are much less detailed and systematic than their Confucian counterparts. In fact, much of the unfilial behavior denounced

51 不孝有三，無后為大.

52 Zhu Xi, *Collected Commentaries on the Four Books*, 286-287.

53 世俗所謂不孝者五：惰其四支，不顧父母之養，一不孝也；博弈好飲酒，不顧父母之養，二不孝也；好貨財，私妻子，不顧父母之養，三不孝也；從耳目之欲，以為父母戮，四不孝也；好勇鬬狠，以危父母，五不孝也. Zhao and Sun, *Annotations of Mencius*, 278-279. It means, "People often claim that there are five offenses to filial piety. To not care about your parents through laziness (a failure to work) is the first offense. To not care about your parents by playing games or drinking liquor is the second offense. To not care about your parents by clinging to material wealth and being partial to one's wife and children over one's parents constitutes the third offense. To indulge one's desires in a way that shames one's parents is the fourth offense. To fight in a way that endangers one's parents comprises the final offense."

54 Exodus 21:15, 17.

55 Deuteronomy 27:16.

56 Proverbs 19:26, 30:17.

in Confucianism is never even addressed by Judaism. This is undoubtedly an area worthy of attention for the body of Jewish law, which places great importance on nuanced discussion.

The *Analects* also instructs that "While your parents are alive, do not travel far. If you do travel, you must have a purpose in doing so."[57] The *Book of Rites* tells us that a son should generally remain by his parents' side, but if he must travel far, he must inform his parents of his intended whereabouts so as to put them at ease. In order to prevent his parents from fearing for his safety, he must also steer clear of dangerous situations.[58] "Preventing worry" is a form of filial behavior that expresses deep psychological concern for parents. This specific kind of filial behavior is nowhere to be found in the Jewish tradition.

Confucian filial piety was originally a system of domestic ethics, and only after successive generations of scholarly interpretation did it break free from the walls of the household and expand into a rich, far-reaching sociopolitical ethical system. Filial piety led to new terms of address for brothers and elders and was even applied to rulers in a manner that linked filial piety with fidelity to a sovereign. The *Book of Filial Piety* states, "The filial piety with which the gentleman serves his parents may become fidelity to a ruler. The sense of fraternal duty with which he serves his elder brother may become deference to elders."[59] If we regard filial piety as a form of familial ethics, then honoring elders, being faithful to a ruler, and other hierarchical forms of social filial piety certainly transcend its domestic scope. It has now expanded into a sociopolitical ethical system whose purpose is no longer to govern relationships within a family but, rather, to delineate, solidify, maintain, and harmonize all manner of social relationships. It serves the function of maintaining social stability and order.

The *Analects* raises the point that those who are filial at home are often obedient citizens.[60] Consequently, expanding filial piety's application to all of society can create a harmonious society. "Teaching filial piety is a tribute of reverence to all the fathers. Teaching fraternal piety is a tribute of reverence to all elder brothers. Teaching the duty of a subject is a tribute of reverence to all

57 父母在，不遠游，游必有方. He and Xing, *Annotations of the Analects*, 57.

58 夫為人子者：出必告，反必面。所游必有常 . . . 不登危，懼辱親也. Zheng and Kong, *Notes and Commentaries of the Book of Rites*, 32-35.

59 君子之事親孝，故忠可移於君；事兄悌，故順可移於長. Li and Xing, *Annotations of the Book of Filial Piety*, 55.

60 其為人也孝弟，而好犯上者，鮮矣；不好犯上，而好作亂者，未之有也. He and Xing, *Annotations of the Analects*, 3-4.

rulers."[61] From a Confucian perspective, as long as the people are filial, there will exist "loving fathers and filial sons, love and respect among brothers, and benevolent rulers and loyal ministers," thereby bringing about a well-ordered nation. The Han Dynasty rulers readily accepted and implemented a practice of "governing the world with filial piety," and later dynasties all looked favorably upon this method of ruling.

In contrast, Jewish filial piety has always remained within the domain of domestic ethics. First, Judaism regards filial piety as having a fixed scope—namely, parents. It does not govern relationships between brothers, let alone toward individuals outside the family. Although in practice Jews also advocate respect for elders, this teaching is rarely found in early Jewish documents.[62] Second, even if filial piety occasionally extends to teachers, a teacher is, in a sense, a "spiritual parent." This is because a teacher provides spiritual cultivation, and the spiritual takes precedence over the physical. This notion aligns rather well with the Confucian saying "to be a teacher for a day is to be a father for life." Thus, the relationship between a teacher and a student can be understood as a familial relationship. Moreover, the scope of Jewish filial piety has never encompassed rulers or had a sociopolitical relevance. Instead, it is unique in that Jewish filial piety transcends secular custom and has been raised to the level of love for the divine.

The Talmud groups God and parents together as "partners" worthy of pious devotion: "Our rabbis taught: There are three partners in man, the Holy One, the father, and the mother. When a man honors his father and his mother, the Holy One says, 'I ascribe merit to them as though I had dwelt among them and they had honored Me.'"[63] If we take into account the fact that God is the

61 教以孝，所以敬天下之為人父者也。教以悌，所以敬天下之為人兄者也。教以臣，所以敬天下之為人君者也. Li and Xing, *Annotations of the Book of Filial Piety*, 53. The second essay in *Lü's Spring and Autumns Annals* [*Lü shi chunqiu xiaoxing lan* 呂氏春秋•孝行覽] also says, "In tending to the root, there is nothing more essential than filial piety. If a ruler is filial, then his reputation will spread far and wide. Those under him will be obedient, and all will praise him. If ministers are filial, then they will be faithful in their service to their ruler, uncorrupt in governance, and willing to sacrifice themselves if disaster strikes. If scholars and the common people are filial, then they will harvest enthusiastically. They will succeed in attack and defense. They will not tire, and will not flee. Filial piety is the root of the legendary emperors and the guiding order behind all manner of affairs. When this principle is implemented, all that is good will be realized, and what is ill will be no more. All under heaven will follow it. This is filial piety!"

62 For example, Leviticus 19:32: "Stand in the presence of a person with gray hair. Show respect for the old."

63 Babylonian Talmud, Kiddushin 30b.

parent of all mankind in Judaism's creation myth, Jewish filial piety includes both parents and God. This kind of relationship can even be used to establish a "larger family" in the universal sense. Evidently, the main function of Jewish filial piety has always been to maintain a hierarchy between parents and children, and God and humanity, as well as to instill respect for and obedience to parents and God. The different treatment of domestic ethics in Confucianism and Judaism draws a dividing line between both traditions' conceptions of filial piety, which demonstrates how they differ in application and scope.

Generally speaking, analyzing a single concept's status within an entire doctrine serves as the primary basis for evaluating the importance of that concept within the system to which it belongs. Thus, we now address the relative position of filial piety within the Confucian and Jewish traditions, respectively. We know that "benevolence" (仁) is the most important concept in Confucianism, and it has been used as the foundation for all Confucian theories and institutions since the time of Confucius himself. Thus a pressing question for Confucianism has always been how to understand and even realize benevolence. In contrast, filial piety is considered the first step on the road to benevolence. It has been said: "The gentleman tends to the basics. Once these are established, the entire Way flows naturally. Filial piety and fraternal devotion—are these not the root of benevolence?"[64] Because filial piety and fraternal duty are most pertinent to daily life and, moreover, are the most common and feasible forms of ethical behavior, they are considered the starting point for benevolence—in other words, moral perfection. Feng Youlan (馮友蘭) once noted that this "root of benevolence" refers to a form of filial piety that asks us to begin with those close to us so that we may learn to empathize.[65] Because of this interaction between filial piety and benevolence, filial piety received ample attention in early Confucianism. As the Confucian ethical system developed, it became abstracted into both a form of virtuous behavior and a kind of moral sense, thereby ascending the ranks of Confucian virtues.[66] This is evidenced by the following excerpt from the *Book of Filial Piety*: "Confucius

64 君子務本，本立而道生。孝弟也者，其為仁之本與! He and Xing, *Annotations of the Analects*, 4; see Zhu Xi, *Collected Commentaries on the Four Books*, 48. According to Zhu's explanation, the character 為 [*wei*] acts as a verb here, and 為仁 [*weiren*] therefore means to act benevolently, which is to exhibit one's innate benevolence.

65 Feng Youlan 馮友蘭, *Zhongguo zhexue shi* 中國哲學史 [*A History of Chinese Philosophy*] (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1961), 437n1.

66 Chen Lai 陳來, *Gudai zongjiao yu lunli—rujia sixiang de genyuan* 古代宗教與倫理—儒家思想的根源 [*Ancient Religions and Ethics—The Origins of Confucian Thought*] (Beijing: SDX Joint, 2009), 333-334, 340-341.

said: 'Filial piety is the root of all virtue and the stem from which all moral teaching grows.'"[67] Clearly, filial piety became the most fundamental and important virtue in Confucian doctrine after successive generations of scholarly analysis. One could even call it the "first virtue" of Confucianism.

In contrast, filial piety is important in Judaism but plays a smaller role than its Confucian counterpart. As previously mentioned, honoring one's father and mother is Judaism's fifth commandment. The preceding four commandments dictate that the Israelites accept Yahweh as their god, forbid idol worship and taking the lord's name in vain, and keep the Sabbath (because the Sabbath is a holy day connected to the creation of the world). These four commandments pertain to the relationship between people and a transcendent God and are regarded as the first part of the Ten Commandments. The remaining six commandments address secular relationships, including respecting parents and forbidding murder, stealing, improper sexual conduct, bearing false witness, and coveting the property of others.[68] Judging from this sequential order, filial piety is a commandment of the second variety, and thus it is not as important as commandments dictating the relationship between man and God. From a theological perspective, although it is the first among "secular" commandments, honoring one's father and mother will always be second to worshipping God.[69]

Rabbinical Judaism places greater emphasis than biblical Judaism on filial piety. As mentioned above, rabbinical Judaism argues that honoring one's father and mother is tantamount to honoring God. However, even if children honor both God and parents, the respective positions of God and parents are not the same. God always occupies the supreme position because parents and children alike worship Him. Additionally, Judaism instructs children to

67 子曰：'夫孝，德之本也，教之所由生也.' Li and Xing, *Annotations of the Book of Filial Piety*, 3.

68 Deuteronomy 5:6-21; Exodus 20.

69 Louis E. Newman, *An Introduction to Jewish Ethics* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2005), 107; Tian Haihua 田海華, *Xi bo lai shengjing zhi shijie yanjiu* 希伯來聖經之十誡研究 [*The Ten Commandments of the Hebrew Bible*] (Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2012), 95. Some scholars also group the Ten Commandments into the first five and the remaining five. According to this view, the commandment to honor one's mother and father belongs to the first group. This division places the commandment among the religious commandments rather than the secular ones, and in doing so demonstrates the importance of this commandment within Judaism. However, this reorganization of the commandments does not change the fundamental fact that worshipping God takes prominence over respect for parents.

"honor" and "fear" both their parents and God, but only God is worshipped. "Worship" implies both honor and fear, but far surpasses both in degree. As the quintessential monotheistic religion, Judaism regards God as the only object of worship. The rabbis who identified both parents and God as "partners" in receiving children's honor never intended for parents to be the object of worship. Otherwise, they would have violated Judaism's fundamental monotheistic principle.

To summarize, ancient Judaism and early Confucianism exhibit clear differences in the degree, application, and scope of filial piety, as well as its position within the overall doctrine of each tradition. "Differences of degree" refers primarily to differences in comprehensiveness and nuance, and Confucianism is more thorough in both of these respects. When it comes to the application and scope of filial piety, both traditions adopt unique standpoints. Confucianism expands filial piety from its familial ethical foundations into sociopolitical territory, while Jewish filial piety has always remained a domestic affair. The status of filial piety is also different in both traditions. Confucianism has always accorded importance to filial piety, and this importance grew as scholars successively reinterpreted the concept. Meanwhile, filial piety occupies a secondary position in Judaism for theological reasons.

How Can Both Traditions Advocate a Common Filial Piety?

How can ancient Judaism and early Confucianism, with their unrelated origins, advocate like forms of filial piety? Fundamentally speaking, Judaism and Confucianism hold similar views regarding care and respect for parents, carrying out their wishes, funeral and mourning rites, and how to remonstrate with them, primarily because both traditions are grounded in affection for and gratitude toward family members. Emotions are an important aspect of humanity. From Plato's psychological framework of "reason, emotion, and will," to Aristotle's emotion-based hedonic theory of the soul, to David Hume's sentimentalist ethics, none of them denied that emotion was an innate aspect of human nature and was inherently tied to morality. Familial affection and gratitude are embodiments of our intrinsic human nature. In this sense, they comprise a natural basis for filial piety, thereby playing an essential role in the genesis of filial piety and its initial progression.

Ancient Confucians used precisely these innate sentiments to ground their filial instructions. To synthesize their collective works, the character for "filial piety" (孝) has always been an ideogram consisting of the characters for "old"

and "child."[70] The information transmitted by this compound is that "the child carries the elder," and thus we can observe the intergenerational familial relationship implied by this character. Confucianism has always regarded continuing the family line as extremely important. Mencius' statement that "there are three offenses against filial piety, and to fail to produce a male heir is the gravest of the three" clearly depicts the relationship between filial piety and furthering the family's bloodline.[71]

Moreover, this relationship is repeatedly cited in Confucian ethical theory and practice. Scholarly research has indicated that "love for a biological son is the deepest psychological basis for benevolence (仁 *ren*). As a form of moral consciousness, benevolence refers first and foremost to the love one feels for a family member."[72] This familial love is an emotion that transcends pure reason, and this is the filial piety that we have in mind. Evidently, a foundation of familial affection serves as both the starting point for the Confucian theory of affection for one's fellow man and the chief manifestation of benevolence. The patriarchal clan system that we examine in the second half of this paper, which was endorsed and maintained by Confucianism, was also built on a foundation of affection for family members. Historical Confucian theories were easily accepted precisely because they conformed to human emotions, and the corresponding social systems derived their stability from this same foundation. This is one reason that traditional Chinese society lasted for over one thousand years.

Familial affection has often influenced Confucian filial piety in tandem with the emotion of gratitude. In the *Analects*, Confucius' reply to Zaiwo's question of whether a dutiful son should observe three years' mourning illustrates the importance Confucius attached to filial piety and its related duties. At a deeper level, it reflects Confucius' call for spontaneous gratitude toward parents. Zaiwo believed that three years of mourning was too long and illustrated his point with examples. He contended that it was detrimental to the system of rites already in place and argued that it did not match the natural progression of the four seasons. He believed that a mourning period of one year would suffice. Confucius replied by asking Zaiwo whether he would have "peace of mind" if he violated the three-year mourning period, to which Zaiwo replied

70 Xiao Qunzhong 肖群忠, *Zhongguo xiao wenhua yanjiu* 中國孝文化研究 [*Research on Chinese Filial Culture*] (Taipei: Wu-Nan, 2002), 11-12.

71 不孝有三，無后為大. Zhao and Sun, *Annotations of Mencius*, 248.

72 Zhu Yiting 朱貽庭, ed., *Zhongguo chuantong lunli sixiang shi* [*zengding ben*] 中國傳統倫理思想史 [增訂本] [*An Intellectual History of Chinese Traditional Ethics* (*Expanded Edition*)] (Shanghai: East China Normal University Press, 2003), 37.

in the affirmative. After Zaiwo left, Confucius reacted angrily, explaining from the perspective of gratitude why three years of mourning are necessary for peace of mind. Children hardly leave their parents' side until after three years of age, and so a three-year mourning period serves as reciprocity for this initial period of care.[73] The period of pregnancy and its hardships are not even factored into this sum. We can now understand Confucius' anger with Zaiwo, for Zaiwo either could not understand or completely disregarded the significance of those three years in favor of a simplified, utilitarian alternative.

Confucianism contains numerous further examples of emphasis on the emotion of gratitude. In the Confucian classic the *Book of Songs* (詩經 *Shijing*), it is written: "The kindness of parents is higher than the heavens when they give their children life, live together with them day after day, raise them with the utmost care, and love them dearly."[74] This means, consequently, for grown-up children to repay their parents' dedication with a filial heart is actually "a matter of course."[75] Confucian filial piety is founded upon this awareness of the innate human emotions of familial affection and gratitude. It is an ethical obligation saturated with emotion.

Ancient Jewish texts devote attention to affection for and gratitude toward family members as expressions of human nature, but these concepts receive different amounts of emphasis at different stages of history. The importance of familial ties is reflected in the Old Testament, in which the ancient Israelites' desire for sons—that is, biological heirs—is an important theme. God repeatedly commands that the Israelites "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth," and the desire to bear an heir is tested time and again in the Bible.[76] We observe that, with the background of the desire to bear and raise a son, many female figures in Judaism bore the torment of infertility. These figures include Sarah, the wife of Abraham,[77] Rebecca, the wife of Isaac,[78] and Rachel, the wife of Jacob.[79] Yet God ultimately granted each of these figures a son, and these sons were cherished all the more by their fathers because of their miraculous births.

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73 予之不仁也！子生三年，然后免於父母之懷。夫三年之喪，天下之通喪也。予也有三年之愛於其父母乎！He and Xing, *Annotations of the Analects*, 275.

74 父兮生我，母兮鞠我，拊我畜我，長我育我，顧我復我，出入腹我。欲報之德，昊天罔亟. "Liao'e 蓼莪" [Minor Odes], in *Book of Songs*.

75 Li and Xing, *Annotations of the Book of Filial Piety*, 22.

76 Genesis 1:28, 9:1.

77 Ibid., 18:9-15.

78 Ibid., 25:21.

79 Ibid., 30:22-24.

In addition to its emphasis on male heirs, the Old Testament goes to great lengths to chart humanity's genealogy since God's creation of the earth, particularly that of the Semites (the forbears of the Jewish people).[80] Readers often choose to skip over this information, which does not lend itself to easy reading. However, with the aim of compiling and circulating classic texts in mind, the inclusion of genealogies within these central texts serves to preserve and strengthen hereditary memory. We believe that the frequency with which this method is used demonstrates the emphasis that the ancient Israelites placed on biological heirs. There are genealogies in the Bible that illustrate this point, with two model examples in Genesis and Chronicles 1. The genealogy in Genesis is scattered among the chapters and records humanity's lineage in several segments: from Adam up to Noah (chapter 5), from Noah's three sons to their descendants (chapter 10), including a direct line from Noah's son, Shem, to Abraham.[81] The line that ultimately reaches Abraham, the first Jew (then called Abram), also extends as far back as the Israelites who went to Egypt, who were the descendants of Jacob.[82] This lineage displays how God chose the Israelites from all of humanity and gives special prominence to the heritage passed down from Abraham to Isaac and then to Jacob in order to illustrate the integrity of the Israelite bloodline. The genealogies in Chronicles are relatively streamlined in format and cover a longer period of time. They take up nine chapters in total and stretch from Adam to the era of David and Solomon, even covering portions of the lineage in exile and return to the land of Israel. This genealogy expands upon the time period and scope of that in Genesis and covers more important biblical figures. Thus, it more systematically reflects the origins and inheritance of the Israelite line.

Filial piety is an intergenerational ethical concept, and as such it does not involve children alone. A more appropriate understanding of filial piety regards it as a "relationship" between parents and children. This relationship is unquestionably rooted in familial sentiment and usually is manifested in the home. Biblical depictions of domestic life often present a comfortable setting. For example, the happiness of Abraham and his wife, Sarah, when she gave birth to their first child when Abraham was one hundred,[83] Isaac's blessing of Jacob and Esau,[84] and Jacob's leading his sons to Egypt to seek refuge and their

80 Genesis repeatedly records and restates humanity's lineage—Abraham's in particular. Related records can be found in Exodus, the Book of Numbers, and Chronicles.

81 Genesis 11:10-26.

82 Ibid., 46:8-27.

83 Ibid., 21:2-8.

84 Ibid., 27:27-29; 27:39-40.

subsequent reunion with Joseph.[85] If we temporarily exclude the religious and focus only on the secular events that occur in these stories, we are left with a distinct sense of the love between family members. It was this familial bond that enabled the twelve tribes of Israel, descended from Jacob, to unite, accept the same monotheistic beliefs, and ultimately establish Judaism. Additionally, later generations of Jews have used this biological lineage as a standard for determining whether someone is Jewish. Whether the paternal or maternal line, it is ultimately an individual's genetic lineage that plays the decisive role. The ties between a parent and child can never be severed. Jewish filial piety developed from this foundation of familial affection.

We can refer back to God's creation of mankind in order to understand the function and significance of gratitude in Jewish filial piety. The interpretations found in rabbinical Jewish texts are particularly illuminating. According to the Genesis, chapter 2, God created Adam from earth and imbued him with a soul, after which he created Eve from one of Adam's ribs. After this, humanity multiplied. The Talmud provides an explanation of this process, which explains God's creation of man and makes it more concrete: "Man's white substance becomes the brain and veins, and woman's red substance becomes flesh, blood, and skin. Life, the spirit, and the soul all come from God."[86] According to the Talmud's explanation, the descendants of Adam and Eve are all creations of God through a synthesis of their parents' biology and God's gift of the soul. This explanation thus involves parents in the process of creation such that it is a father, mother, and God who create a life together. Appreciation for this gift of life is a debt of gratitude. As the Jewish scholar Louis E. Newman has said, "Some Jewish authorities have observed the basic principle of gratitude in the commandment to honor one's parents, and have thereby come to view it as a general commandment."[87] In this way, gratitude performs a fundamental role in Jewish filial piety.

In short, children are filial in order to repay their parents' gift of life, nourishment, and education. This filial piety reasonably complies with human nature and is common to all regions and eras. The reason Judaism and Confucianism have so much in common when it comes to filial piety is that they share a common foundation in human nature—that is, the bonds of familial affection and gratitude. It is this shared underpinning that explains how these two ancient civilizations, separated by space and time, could hold the same views.

85 Ibid., 43:27-45:15.

86 Babylonian Talmud, Niddah 31a.

87 Newman, *An Introduction to Jewish Ethics*, 106.

Why Jewish and Confucian Filial Piety Differ

Combing through the variation in both traditions described above, we cannot help but inquire a step further: why do Judaism and Confucianism differ on so much if they agree on genealogical matters? From where does each tradition derive its unique aspects?

We believe that their unique attributes originate in the different cultures in which these two traditions were conceived and developed. From what has already been written, we can see that Judaism and Confucianism both place tremendous emphasis on the here and now, which is manifested concretely in their attention to the perception of and reaction to human emotion. Both traditions interpret and explain filial piety in terms of the bonds of familial affection and gratitude. However, Jewish filial piety involves a more fundamental religious element, while Confucianism has used these emotions as the starting point for the design of an ethical system of governance, taking the humanist side of Chinese culture to its utmost.

Judaism is both the first and the quintessential monotheistic religion. Biblical Judaism and rabbinical Judaism have the following main characteristics. First, Yahweh (God) is the only god and object of worship. No other deities are permitted. Second, Jews must believe in the word of God, which is revealed through prophets and their insights. Furthermore, the commandments of the Old Testament are a record of God's covenant with Moses and are God's direct commandments to mankind. Third, Jews can commune with God via sacrifice or prayer. Fourth, the Israelites are God's "chosen people," and thus God has established a covenant with them that has become Jewish law. Fifth, Judaism advocates "righteousness through deeds," that is, the belief that every Jew can become a righteous individual by adhering to the Torah's commandments. Sixth, everyone is created in God's image, and, consequently, all are equal before God. Seventh, Judaism decrees that all Jews live by the commandments of the Torah, which is comprehensive in its instruction. Therefore, a Jewish life is a religious life, and there is no aspect of life that is purely secular. The result of this religious life is that it "makes the ordinary holy." It is clear from these characteristics that Judaism is a theocentric religion. In other words, God serves as the highest entity and legislator and lies at the very core of Judaism. Jewish life is carried out in accordance with divine guidance in the form of God's commandments.

In comparison with ancient Judaism's consistent religious development, Confucianism has elements of religious mysticism as well as a tradition of humanism. This humanist nature was particularly evident in Confucianism's early stages. Scholars generally agree that the ideas of the Western Zhou

Dynasty provided the background and intellectual resources for Confucian thought.[88] In particular, the Western Zhou witnessed the awakening and development of secular thought. In contrast to their immediate predecessors in the Shang Dynasty, who worshipped gods and spirits, the people of the Zhou Dynasty turned their gaze away from the supernatural and toward worldly affairs, focusing their attention on "the people." From the establishment of the concept of "virtue" by the founder of the Zhou Dynasty to the duke of Zhou's establishment of rites and ritual music, and ultimately to Confucius' continuing the Zhou legacy via the propagation of Zhou institutions and the study of benevolence (仁 *ren*), the constant focus had been worldly affairs and everyday life.[89] Successors to the Zhou universally recognized this shift as well. Zichan, the Spring and Autumn Period statesman endorsed by Confucius, once famously said: "The way of heaven is distant, and the way of man is near. We cannot reach the former."[90] This clearly reflects the secular mind-set of the period. Additionally, the attitude with which Confucianism handled the worship of ancestors, deities, and spirits completely differed from that of the Shang and early Zhou Dynasties. Confucius once said, "How can you serve the spirits if you cannot serve man?"[91] and "Respect ghosts and spirits, but keep them at a distance."[92] In the *Analects*, it is also written, "Confucius did not speak of the extraordinary, feats of strength, chaos, or the supernatural."[93] Later generations inherited the humanist tradition of early Confucianism and adopted it as a guiding principle.

Of course, we cannot conclude from this that Confucianism lacked a transcendent religious dimension. Early Confucian classics such as the *Book of Songs* regard Heaven as the creator of man: "Heaven gave birth to the multitude of humanity, and in each of them inscribed its laws."[94] In the *Analects*, Confucius also considered Heaven an entity capable of punishment and reward, warning: "He who offends Heaven can pray to no one."[95] These examples indicate that

88 Chen, *Ancient Religions and Ethics*, 18.

89 For more information on the development of "virtue" since the Western Zhou Dynasty, see Wang Bo 王博, *Zhongguo ruxue shi: xianqin juan* 中國儒學史•先秦卷 [*A History of Chinese Confucianism: Pre-Qin Volume*] (Beijing: Peking University Publishing House, 2011), 1-13.

90 天道遠，人道邇，非所及也. Yang Bojun 杨伯峻, *Chunqiu zZuo chuan zhu* 春秋左传注 [*Annotations of the Chronicle of Zuo*] (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1981), 1395.

91 未能事人，焉能事鬼. He and Xing, *Annotations of the Analects*, 164.

92 敬鬼神而遠之. Ibid., 87.

93 子不語怪、力、亂、神. Ibid., 102.

94 天生烝民，有物有則. "Major Court Hymns," in *Book of Songs*.

95 獲罪於天，無所禱也. He and Xing, *Annotations of the Analects*, 39.

early Confucians treated Heaven as a transcendent object of ultimate faith. It is simply that the humanist aspects of Confucianism eclipsed its religious elements. When compared with Judaism and its theocentrism, Confucianism is an ethical system with religious elements that regards humanity as its primary focus.

This analysis of both cultures aids our contrast of the degree and scope of Jewish filial piety, as well as its etiquette and relative position within the tradition, to the corresponding aspects of Confucianism. As the focus of Judaism, God is considered the only object of worship, while parents occupy a secondary role, under which they are accorded honor and fear, which do not reach the degree of worship. If one worships anything other than God, including one's living or dead parents, then one has violated Judaism's first prohibition: idol worship. The Jewish prohibition against idolatry and polytheistic worship is maintained consistently within the tradition, such as in Exodus 32, in which Moses struggles with his fellow Israelites after they resort to idol worship while wandering in the wilderness. It is also written in Genesis: "God created mankind in his own image; male and female, he created in His own image."[96] Since every person is a creation of God, we are all equal in dignity. Judaism is deeply influenced by this egalitarian spirit, and so its filial piety does not surpass a recognition of hierarchy between father and son, thereby weakening the degree of veneration accorded to parents. Since worship and respect for God are primary, and reverence for parents is secondary, caring for one's parents need not meet the Confucian standard under which parents must be respected *and* pleased.[97] By the same token, pious worship of God is naturally a primary virtue, since God is the only acceptable object of worship. In comparison, filial piety is relegated to a secondary form of moral behavior. Since every Jew can become a righteous individual by following the Torah's commandments, and since these commandments are comprehensive in their content, filial piety is one of many moral commitments, and therefore it is not and need not be so meticulously delineated as it is in Confucianism. Perhaps excessive attention to filial piety runs the danger of detracting from one's observance of other commandments. Since Jewish life is a life governed by divine commandments,

96 Genesis 1:27.

97 Judaism also addresses the issue of "serving" God. In Proverbs 3:9, it is written, "Honor Yahweh with your wealth and with the first fruits of your harvest." Biblical Israelites used sacrifices as a form of worship. There were various kinds of offerings, such as peace offerings, sin offerings, trespass offerings, burnt offerings, and meal offerings. For details, refer to Leviticus.

filial piety is not a purely secular form of domestic ethics, and consequently worship of God takes precedence.

In Judaism, bonds of familial affection and gratitude take a back seat to faith in God, such that the filial ethical relationship becomes a religious commandment and is prescribed as one of many religious duties. Because filial piety is a duty, Jews need only fulfill it as such. With God's permission and punishment as a "barrier," there is no motive or need for an expanded application or further explication of filial piety in Judaism. Its degree and scope are quite limited in comparison to those of Confucian filial piety. Consequently, while from a philosophical perspective Jewish filial piety is also grounded in innate familial affection, a religious or biblical perspective reveals God as the ultimate root of filial piety. From this perspective, filial piety is a special bond between God and his "chosen people," inscribed in the God-given laws passed down to the Jews by Moses. We could thus say that the characteristic features of Jewish filial piety derive from their being a part of a quintessentially monotheistic culture.

As two cultural traditions deeply rooted in human nature, ancient Judaism and early Confucianism are both expressions of the same human nature but manifested in different times and places. They were each a fusion of a common human nature and a particular spatiotemporal setting. By responding to the needs of their time periods, they created institutional forms uniquely suited to their respective conditions, and these institutions in turn continued to strengthen their intellectual traditions, thereby accounting for the differences in Jewish and Confucian filial piety.

Confucianism's emphasis on familial bonds and ethical relations directly influenced traditional systems of governance as well as the relationship between Confucianism and political affairs. Family ties have characterized Chinese governance since the Xia Dynasty founder Yu the Great "ruled the nation like a family." During the Zhou Dynasty, institutional reform was based on bonds of consanguinity, in particular the establishment and development of systems that delineated family lines and dictated the number of temples allowed for various members of the aristocracy.[98] The idea of "structuring the family and the nation according to the same principle" was advanced through the establishment of institutions that distinguished varying degrees of familial relation. The sociopolitical structure that regarded "all under heaven [as] one family" was established with the Zhou rulers as the heads of this "grand family", i.e. the entire patriarchal system (宗法制度).

98 Wang Guowei 王國維, "Yin zhou zhidu lun 殷周制度論 [Institutions of the Late Shang and Zhou Dynasties]," in *Guan tang ji lin* 觀堂集林 [*Selected Works of Wang Guantang*] (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1959), 10: 454-455.

Confucianism continued to build on this foundation, establishing concentric systems for governing human interaction as indicated by the adage in the *Great Learning* (大學 *Daxue*), "Cultivate your character, manage your household, govern the nation, and all under heaven will be pacified."[99] From a Confucian perspective, a household and the nation share the same structure. The nation is an extension of the family, and the ruler acts as the head of a household. This is what makes possible the seamless transition from household to nation and from father to sovereign. Within the household, filial piety is the ethical bond between family members. This same kind of relationship can be extrapolated to the national scale, where it can develop in parallel with a patriarchal clan system. By this logic, there is no difference between obedience to a father and loyalty to a ruler. This attitude persisted until the "governance through filial piety" school formally established the close relationship between filial piety and governance through its slogan of "let filial piety become loyalty," as represented in the *Book of Filial Piety*. Such ideas had profound influence on the construction of traditional Chinese systems of governance.

As a religion that places great emphasis on actions, ancient Judaism pays particular attention to the role that "deeds" play in salvation. This is called "righteousness through deeds."[100] According to this principle, an individual may become righteous through adherence to the holy laws of the Torah. Collectively and as a nation, adherence to God's laws is necessary for a peaceful society and prosperous nation. These conditions directly influence the dynamic between Judaism and governance. As we know, the Israelites can be traced back to a common ancestor (Abraham), and their twelve tribes have a common lineage. However, due to the presence of God and the Torah's laws, the Israelites never developed a society or system of governance modeled after a patriarchal clan system, as was the case in ancient China. We may observe in the Old Testament that, from the time of Moses to the era of the biblical judges, Israelites lived under a theocracy.[101] Even during the Israel's period of united monarchy, theocratic governance predominated, the gist of which was the following: God is the true ruler of the nation, while human rulers—leaders of the people like Moses, or tribal leaders and judges, elders, and kings—were

99 修身、齊家、治國、平天下.

100 For a comparison between Judaism's "righteousness through deeds" with Christianity's "justification by faith," see Fu Youde 傅有德, *Youtai zhexue yu zongjiao yanjiu* 猶太哲學與宗教研究 [*Jewish Religion and Philosophy*] (Beijing: China Social Sciences Publishing House, 2007), 174-178.

101 Baruch Spinoza, 神學政治論 *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, trans. Wen Xi 溫錫增 (Beijing: Commercial Press, 1982), 232.

in theory only implementing laws prescribed by God. Moreover, these leaders were required to govern according to these laws, lest they face condemnation by prophets or even revolt instigated by them. Under a theocratic system of this sort, people's ultimate concern was the implementation of divine laws.

In contrast to the concentric structure of Confucian governance, Judaism adopted a "top-down" method for establishing political legitimacy. Under the premise that all Jews completely accept the Jewish faith, Jewish sovereigns derived their authority from Judaism's holy source—God—and maintained their rule with the help of their subjects, who lived in accordance with the holy laws. At the same time, this theocracy did not tolerate improper behavior from its rulers but, rather, supervised their rule through the use of prophets, who would often openly condemn unsuitable rulers in God's name. We should take special note of the humble backgrounds of the majority of biblical prophets and that "they transmitted the word of God, reflected the demands of the common people, and represented society's conscience."[102] The social critiques of these fearless prophets realized the ideals of justice and fairness and established a balance between ruler and subject through prophets' willingness to speak out. Influenced by the opinions and behavior of prophets, Israelites held their rulers accountable by remaining loyal to God. They adhered to the laws of the Torah and sought a holy life over secular subsistence. Thus, it is not peculiar that the ancient Israelites lacked "fidelity" to a sovereign monarch. Moreover, if we consider the influence of religion on sociopolitical dynamics, Judaism's mode of conduct in society can be summarized as "love." With the prerequisite of love for God, one must love God and his neighbors.[103] To put it concretely, one must love God through sacrifice and by honoring His commandments, and one must love others through equal treatment and "loving others as oneself."

In this schema, Judaism bifurcates love into love for God and love for humanity, and parents are grouped among all of mankind. This weakens the special love accorded to parents—that is, the space in which filial piety resides. With this restriction on filial piety imposed by religion, all roads ultimately lead to God. Rulers therefore need not resort to secular ethics such as filial piety in order to maintain a population of compliant citizens nor do they need to rely on extensions of filial piety—fraternal deference, respect for elders, and fidelity to a sovereign—in order to harmonize social relationships among brothers

102 Fu Youde, "Xi bo lai xianzhi yu rujia shengren bijiao yanjiu 希伯來先知與儒家聖人比較研究 [A Comparative Study of Hebrew Prophets and Confucian Sages]," *Chinese Social Sciences*, no. 6 (2009).

103 Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18.

and neighbors. In other words, ancient Israel did not develop a conception of filial piety that extended beyond parents and into other households, society, and government precisely because this was unnecessary.

In summary, substantial differences in the cultures of ancient Judaism and early Confucianism account for dissimilarities in their versions of filial piety. Among these cultural differences, Judaism's theocentric stance and Confucianism's humanist characteristics play a decisive role. Likewise, the different systems of governance and social dynamics established by each tradition also served to produce divergent conceptions of filial piety.

Commentary

In recent years, discussion of filial piety has been ongoing within Chinese academic circles.[104] This paper does not aim to critique that body of work nor does it attempt to offer a comprehensive discussion of filial piety. We are concerned with comparing the ancient Jewish and early Confucian conceptions of filial piety and addressing two observations made in relation to the characteristics of Jewish filial piety. These observations may serve as a reference in the revival and reestablishment of Confucian filial piety as an ethical principle.

First, rooting filial piety in both the transcendent and human dimensions can prevent it from becoming excessive. Early Confucians entrenched filial piety in familial bonds and regarded providing for and respecting one's parents as its core spirit. Both now and in the past, regardless of whether the individuals concerned are Jewish, Chinese, or other, these bonds provide a strong base for moral behavior. At the same time, we should note that ancient Confucianism as a whole adopted an indifferent stance with regard to transcendent values and, instead, devoted disproportionate attention to human bonds of affection. This stance was largely responsible for suppressing the transcendent dimension

104 For example, Chinese scholarly circles have been discussing the question of "relatives covering for each other" in recent years. See Guo Qiyong郭齊勇, *Rujia lunli xin pipan zhi pipan* 儒家倫理新批判之批判 [*A Critique of New Criticisms of Confucian Ethics*] (Wuhan: Wuhan University Press, 2011); idem, ed., *Rujia wenhua yanjiu* 儒家文化研究 [*Research on Confucian Culture*] (Beijing: SDX Joint, 2008). Foreign scholars have taken an interest in the issues surrounding Confucian filial piety as well. For a summary of this discussion and an overview of recent research, please refer to Hagop Sarkissian, "Recent Approaches to Confucian Filial Morality," *Philosophy Compass* 5, no. 9 (2010); Cecilia Wee, "Filial Obligations: A Comparative Study," *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 13, no. 1 (2014).

that filial piety should possess, thereby resulting in a tendency toward its pronounced humanism and secularism.

In ancient Judaism, bonds of familial affection serve as a foundation for filial piety rooted in human nature, and at the same time a transcendent God serves as the ultimate source of human morality. Because God takes precedence over parents, faith and reverence for God take precedence over love and respect for parents. This variety of filial piety has limitations. It cannot serve as the primary virtue or highest object of pursuit. In addition to respecting one's parents, one should also live in reverence of the infinite and transcendent. Such an individual is capable of continuously reflecting upon and rectifying his filial behavior in daily life precisely because he possesses this religious disposition.

Second, equality tempers the hierarchy imposed by intergenerational relationships. There is undoubtedly a necessary hierarchy between junior and senior; however, this kind of relationship can be a source of conflict between parent and child if taken to the extreme. Therefore it can be detrimental to the development of filial piety. Jewish filial piety avoids this pitfall by according individuals an equal status. The Old Testament stresses equality because every individual is created in God's image. God, as creator of the world, is worshipped by all, and as Jewish believers in God, parents and children are equals. This equality makes possible a social buffer such that the relationship between parents and children will not end in deadlock and collapse due to a strict delineation of authority between junior and senior. In reestablishing a modern Confucian filial piety, we should keep this equal relationship between parent and child in mind and make it such that both parents and children respect each other's dignity. In this way, we can construct a modern filial ethic in which both sides of the equation are aware of their mutual rights and responsibilities.[105]

Ancient Judaism and early Confucianism are artifacts of the past. Just as Christianity underwent a reformation in the seventeenth century that established a religious and ethical foundation for contemporary individuals in the West, Judaism underwent its own reformation in the early nineteenth century and devoted nearly a century to completing traditional Judaism's modern transformation. This metamorphosis allowed modern Jews to assimilate into

105 After examining various Western and Chinese forms of filial piety founded on parent-child relationships, Cheng Zhongying 成中英 proposes that a modern filial piety should be one of "parallel responsibilities between parent and child." He stresses the mutual rights and obligations of both parent and child. See Cheng Zhongying, "Lun rujia xiao de lunli ji qi xiandaihua: Zeren, quanli yu dexíng 論儒家孝的倫理及其現代化：責任、權利與德行 [On the Ethics of Confucian Filial Piety and Its Modernization: Rights, Responsibilities, and Virtuous Behavior]," *Journal of Sinology* (漢學研究) 4, no. 1 (1986).

mainstream Western society and, at the same time, sustained Jewish culture by maintaining its unique characteristics. Chinese culture is currently in the midst of its own modern transformation. Like the Jews after the French Revolution, since the Opium Wars, the Chinese have continually faced conflict and decisions divided along traditional and modern as well as national and global lines. When faced with such decisions, the Jewish people chose to adopt an inclusive path of "both/and"—rooted in tradition and accepting of modernity. That is, they steadfastly maintained their traditional identity as a people while, at the same time, joining mainstream global society. The lesson of Judaism's modernization is undoubtedly valuable for Chinese culture. Perhaps we can draw upon Judaism as a resource in modernizing our own filial ethics. We can create a union of traditional values and a modern spirit by simultaneously remaining rooted in a traditional conception of filial piety, including the recognition that familial bonds constitute the foundation of filial piety, and accommodating the modern values of equality, freedom, universal love, and individual rights. In this way, we can both retain the Confucian humanist tradition and seek out a transcendent form of filial ethics.

These thoughts are reflections of a macroscopic nature following a comparison of the concepts of filial piety in ancient Judaism and early Confucianism. The concrete execution of bringing traditional filial piety into the modern era is a matter beyond the scope of this paper.

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On China's Challenge to American Hegemony

Tan Mingran

Abstract

China's rise has brought about various propositions about its role in the future global order. Based on a dozen influential scholars' works, this essay first summarizes the supposed economic, political, and cultural challenges China will pose for America and then analyzes their sustainability. Like Martin Jacques, it insists that China will not be able to catch up with America using a resource-intensive model. And China cannot expand using this model through technological upgrades either, for, as a power-oriented culture, China cannot train disinterested scientists to be truly engaged in technological upgrades. Nevertheless, China has alarmed the West as it seeks a way to deal with its rise. My position is that, as China and America become more economically interdependent, the best way is to achieve mutual benefit through peaceful dialogue and establish a world culture that integrates Chinese tradition and American democracy, for maintaining American universalism and containing China by preserving U.S. military superiority are unsustainable.

Keywords

America – Beijing Consensus – challenge – China – Washington Consensus

As China's economic and political influence has increased around the world, it has increasingly drawn the attention of European and American scholars and politicians. For the first time in American history, China's rise became a topic of debate in the 2012 presidential election, in which each candidate described how he would counter China's growing claims in the South China Sea and other disputed territories and how he would handle trade tensions

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between China and the United States.[1] In fact, since 2007, American universities have increased their budget for research on China. They have changed the romanization system used in the indexing of Chinese books in libraries from Wade-Giles to pinyin and sent more students to study in China. They have also created more positions for teaching Chinese language and history. At the same time, Chinese people and cheap goods with the "Made in China" label flood into every corner of the world. As a result, some Western scholars have started to reevaluate Chinese culture and believe that it can compensate for some insufficiencies in Western civilization. As Karl Heinz Pohl says, "An encounter with Confucianism could, at least, makes us aware of some blind spots in the Western model. It might even give us the vision of an alternative modernity, one that is possibly less built on self-interest and the notion of conflict . . . and last but not least a (re-)discovery of the way of the Mean as a means to achieve social harmony."[2] However, some scholars insist that China's rise is shrinking the West[3] and will lead to the conflict between China and America.[4] Whether Chinese civilization is seen as a supplement or as a threat, there is no doubt that it is viewed as a challenge to the dominance of Western civilization. In the following, I analyze how Chinese civilization can provide an alternative set of cultural resources for coping with a Western capitalist and neoliberal crisis.

Before discussing the topic, let us first define the meaning of civilization in our context. Despite various definitions, civilization is regarded as "a cultural entity, and refers to the overall way of life of a people. It involves the values, norms, institutions, and modes of thinking to which successive generations in a given society have attached primary importance."[5] It is a "cultural area . . . ranging from the form of its houses the material of which they are built, their roofing, to skills like feathering arrows, to a dialect or group of

1 "China's Rise, a Major Topic for Final U.S. Presidential Debate," *People's Daily Online*, October 25, 2012, http://en.people.cn/90883/7990440.html.

2 Karl Heinz Pohl, "Ethics for the 21st Century—The Confucian Tradition," www.uni-trier.de/fileadmin/fb2/SIN/Pohl_Publikation/ethics_for_the_21st_century.pdf. Accessed October 10, 2012.

3 Stefan Halper, introduction to *The Beijing Consensus*: *How China's Authoritarian Model Will Dominate the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), v.

4 Huntington wrote, "With the Cold War over, the underlying differences between China and the United States have reasserted themselves in areas such as human rights, trade and weapons proliferation. These differences are unlikely to moderate. A 'new cold war,' Deng Xiaoping reportedly asserted in 1991, is under way between China and America" ("The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 [1993]: 34).

5 Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 41.

dialects to tastes in cooking, to a particular technology, a structure of beliefs, a way of making love, and even to the compass, paper, the printing press."[6] In short, civilization includes both the spiritual and material existence of a people as well as its technical know-how. Based on this definition, I explore the challenge of Chinese civilization to the West from economic, political, and cultural perspectives.

China's Economic Challenge

Although the improvement of a country's economy may not transform it into a military power, it truly can become the ultimate arbiter of military fortune and help the country gain more leverage in diplomacy and cultural influence. Historically, Great Britain and the United States have both relied on economic power to achieve world hegemony and transform the world with their culture and values.

Since the implementation of reform and the opening-up policy in 1979, "in a remarkably short space of time, China has become the centre of global manufacturing. 'Made in China' has become synonymous with a host of mass-produced consumer products throughout the world. It produces two-thirds of the world's photocopiers, shoes, toys and microwave ovens; half its DVD players, digital cameras and textiles; one third of its DVD-ROM drives and desktop computers; and a quarter of its mobiles, television sets, PDAs and car stereos."[7] By 2008, when the United States was struggling with a debt of US$2 trillion, China was enjoying reserves of US$1.8 trillion. China has bought a great number of U.S. Treasury bonds and acted as a creditor of the U.S. government. China's good economic performance has softened U.S. criticism on the issues of human rights, Taiwan, and Tibet. In order to win China's support while seeking a solution of the global economic crisis, Hilary Clinton proposed the separation of economic measures from these issues at a 2009 speech in Seoul, South Korea.[8] Her cooperative manner with China has virtually confirmed many Western scholars and politicians' belief that China poses a serious challenge to U.S. hegemony.

6 Niall Ferguson, introduction to *Civilization: The West and Rest* (New York: Penguin Press, 2010), xv.

7 Martin Jacques, *When China Rules the World: The Rise of the Middle Kingdom and the End of the Western World* (London: Allen Lane, 2009), 162.

8 Hilary Clinton, "Chinese Human Rights Can't Interfere with Other Crises," http://edition.cnn.com/2009/POLITICS/02/21/clinton.china.asia/index.html. Accessed May 10, 2013.

According to the views of Western scholars, the Chinese economic challenge can be summarized mainly by two points: (1) China's unique development model competes with the Washington Consensus, and (2) China's support of developing countries with its huge U.S. dollar reserves dwarfs that of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) and affects the effectiveness of their policy in promoting democracy.

It is well known that China's unique development model has avoided shock therapy, pursuing instead a more gradual pace of reform. "Contrary to neoliberal prescriptions, the state has actively intervened in the Chinese economy and played a key role in setting economic policy, establishing functional government institutions, regulating foreign investment, and mitigating the adverse effects of globalization on domestic constituencies."[9] This model has been called the Beijing Consensus, Yellow River Capitalism, Walled World, state-managed capitalism, and so forth. The idea behind these labels is the same—that is, China is following a market-authoritarian model instead of a market-democracy model, with a pragmatic approach to reform and support for a larger role for the state in guiding the economy and ensuring equitable growth and "an emphasis on self-determination to prevent powerful international actors from unduly influencing China's development choices, and, more problematically, a wholesale rejection of the Washington Consensus."[10]

The Washington Consensus is a term invented in 1989 by John Williamson to indicate that democratic political reform is a prerequisite for economic development. As a condition of loans from the World Bank and the IMF, some developing countries have been coerced, by the Washington Consensus, to adopt democratic policies in the context of a low level of wealth. As a result, Indonesia, Cambodia, and Bangladesh have become poorer and more chaotic after being democratized, and Latin Americans have lost confidence in democracy because of a lack of economic growth, the deterioration of public services, a rise in crime, and the persistence of widespread corruption. "A 2003 survey found that more than 50 percent of respondents of Latin Americans agreed with the statement, 'I wouldn't mind if a non-democratic government came to power if it could solve economic problems.'"[11]

Just as these developing countries are struggling due to the economic mire generated by democratization, China has accomplished its economic takeoff by postponing democratization. China's success, in Joshua Cooper Ramo's

9 Randall Peerenboom, *China Modernizes: Threat to the West or Model for the Rest?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 5.

10 Ibid., 6.

11 Halper, *The Beijing Consensus*, 133.

words, "marks a path for other nations around the world who are trying to figure out not simply how to develop their countries, but also how to fit into the international order in a way that allows them to be truly independent, to protect their way of life and political choices in a world with a single massively powerful center of gravity."[12] "For governments in Africa, Central Asia, Latin America, and even the Middle East, China's rise means that there is no longer a binary choice between assimilation to the West and isolation."[13] Peerenboom goes on to comment, "[The Beijing Consensus] replaces the discredited Washington Consensus, an economic theory made famous in the 1990s for its prescriptive, Washington-knows-best approach to telling other nations how to run themselves."[14]

The allure of the Chinese model has quickly extended beyond China's borders. "In their quest to mimic Chinese success, countries as diverse as Brazil, Russia and Vietnam are copying Beijing's activist industrial policy that uses public money and foreign investment to build capital-intensive industries."[15] Many African countries have directly invited China to establish special economic zones. The reason is that the Chinese model provides rapid growth, stability, and the promise of a better life for its citizens, which are goals toward which many developing countries are striving. Undoubtedly, the popularity of this model will inevitably shrink the influence of the Washington Consensus, challenging the dominant Western values.

Historically speaking, the Washington Consensus may have proven effective only in America's takeoff. With its constitutional democracy and immigrant population, the United States has maintained its market-democracy model for more than 200 years. However, all Western European countries experienced takeoff without democracy. In fact, the most common form of government during Europe's Industrial Revolutions was absolute or constitutional monarchy. In Martin Jacques' view, there is an inherent authoritarianism involved in the process of takeoff and modernization—because of the need to concentrate society's resources on a single objective—which, judging from history, people are prepared to tolerate because their lives are dominated by the exigencies of economic survival and the desire to escape poverty.[16] Obviously, the market-democracy model is not suitable for other countries universally, and, even before the appearance of the Chinese model, promotion of it by the United

12 Ibid., 214.

13 Mark Leonard, *What Does China Think?* (London: Fourth Estate, 2008), 117.

14 Peerenboom, *China Modernizes*, 7.

15 Mark Leonard, *What Does China Think?* 121.

16 Jacques, *When China Rules the World*, 212-214.

States was already meeting setbacks in Cambodia, Bangladesh, and Indonesia. For this reason, with regard to the relentless promotion of a market-democracy model by the United States, Peerenboom claims: "Paradoxically, the U.S., the leader of the free world, decides for others what is in their best interests and imposes the costs of its decisions on them in the name of democracy."[17]

If the Beijing Consensus challenges the Washington Consensus by providing an alternative model of development, China's loans to the developing world further financially undermines the leverage of the IMF and the World Bank, which have used loans as tools for promoting the free market and democracy. With China's unrestricted loans, developing countries do not need to risk the disintegration of their government in order to obtain aid from the IMF or the World Bank with added conditions. For example, "the IMF spent years negotiating a transparency agreement with the Angolan government, only to be told hours before the deal was due to be signed that the authorities in Luanda were no longer interested in the money: they had secured a $2 billion soft loan from China. This tale has been repeated across the continent—from Algeria to Chad, Ethiopia to Nigeria, Sudan to Uganda, and Zambia to Zimbabwe."[18] As a result, "The most serious human rights abusers in the world have a new sugar daddy, as do the proliferators, the 'genociders,' and just about every other category of state malcontent."[19] It goes without saying that the Washington Consensus has suffered setbacks in the process, and the promotion of democracy is being put aside by many governments.

Annoying many Westerners, China demands a greater voice in global forums that the West founded and has presumed to dominate, such as the United Nations, the IMF, the World Bank, and the World Health Organization (WHO). On a trip to Moscow in November 2008, Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao spoke of the importance of building a new international financial order by attaining new levels of financial and industrial cooperation among China, Russia, and other groups, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Wen also stressed the need to give developing countries more say in global institutions such as the IMF so that they can play an even more important role in international regulatory mechanisms and supervision over financial institutions in countries whose currencies are held as reserves around the world—namely, the United States.[20] Undoubtedly, all these actions are seen as part of China's challenge to the West, in the pursuit of a new world order.

17 Peerenboom, *China Modernizes*, 180.

18 Leonard, *What Does China Think?* 120.

19 Halper, *The Beijing Consensus*, 212.

20 Ibid., 5.

China's Political Challenge

As China's economy has risen, its influence on world politics has also increased. Its success in economic reform has helped it gain many followers and increased its political influence on global arenas. Its financial resources also facilitate the establishment of various forums through which its interests are secured and its voice is heard. Using a term from Sunzi's *Art of War*, China is seeking its political advantage through "global strategy and diplomacy" instead of showing military muscle. It seldom confronts the United States directly but secures its own interests in an indirect way.

Because Chinese diplomats know very well that most developing countries do not like the infringement of their sovereignty or interference in their domestic affairs by Western countries, they use this feeling to fight America's universalism and exceptionalism. They never claim that American universalism is not popular, but in 2006 let President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda deliver the message: "The Western ruling groups are conceited, full of themselves, ignorant of our conditions, and they make other people's business their business, while the Chinese just deal with you as one who represents your country, and for them they represent their own interests and you just do business."[21]

With regard to many moves proposed by Western countries, China seldom exercises its veto power in the United Nations (UN) but solves the problems by other means. For example, Beijing has been willing to allow the Organization of Islamic States to take the lead in weakening the new Human Rights Council in 2006. "Beijing also appointed an envoy to Darfur in 2007, supporting the idea of a UN peacekeeping mission and putting pressure on the Sudanese government to negotiate with rebel forces, yet adhering to a political line of influence, instead of intervention, in refusing to accept sanctions against the regime, and insisting that forces should only be deployed with the Sudanese government's consent."[22]

This subtle diplomacy has been tremendously effective, contributing to a massive fall in U.S. influence. Mark Leonard observes,

> (In) 1995 the USA won 50.6 per cent of the votes in the United Nations general assembly; by 2006, the figure had fallen to just 23.6 per cent. On human rights, the results are even more dramatic: China's win-rate has rocketed from 43 per cent to 82 per cent, while the USA's has tumbled

21 Ibid., 100.

22 Leonard, *What Does China Think?* 129.

> from 57 per cent to 22 per cent. The *New York Times'* UN correspondent James Traub has detected a paradigm shift in the United Nations' operations, and said, "It's a truism that the Security Council can function only insofar as the United States lets it. The adage may soon be applied to China as well" . . . The United Nations is therefore becoming a powerful amplifier of the Chinese world-view.[23]

In addition, China is expanding its influence within such international organizations as the World Bank, WHO, World Trade Organization (WTO), and IMF. In Halper's view, China and other newcomers in these institutions are increasingly forming clubs and other associations that outnumber the old-timers in a process that threatens to leave Western governments feeling like strangers in their own home. Merely the size of the meeting table at the London Group of Twenty meeting in early 2009 highlighted an important new reality: that the answers to the world's problems no longer lie primarily in Washington and Brussels. They also lie increasingly in new centers of economic power and new forms of global cooperation beyond the membership of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization).[24]

At the same time, China is making its voice heard by establishing such forums as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the China-African Cooperation Forum, and East Asia Summits. China plays a dominant role in these organizations, and the United Stated is not invited. For example, Halper points out, at the summit of the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) countries in 2009, the principal aim of the meeting was to discuss how to conduct trade and provide aid in ways that excluded the United States. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev described the meeting as an opportunity for these countries to "build an increasingly multi-polar world order," and to move beyond an "artificially maintained uni-polar system" with "one big center of consumption, financed by a growing deficit, and thus growing debts, one formerly strong reserve currency, and one dominant system of assessing assets and risks." When they asked to attend the meeting as observers, officials of the newly installed administration of U.S. President Barack Obama received a simple response: "nyet."[25]

There is no doubt that economic power plays a great role in China's challenge to the West in global political arenas. But we should not neglect the appeal of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, especially a respect for

23 Ibid., 129-130.

24 Halper, *The Beijing Consensus*, 212.

25 Ibid., 28-29.

sovereignty and non-interference in other countries' internal affairs. To some degree, these five principles express the common desires of most developing countries, which have gained independence from their colonizers. As we know, "The world of 1900 was an imperial world of territorial empires spreading across much of the globe; and of informal empires of trade, unequal treaties and extraterritorial privilege (for Europeans)—and garrisons and gunboats to enforce it—over most of the rest. Concepts of international law (invented in Europe) dismissed claims to sovereignty (and justified foreign intervention) unless the state concerned met a 'standard of civilization' that was approved in Europe."[26] Although the United Nations claims that all countries are equal and enjoy the same respect for their sovereignty and culture, regardless of size and population, nevertheless, American exceptionalism and universalism remind the developing countries of their colonial past. On the one hand, the United States is unwilling to be bound by rules made for others. As Mahbubani observes, "When American interests were aligned with global interests, there would be no problems. . . . However, when American interests diverge from global interests, its dominance of the UNSC [UN Security Council] could create serious distortions. . . . The U.S. effectively used its power to go against the clear wishes of the international community."[27] On the other hand, the Americans believe that what is good for America is good for the world. Democratic institutions on the American model, America's version of the market economy, and a commercial culture made for mass consumption were the best guarantees of wealth and stability.[28] As a result, although most countries dare not challenge America's hegemony, in order to survive and protect their own interests, they do not endorse America's positions either. As China's insistence on a respect for sovereignty meets most countries' desires, China has naturally become the representative of the developing countries and has won their support.

In short, through diplomacy with a smile and nonconfrontation, China is winning more and more friends in the world. Instead of promoting democracy and human rights, China puts more importance on economic development and an improvement in people's living standards. Rather than coercing other countries to accept its values, China respects their sovereignty and culture, providing them with unconditional loans. From a short-and medium-term perspective, more and more countries will accept China's model in order

26 John Darwin, *After Tamerlane: The Global History of Empire Since 1405* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2008), 298-299.

27 Kishore Mahbubani, *The New Asian Hemisphere: The Irresistible Shift of Global Power to the East* (New York: Public Affairs, 2008), 113.

28 Darwin, *After Tamerlane*, 482.

to develop their economy. In the current world situation, as most countries are still in a condition of poverty, they will prefer economic development to American democracy and human rights. However, from a long-term perspective, as people's living standards increase, they will demand a greater voice in government decisions, and democracy and human rights will become more appealing. Therefore, currently, it is important for the United States to help the rest of the world to become rich. Only after people liberate themselves from the struggle for survival will they have the mind and time to consider democracy and human rights.

China's Cultural Challenge

Wealth and economic strength are preconditions for the exercise of soft power and cultural influence. Because of their huge wealth accumulated after the Industrial Revolution, Euro-American culture since 1800 has played a dominant role in the process of globalization. Western styles of dress and living have been popular around the world. The historian J.M. Roberts wrote, in a somewhat triumphalist vein:

> Everywhere you go in South East Asia, you feel the presence of the West. Skyscrapers, Hollywood films, McDonald's, basketball, and iPads are still the symbols of modernity. People in the developing world are still fond and proud of studying at European and American universities and pay high respect and admiration to those educated in the West. To some degree, it can be said that Euro-American culture is changing the global culture, and people are becoming more Westernized. "What seems to be clear is that the story of Western civilization is now the story of mankind, its influence so diffused that old oppositions and antitheses are now meaningless."[29]

However, no matter how influential Western culture is, it cannot completely uproot indigenous cultures, such as Confucianism, Islam, and Hinduism, because culture is the means by which a person defines and fulfills the meaning of his life and explains its unique origin and potential for survival. Economic development in these cultural areas allows the people in these cultures to become more confident in their beliefs, and their culture thus regains vitality. For example, Confucianism and Hinduism are exerting and will exert

29 Jacques, *When China Rules the World*, 45.

more influence around the world, at least temporarily, as indicated by the fact that a rising number of Americans are learning Mandarin Chinese, martial arts, and meditation. Moreover, with the rise of postmodern criticism toward Western instrumental reason and individualism, Chinese culture, due to its emphasis on communitarian values and harmony between man and nature, is becoming more appealing as a the remedy to the global environmental crisis and reconstruction of the meaning of human life. As a result, Chinese culture, more or less, will pose a challenge to Western cultural dominance as either an alternative or a supplement to it.

From my observation, China's cultural challenge to the West can be summarized by three points. The first is that Confucian values may offer an alternative to American individualism. Unlike American democracy, which promotes individualism, Confucian values advocate communitarianism and mutual responsibility and benefit among members of a family and society. It places individuals in a web of social relations and emphasizes family and social harmony. In December 2003, while delivering a lecture at Harvard University, Prime Minister Wen remarked: "From Confucius to Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the traditional Chinese culture presents many precious ideas and qualities, which are essentially populist and democratic. For example, they lay stress on the importance of kindness and love in human relations, on the interest of the community, on seeking harmony without uniformity and on the idea that the world is for all."[30] In other words, if China truly develops a kind of democracy, its version will be imbued with heavy Chinese characteristics to emphasize the sacrifice and loyalty of individuals to the family and the state, unlike American democracy, which is based on individualism. Bergsten has a bolder prediction, saying, "There is the strong possibility that China is trying to develop a new model of politics that it will call democratic but that will not include the elements of pluralism, contestation and direct elections that the U.S. regards as essential part of democracy."[31] Bergsten's words can be elaborated on further from the perspective of Chinese Confucian and Daoist tradition. China will use its traditional elitism to mediate popular election and reduce the influence of the shallow and mundane popular trends in Chinese culture and politics. It will emphasize the mutual duty between ruler and subject, and parents and children, and secure a favorable environment for the development of self-cultivation. It

30 Wen Jiabao, "Turning Your Eyes to China," http://en.people.cn/200312/12/eng20031212_130267.shtml. Accessed November 20, 2012.

31 C. Fred Bergsten et al., *China's Rise: Challenges and Opportunities* (Washington, DC: Peterson Institute for International Economics, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 2008), 11.

will also exploit the Daoist heritage to develop a kind of individualism that promotes individuality but pays attention to fate and social trends. It goes without saying that this kind of democracy and individualism will be based more on cooperation and duty than on rights and self-assertion. To some degree, it is troubled by the American individualism based on rights instead of duties, such that Roger T. Ames goes on to propose "Confucian democracy" and hopes to change or transform Atlantic democracy with it.[32]

The second cultural challenge should be the development of a Chinese version of modernity and approaches for achieving it. Chinese scholars seemed to separate modernity from Western culture as early as China's Self-Strengthening Movement beginning in the 1860s. Their philosophy, "Chinese learning as the substance, but Western learning for practical use," demonstrates that their conception of modernity focused mainly on the technological dimension of Western culture. Although China's Self-Strengthening Movement ended in failure, its counterpart, the Meiji Restoration in Japan (1868) offered the world a different version of modernity, a grafting of Western technology onto Japanese Confucian culture. Later, many scholars clearly indicated that modernity is not identical to Westernization.[33] Fareed Zakaria rightly states, "Becoming a modern society is about industrialization, urbanization, and rising levels of literacy, education, and wealth. The qualities that make a society Western, in contrast, are special."[34]

Undoubtedly, this separation of modernity from Westernization is a new obstacle to the spread of American values. It overthrows the notions of American universalism—that what is good for Americans will be good for the rest of the world—and that Westernization is a prerequisite of modernity. As a result, people will modernize their countries on the basis of their own culture and will no longer rely on American or Western prescriptions. Western dominance of the world is further reduced. At this point, it is not surprising that Western scholars and politicians are reacting so strong to the Beijing Consensus or Yellow River Capitalism, which provides a new approach to modernity.

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32 Yang Zhende, "Pragmatism, Confucian Thought and Chinese Democracy—A Reflection on David Hall and Roger Ames' 'Confucian Democracy,'" in *Modern Confucianism and Western Culture*: *Reception and Transformation*, ed. Lee Ming-huei and Lin Wei-chieh (Taipei: Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy, Academia Sinica, 2007), 98.

33 Paul Cohen, *Discovering History in China: American Historical Writing on the Recent Chinese Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 72; Darwin, *After Tamerlane*, 14; Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*, 69.

34 Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World: Release 2.0* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011), 87.

The third challenge is for the Chinese to actively promote their culture in the world. As early as 1993, Cui Zhiyuan 崔之元, a professor at Tsinghua University, argued that, after freeing themselves from orthodox Marxism, Chinese intellectuals should liberate themselves from their unquestioning admiration of Western capitalism.[35] Meng Peiyuan, a professor at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, declined to interpret Chinese culture with Western thought as a frame of reference. In his view, Chinese should plan their own modernity based on Chinese history and experience, instead of copying Western versions.[36] "With a growing sense of self-confidence among Chinese scholars, the idea that China must learn from the West is being joined by the proposition that the West needs to learn from the East."[37]

The Chinese government responded to its scholars' demand promptly. In 2004, China's vice premier, Li Changchun, began to engage in overseas outreach (*waixuan gongzuo* 外宣工作). With a budget of US$720 million, China aims to establish media offices and Confucius Institutes around the world, introducing Chinese culture and the Chinese economic model and offering Chinese language instruction. By 2014, 500 Confucian institutes around the globe were teaching Mandarin and transmitting Chinese culture. China is also increasing its offers of scholarships to foreign students, expecting foreign students to help spread Chinese values. It goes without saying that China still cannot compete with America on global influence, but it will join the process of reshaping the world order, providing an alternative to Euro-American values.

The Sustainability of China's Challenges

China's advantages in challenging the West can be listed as follows. China has US$1.8 trillion in reserves and has become the center of global manufacturing. "Made in China" has become synonymous with a host of mass-produced consumer products throughout the world. China's double-digit economic growth rate has driven up the prices for raw materials and benefited countries with resources. At the same time, the developed world is also enjoying a low-cost manufacturing base and extremely cheap imports from China. In addition, China has an inexhaustible supply of cheap labor. However, according to Martin Jacques' analysis, China also has three disadvantages: technology

35 Leonard, *What Does China Think?* 14.

36 Meng Peiyuan, "My Exploration in Chinese Philosophy," www.confuchina.com/xuezhe%20wenji/meng%20peiyuan.htm. November 20, 2012.

37 Jacques, *When China Rules the World*, 380.

bottlenecks, scarce resources, and an export-driven economy. These three disadvantages will make it impossible for China to follow the resource-intensive American model of progress, and that will happen long before China gets anywhere near the present U.S. living standards.[38]

First, history has proven more than once that technology plays a critical role in sustaining an economy. In the 1800s, it was spinning machines that enabled Britain to subdue its Indian and Chinese competitors and become the global manufacturing center. At the end of the 1980s, it was a range of new industries and technologies, most notably in computing and the Internet that the United States found a new lease of economic life, leaving Japan far behind. Now, even though China is the global manufacturing center, it does not have much advanced technology to power its economy. Instead, it depends mainly on low-end manufacturing and exploits its huge supply of cheap unskilled labor and thereby produces at rock-bottom prices. Martin Jacques thus observes, "As the proportion represented by manufacturing is very small—around 15 per cent of the final price—with the bulk of costs being creamed off by design, marketing, branding and so forth, tasks which are still overwhelmingly carried out in Western and Japanese multinationals,"[39] China's status as a manufacturing center will be easily supplanted after China challenges the interests of the developed world. In fact, as Huntington proposes, "non-Western civilizations will continue to attempt to acquire the wealth, technology, skills, machines, and weapons that are part of being modern."[40] This, according to Huntington, will require the West to maintain the economic and military power necessary to protect its interests in relation to these civilizations. Implicitly, Western countries will continue their technology blockade of China, in order to blunt China's challenge.

Second, China's growth has been extremely resource intensive, demanding land, forests, water, oil, and more or less everything else. Of course, such a level of demand is unsustainable in terms of the world's available resources. In addition, China's competition for resources will cause conflicts with the developed world and makes further development more difficult. At present, China has disputes with Japan and Southeast Asia over oceanic resources, and its oil suppliers, such as Libya and Iran, were also overthrown or are harassed by the United States. Hence, it is necessary for China to upgrade its technology to make full use of its present resources and cut down on imports.

38 Ibid., 170.

39 Ibid., 174.

40 Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," 49.

If these two disadvantages can be reduced by technology upgrades, China's heavy reliance on exports will affect the developed world. At the time of the 2008 global crisis, "the European Union accounted for around 22 percent of Chinese exports and the United States 18 percent."[41] If Japan were taken into account, the percentage for developed countries would be higher. After the 2008 financial crisis, in response to the decline in exports, the Chinese government called for expanding internal consumption. It invested a lot of money in infrastructure, public welfare, and education, and lowered interest rates. However, growth in the first three quarters of 2014 was still below the expected 8 percent on an annualized basis. It will very likely be below 7 percent if the developed world continues to struggle in their economic mire, which will lead the West to adopt stricter protectionist measures. Were China's growth rate to fall below 7 percent, social unrest ignited by unemployment and corruption would eliminate any opportunity for China to challenge the West.

Can China find a solution through technological upgrades? For the near future, the answer appears to be negative. The reason is that most Chinese are pursuing short-term interests, and few do research with a disinterested mind-set. Chinese society is power oriented and people have greater respect for officials than a Nobel laureate, because the former can bring benefits immediately. As a result, in China the day that a scientist becomes famous is also the day that he becomes a technocrat. This ethos makes everyone spend time and energy on earning promotions and establishing connections, and no one greatly cares about upgrading technology. Therefore, China's challenge to the West is only temporary.

The Response of the West

Despite the fact that China's challenge is only temporary, the West, especially the United States, has become very sensitive. As Martin Jacques describes,

> We are so used to the world being Western, even American, that we have little idea what it would be like if it was not. The West, moreover, has a strong vested interest in the world being cast in its image, because this brings multifarious benefits. . . . For reasons of both mind-set and interest, therefore, the United States, and the West more generally, finds it

41 Jacques, *When China Rules the World*, 164.

> difficult to visualize, or accept, a world that involves a major and continuing diminution in its influence.[42]

Of course, the dissolution of Western hegemony incurs not only the change of power center but also the loss of superiority, wealth, and attention. Take ancient China as an example: before its defeat by the West, China dominated its tributary states, and Chinese enjoyed a sense of superiority toward the people in its empire. After being defeated, the Chinese lost not only territories and wealth but also the respect of its neighboring peoples. Hence, it is understandable that the West is preparing to defend its dominance even when China shows no sign of challenging it.

Huntington suggests maintaining the superiority of the West in technology, machines, and weaponry, in order to limit the expansion of the military strength of Confucian and Muslim states. At the same time, through exploiting differences and conflicts among Confucian and Muslim states, the West should dissolve the Confucian-Muslim military connection; through creating allies with Judeo-Christian countries and Japan, limit and contain Confucian and Muslim states; through supporting other groups sympathetic to the West, and strengthening international institutions that reflect and legitimize Western interests and values, maintain Western predominance, protect Western interests, and promote Western political and economic values.[43]

Bergsten's proposition can be viewed as a detailed reprise of Huntington's exploitation of the differences and conflicts among Confucian and Muslim states. He asks the United States to establish interest allies in Chinese inland, both high-and low-level governments. He insists that U.S. officials, politicians, and merchants go to localities and learn about their policy, culture, and way of thinking.[44]

Halper's prescription is more detailed. Like Huntington, he proposes to prevent an Asian economic union through worsening the disputes between China, Japan, Pakistan, and India. He calls for using China's internal problems, especially ethnic separatist trends, to cause the disintegration of China. As for the United States, he recommends energy saving and independence and investment incentives. Most importantly, he proposes more funding and larger development programs for domestic infrastructure, R&D, skilled workforces, and the education of students in key areas of the high-tech and engineering sectors. In his view, the United States could kill two birds with one stone and

42 Ibid., 45.

43 Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," 49.

44 Bergsten et al., *China's Rise*, 85.

transfer some of the money used to subsidize agriculture into subsidizing education.[45] Halper's proposal reminds us of how America succeeded in leaving Japan behind in the 1980s through a computing and Internet-technological revolution.

In addition, Halper asks the United States to learn from China on how to interact with African countries. He suggests that the United States loosen its requirements on loans and support to African countries; help them build infrastructure, and acknowledge their special circumstances. He recommends holding an American-African summit and opening the American market to African countries to compete with China for influence and resources. He also calls on American leaders to treat leaders from small countries with due respect and increase American popularity around the world.

In addition to the proposals mentioned above, other scholars make bold predictions, exacerbating the threat from China. Ferguson predicted that, within a decade (beginning in December 2010), China will overtake the United States in terms of the gross domestic product, just as, in 1963, Japan overtook the United Kingdom.[46] Halper observes that unless China and India suffer outbreaks of serious military conflagration or a calamitous domestic crisis, they will become the world's largest economies in the middle of the twenty-first century.[47] Martin Jacques and others believe that China will reshape the world order in its Confucian tradition.[48] In response to scholars' proposals, the U.S. government has lost no time in shifting its military focus to East Asia, strengthening its containment of China, for Americans are trying to dissuade any potential adversary (now China) from pursuing a military buildup in the hope of surpassing, or equaling, the power of the United States. It fears that China will rapidly modernize its military along with its economy, challenging American hegemony and affecting American interests around the globe.

In the face of American containment, China's response is unpredictable. However, whether a war breaks out will depend on the patience and reasonable judgment of the two sides. On the one hand, if China's economic prosperity causes an economic downturn in the United States or becomes an obstacle to the development of the U.S. economy, the United States may act like Great Britain, in the 1800s, which destroyed China's economy with coercive selling of opium. On the other hand, if China cannot tolerate American containment, just

45 Halper, *The Beijing Consensus*, 240.

46 Ferguson, *Civilization*, ix.

47 Halper, *The Beijing Consensus*, 41.

48 Bergsten et al., *China's Rise*, 12; Jacques, *When China Rules the World*, 318; Leonard, *What Does China Think?* 115.

as Germany could not tolerate British containment in 1909, a war may break out. In any case, China should prepare for the worst measures that America could take, in the spirit of the French thinker Alexis de Tocqueville's words. After a visit to America, de Tocqueville once said in 1835, "If we reason from what passes in the world, we should almost say that the European is to the other races of mankind what man himself is to the lower animals: he makes them subservient to his use, and when he cannot subdue he destroys them."[49] Then the American white colonizers soon put his words into practice with the liquidation of the American Indian. In fact, since the United States became a superpower, it has been doing its best to wipe out any challenger to its hegemony and global interests. Japan is America's loyal and subservient ally, but America destroyed its economy through an appreciation of the yen when the Japanese economy showed signs of surpassing America's in the 1980s. When the leaders of Iraq and Libya, Saddam Hussein and Muammar Gaddafi, respectively, challenged America's hegemony, they were annihilated without the authorization of the United Nations. All these events demonstrate that the United States will waste no time when an opportunity comes to defeat its opponent.

However, America seems to be extremely tolerant of China's rise. The reasons may be: (1) China and America have formed "Chimerica," a term coined by Moritz Schularick and Niall Ferguson in describing the relationship between parsimonious China and profligate America.[50] If the Chinese start selling U.S. Treasury bonds or cease to buy them, the dollar will plummet, and so will the value of their dollar assets.[51] If the United States attacks China and China sells its U.S. Treasury bonds, the global dollar system will collapse, and U.S. hegemony will end quickly. To some degree, the two countries have entered into a symbiotic relationship. (2) China has done its best to accommodate the United States around the world. Regarding issues with respect to North Korea and Iran, China is actively cooperating with the United States; on Darfur (Sudan) and Myanmar, China has followed the West's lead. China also is gradually appreciating the value of the *renminbi* and reducing pressure on the U.S. dollar. (3) China has adequate defense forces and can resist a U.S. attack. Moreover, China also has strategic weapons globally to deter or respond to any American nuclear attack. All these factors may lead the two countries to sit down and negotiate plans for the future.

49 Darwin, *After Tamerlane*, 24.

50 Ferguson, *Civilization*, vi.

51 Jacques, *When China Rules the World*, 360.

The Possibility of a Peaceful Dialogue

Chimerica, or this symbiotic relationship, makes possible peaceful dialogue between China and the United States. However, to keep the dialogue peaceful, each side needs to recognize the other's culture and values with an open mind.

First, the West should give up its domineering manner developed since the colonial period. Especially, the United States should respect its interlocutors and adopt a cooperative manner instead of the argument "only we can do this, and you cannot do this."[52] As the West is so used to the world being Western, even American, as Martin Jacques observes, it will be very difficult for the West to cease being condescending in its dialogue with other people. But difficulty does not mean impossibility. Just as in the 1900s white Americans could not accept equality with black people, their descendants changed their minds and elected a black man their president in 2008. Also, at the time of the Emperor Qianlong's letter to King George III of England in the 1700s, the Chinese did not acknowledge any valuable things from barbarians, but after being defeated, their descendants completely accepted Western science and technology. Even for Europeans and Americans, their mind-set of dominance is a recent phenomenon. During the Renaissance, many great Western thinkers, such as Kant, Leibniz, and Voltaire, highly acknowledged the good points of Chinese culture and hoped to complement the Western tradition with it.[53] Therefore, Europeans and Americans should truly accept "the other" and acknowledge the existence of alternatives for human development. Otherwise, conflicts and harm to all human beings will come about if, as Mahbubani says, some people believe that Western civilization represents the apex of human civilization and that any alternative portends a new dark age.[54]

Along with giving up their domineering manner, the West should abandon its double standard when dealing with human rights problems in developing countries. As Ron Wheeler critically points out, Western states are seldom targeted in resolutions by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, and

52 Leonard, *What Does China Think?* 93.

53 In fact, during the Enlightenment, Confucius was hot. Many European liberals idealized Confucianism for its basis in natural, as opposed to divine law. Voltaire put it simple in his *Philosophical Dictionary*: "No superstitions, no absurd legends, none of those dogmas which insult reason and nature." Immanuel Kant would later call Confucius "the Chinese Socrates." Leibniz, a philosopher who straddled the line between religiosity and secularism, went so far as to argue, "We need missionaries from the Chinese who might teach us the use and practice of natural religion" (Zakaria, *The Post-American World*, 123).

54 Mahbubani, *The New Asian Hemisphere*, 125.

none has been targeted for domestic human rights violations of any kind. In fact, the West or Americans have turned the Commission into a "court" where they put developing countries on trial.[55] In the case of China, the United States and other Western powers should correct their partiality to gross violations of human rights occurring in their allies, such as Burundi, Colombia, India, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Uganda, and countless other countries, and yet are quick to criticize China even though most Chinese enjoy more extensive freedoms and a better standard of living than ever before.[56] However, to be lenient to China does not mean to ignore China's violation of human rights. It just reminds us of the fact that both the West and China need to be more self-critical about their own shortcomings with respect to human rights.

Second, Chinese people should step out of their sense of "being humiliated" and sense of inferiority and recover their cultural confidence. Since the defeat in the Opium War, Chinese people, from top to bottom, have lost their orientation. Gradually, they not only have accepted the superiority of Western science and technology but have also started doubting the values of their own culture, especially Confucianism. For most Chinese, Western society represents order, wealth, and superiority. This has been demonstrated by the never-ebbing wave of Chinese students studying abroad, especially in Western Europe and North America. If the Chinese start a dialogue with Europeans and Americans with this mind-set of worshipping the West, the tone and character of the talk will be tilted toward the West, and the outcome will not be constructive.

To shed this sense of inferiority, Chinese people should reevaluate both the Chinese and the Western culture. They should appreciate the achievements of Western science, technology, and capitalism, but they also need to use the harmony of man and nature to curb the merciless conquest of nature powered by instrumental rationality and secure a lively world where "the kites fly in the air and fish jump in the water." They should seek democracy to fight infringement of individual rights by the government and leaders, but they should be aware of the negative consequence of extreme individualism on family and society and correct it with Confucian familial ethics. Moreover, they should not be blinded by the sense of "being humiliated," but look at the forced openness to Western culture since 1840 as a valuable asset for knowing the West better. With this sincere openness and learning, Chinese people have accumulated more knowledge than the West in reconstructing "a unified world culture" in the twenty-first century. Paul A. Cohen, a Harvard professor of history,

55 Ron Wheeler, "The United Nations Commission on Human Rights, 1982-1997: A Study of 'Targeted' Resolutions," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 32, no. 75 (1999): 99.

56 Peerenboom, *China Modernizes*, 164.

has realized the West's ignorance of the world. He observes, "Western people stepped in the 1700s Chinese old way, when the representatives of all other great cultures have been compelled to take fundamental stock of our own culture, deliberately dismantle large portions of it, and put it back together again in order to survive. Never have Westerners had to take other peoples' views of us really seriously."[57] Therefore, it is predictable that Chinese people are in a favorable position to meld the good points of China and the West, just as they melded Confucianism and Buddhism. Hence, Chinese people should have the wisdom and confidence to grow out of the humiliation, recover their cultural and economic confidence, and finally work out a peaceful dialogue with Americans.

In addition, other factors also force America to concede more room and power to the rest of the world. Europeans and Americans gained dominance through the technology and wealth generated by the Industrial Revolution. However, in the twenty-first century, wealth is shifting to the rest of the world. Shanghai, Mumbai, Dubai, and others have become new centers of wealth, and the monopoly of wealth by the West has been further weakened by the 2008 financial crisis. At the same time, science and technology have come to be viewed as separable from Western culture and are believed to be able to grow in other cultures, as most countries provide scientists and engineers with academic freedom and facilities. Blocking the spread of technology has become less and less efficient. Although the United States is spending billions on military upgrades, its new technology will soon be able to be copied or cracked. To maintain a dominant and unchallengeable force will become increasingly unsustainable. Therefore, the best practical option for the United States is peaceful negotiation.

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57 Jacques, *When China Rules the World*, 100.

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Communicating Civilization Through Rituals: Mount Tai Pilgrimages in Song China, 960-1279

Han Lifeng

Abstract

This paper examines the imperial *feng* 封 and *shan* 禪 ritual at Mount Tai in 1008 and its connection with popular pilgrimages among the Mount Tai cult. It aims to demonstrate how ritual can be used as a tool of the imperial state in communicating its political and cultural agenda.

Placing the imperial pilgrimage within its historical context at the turn of the eleventh century, it can be understood as an effort to secure mass identification with the state and its authority. More importantly, it could be used to establish ownership of Chinese civilization by the Song dynasty (960-1279) in its competition with the Khitan, who had long adopted Chinese institutions and ideology. Various strategies were deployed by the throne to communicate the imperial symbolism of the mountain. The mountain, therefore, had become valuable symbolic capital. Through the composition of temple inscriptions, the literati were able to redefine the popular ritual practices of the Mount Tai cult and brought them into a hegemonic discourse on the mountain. This facilitated the construction of an imperial cultural identity accessible to all social groups and allowed an abstract concept of Chinese culture to be communicated through the fabric of society.

Keywords

communication – *feng* and *shan* ritual – pilgrimage – symbolism

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Introduction

This paper scrutinizes the imperial *feng* 封 and *shan* 禪 pilgrimages to Mount Tai and their complex domestic and intercultural background, particularly the ritual competition from the Liao state for the Mandate of Heaven. It examines how the mountain became a symbol of the orthodoxy of Chinese civilization and culture. Through sophisticated manipulation of ritual and communication strategies, the Song court managed to convey its legitimacy and establish its monopoly over the interpretation of the mountain as a symbol. Further attention is paid to investigating how popular pilgrimages and religious rituals connected to the Mount Tai cult were redefined and interpreted through the efforts of the literati and how the symbolism of the mountain penetrated popular life.

In 1127, the Song Dynasty (960-1279) lost nearly half its territory in the north to the Jurchen, also known as the Jin Dynasty (1115-1234), including the sacred seat of Mount Tai. The center of the Mount Tai cult shifted from northern China to the south. In scholarly writings, we see the change as well as continuity regarding the pilgrimages of the Mount Tai cult. The symbolism of the mountain was enhanced in the absence of its geographical availability and was strongly invoked in defense of the enduring legitimacy of the Song.

This paper treats ritual and ceremony as indispensable parts of establishing political legitimacy and its power structure. This approach draws inspiration from sociological work in which the power of ceremony and the ceremonials of power have been important areas of study.[1] The functional relationship between power and public events, such as feasts, festivals, and ceremonies, has also attracted considerable attention among many anthropologists who consider the symbolic representations of power as essential to the ordering of a society.[2] Clifford Geertz, for one, has argued that in premodern Bali, pomp was not the handmaiden of power; rather, it was the other way around. It was

1 The literature on this subject is vast. See, in particular, David Cannadine, "Introduction," in *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, ed. David Cannadine and Simon Price (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 2; David Chaney, "A Symbolic Mirror of Ourselves: Civic Ritual in Mass Society," *Media, Culture and Society*, no. 5 (1983): 119-135; Ronald L. Grimes, *Symbol and Conquest: Public Ritual and Drama in Santa Fe, New Mexico* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976); David Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics and Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Steven Lukes, "Political, Ritual, and Social Integration," in his *Essays in Social Theory* (Aldershot, UK: Gregg Revivals, 1994); Edward Shils and Michael Young, "The Meaning of the Coronation," *Sociological Review* 1, no. 2 (December 1953): 63-81.

2 See, for instance, Cannadine, "Introduction," 3; Raymond Firth, *Symbols, Public and Private* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1973); Clifford Geertz, "Centers, Kings and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power," in *Culture and Its Creators*, ed. Joseph Ben-David and Terry N.

through the performance of state ceremony that the Balinese king exercised his rule.[3] Many historians have also studied power and ceremonial ritual with an attempt to reveal their close connection in a historical way.[4]

This paper looks at ritual as a tool of the imperial state in the operation of power. It was a choreographed public performance that was meant to display imperial power and authority before its subjects and to articulate the political and cultural agenda of the state.

The Early History of Mount Tai

Mount Tai, also known as the Eastern Sacred Peak (*dongyue* 東嶽), was a numinous magnet for Chinese from all walks of life and believers of different religious traditions.[5] Chinese cosmology identifies several mountains as more sacred and powerful than others. These mountains were called Sacred Peaks (*yue* 嶽).[6] Initially there was a system of four Sacred Peaks located in the four cardinal directions.[7] The *Zuo Commentary* (*Zuozhuan* 左傳) links the four Sacred Peaks to non-Chinese tribes,[8] symbolizing the four regional leaders defending the frontiers against foreign invasion. In this system, the Sacred Peaks are "defined as outside of or at least peripheral to the Chinese cultural sphere."[9] According to the canonical *Book of Documents* (*Shangshu* 尚書), the

Clark (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977); Victor Turner, *Dramas, Field, and Metaphors*: *Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974).

3 Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 13, 136.

4 Cannadine and Price, *Rituals of Royalty*; W.R. Connor, "Tribes, Festivals and Processions: Civic Ceremonial and Political Manipulation in Archaic Greece," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 107 (1987); James Laidlaw, "On Theatre and Theory: Reflections on Ritual in Imperial Chinese Politics," in *State and Court Ritual in China*, ed. Joseph McDermott (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

5 Terry Kleeman, "Mountain Deities in China: The Domestication of the Mountain God and the Subjugation of the Margins," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 114, no. 2 (April-June 1994): 226.

6 Brian R. Dott, *Identity Reflections: Pilgrimages to Mount Tai in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 30.

7 *Shangshu zhengyi*, *juan* 3, in SSJ, 1: 266. The four mountains are the Eastern Sacred Peak (Mount Tai in present-day Shandong province), the Western Sacred Peak (Mount Hua in Shaanxi province), the Northern Sacred Peak (Mount Heng in Shanxi province), and the Southern Sacred Peak (Mount Heng in Hunan province).

8 *Zuozhuan zhengyi*, *juan* 32, in SSJ, 5: 4243-4244.

9 Kleeman, "Mountain Deities in China," 228.

sage-ruler Shun went on imperial inspections (*xunshou* 巡守) during certain months of the year to the four Sacred Peaks. He presented offerings to Heaven by burning them and did the same to the mountains and rivers successively.[10] Traveling through the sacred space, the ruler, with the presence of his holy body as the son of Heaven, ordered the spatial hierarchy of the Chinese landscape, defining the center and the periphery of Chinese civilization.

During the late Warring States Period (481-221 BCE) and Han Dynasty (202 BCE-220 CE), the central peak (Mount Song in present-day Henan province) was added to the sacred peaks, yielding a total of five mountains. With the expansion of Chinese territory, the sacred peaks no longer marked the frontiers of Chinese civilization but had become part of the heartland instead.[11] We see the rising importance of the Eastern Sacred Peak, Mount Tai, starting in the Han, when the system was correlated to the five agents (*wuxing* 五行). Located in the east, Mount Tai was associated with the sunrise and all the creative forces or elements, such as spring, green, and wood. This connection led Mount Tai to be seen as the source of all life. Because of this, Mount Tai became the most important and thus the leader of the Five Sacred Peaks. (五嶽之尊)[12]

Apart from being the site for imperial tours, Mount Tai was also a sacred place for imperial rituals and a source of political legitimacy. Among the rituals, the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices dedicated to heaven and earth respectively were the most solemn and influential. *Feng* was often interpreted in traditional Chinese scholarship as "to pile up earth" in order to construct a raised altar, and *shan* as "to sweep away the earth" to make a flat altar. These two glosses thus signified the preparation for a sacrifice.[13] The origins of the *feng* and *shan* rituals themselves are unclear. Though Sima Qian in his famous *Records of the Grand Historian* (*Shiji* 史記) stated that the tradition had begun in antiquity, traditional Chinese opinion on it has never arrived at a consensus.[14] Mark Lewis notes that "as early as the Liang Dynasty (502-526 CE) Chinese scholars began to posit that the sacrifices were created in the Qin and the Han."[15]

Traditionally, "the sacrifices bore strong political as well as religious overtones. . . . They were an expression of the ruler's reception of the Mandate of

10 *Shangshu zhengyi*, *juan* 3, in SSJ, 1: 268; *Liji zhushu, juan* 11, in SSJ, 4: 2871-2872.

11 Kleeman, "Mountain Deities in China," 230.

12 Dott, *Identity Reflections*, 31.

13 For interpretations of the two terms, see *Shiji, juan* 28: 1355. For conclusions by modern scholars, see Mark E. Lewis, "The *feng* and *shan* Sacrifices of Emperor Wu of the Han," in McDermott, *State and Court Ritual in China*, 54; Howard Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk: Ritual and Symbol in the Legitimation of the T'ang Dynasty* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 172.

14 Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk*, 171.

15 Lewis, "The *feng* and *shan* Sacrifices of Emperor Wu of the Han," 52.

Heaven. . . . They were an announcement to Heaven and Earth that the ruler had unified the empire and brought peace to the world, that is, that the divine charge had been fulfilled."[16] But despite the great significance of these rites, they were rarely carried out. Six emperors at most in all of Chinese history are recorded to have performed the rites: Shi Huangdi of the Qin (220-210 BCE), Emperor Wu of the Former Han (141-87 BCE), Emperor Guangwu of the Later Han (25-57 CE), Emperors Gaozong (649-683 CE) and Xuanzong of the Tang (712-756 CE), and Emperor Zhenzong of the Song (997-1022 CE). The last performance was in 1008.[17]

Mount Tai's association with life and Heaven was complemented with a connection with death, Earth, and the underworld. Beginning in the Han, people believed that Mount Tai presided over death.[18] The spirit of the mountain was seen as a male god who, by Tang times, ruled the underworld as the judge of the dead.[19] He received imperially bestowed titles such as king (*wang* 王) and emperor (*di* 帝).[20] His common appellation in the Song was "Emperor of Humane Holiness, Equal to Heaven" (*tianqi rensheng di* 天齊仁聖帝). In post-Tang China, temples to the Eastern Sacred Peak were found in every major town and city.[21]

A Popular Pilgrimage to Mount Tai

In the third month of 1080, a group of boat people from Sizhou (泗州, roughly in the area of modern-day Xuyi 盱眙 in Jiangsu province) and Peixian (沛县) went on a pilgrimage to Mount Tai. They visited the principal temple of the God of the Eastern Sacred Peak and an attached shrine dedicated to the Lord of Mount Haoli,[22] who was claimed to be an assistant of the God of Mount

16 Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk*, 170.

17 See CB 70: 1563-1573; *Hou-Han shu*, 1: 82; *Jiu Tangshu*, 5: 89; 8: 188-189; *Shiji, juan* 28: 1366-1367, 1397-1398, 1401, 1403; *Tang huiyao, juan* 7: 113-119.

18 Edouard Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan: Essai de monographie d'un culte chinois* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1910), 398-399; Kleeman, "Mountain Deities in China," 230; Ye Tao, *Taishan xiangshe yanjiu* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2009), 53.

19 Susan Naquin, "The Peking Pilgrimage to Miao-Feng-Shan: Religious Organizations and Sacred Site," in *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*, ed. Susan Naquin and Chü-fang Yü (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 4.

20 See *Jiu Tangshu*, 8: 188; SS, 102: 2486; *Tang huiyao, juan* 47: 977.

21 Kleeman, "Mountain Deities in China," 230.

22 Another name for the mountain is Mount Gaoli. Located to southwest of the city of Tai'an, it was believed to be the entrance and exit for souls undergoing reincarnation. During the

Tai. After performing *sai* (賽) rituals[23] and conducting prayers to the gods, the pilgrims erected a long pole in the courtyard of the temple to honor the shrine. A presented scholar (*jinshi* 進士) from Dongping (東平, in present-day Tai'an) wrote a text for them to commemorate the event. They had it carved in stone and placed the stele in front of the shrine.[24] The text reads:

> Fenggao county [in present-day Tai'an] in the prefecture of Yanzhou, with Mount Tai to its north, is a town of great significance under Heaven. It is venerably said that the God of the Eastern Sacred Peak is the Emperor of Humane Holiness, Equal to Heaven. From the Qin and Han dynasties until the great Tang up to our time, the Song, the *feng* and *shan* sacrificial rites have been practiced. The façade of the god's temple is lofty and intimidating, its halls outstanding and spacious, all in conformity with the layout of celestial palaces. The humble visitors become more respectful and cautious. Oh, the virtue of the god is being wise and righteous, while his duty is to take charge of the happiness, goodness, misfortune, and excessiveness in the world. Staying in shadows, he is unfathomable; showing his presence, he answers all the prayers. Therefore, people from the four directions all submit to him and venerate him. In the west wing of the temple stands the shrine for his subordinate, the god of the Gaoli Mountain. The temple title was inscribed in the Han dynasty. He is the leader of all the bureaus [*si*] of the underworld and in charge of the records about the lengths of people's lives. The glory of his everlasting power is preserved in sacrificial canons.
>
> Today there is the boat merchant Zhang Ping of the Yellow River from the ancient town Peixian. He organized a [pilgrimage] society and collected money to perform the annual *sai* ritual at the shrine. [The pilgrims,] after praying devoutly in front of the statue of the god, erected a long pole in the courtyard of the temple. The pole is made out of catalpa wood decorated with polished emeralds. The pole rises up straight and towering, glorifying the god's altar. Upon the completion of the event, the text is therefore composed to keep a record. [We] have it carved in stone so that it will pass on forever.

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last three performances of the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices (in 666, 725, and 1008) the *shan* ceremony was conducted at the mountain immediately to its east, Mount Sheshou.

23 *Sai* is an archaic term for offerings to the gods. Later, it generally meant religious procession with music and all kinds of performances.

24 The stele is now lost. Its rubbing is preserved in the Tai'an Museum. The text can be found in Tang Zhongmian 唐仲冕, "Dailan岱覽," in SDWXJC, *juan* 20: 17.

This happened in the third month of the third year of Yuanfeng [1080], of the great Song Dynasty.

Respectfully from the boatmen of Sizhou and their head of society Wang Zhengnan. Zhang Ping, the head of society of Liucheng in Peixian, the prefecture of Xuzhou, set up the stele.

Composed by Hu Yuanzi, advanced scholar of Dongping; calligraphy—Xu Peisong; the title in seal script—the guidance officer of the East Sacred Peak . . . Shoude; engraving—Zhang Xibai.[25]

The stone inscription is a valuable record of the earliest popular pilgrimages to Mount Tai.[26] The participants in the event were mostly boat people. The major purpose of their pilgrimage was to set up a pole in the temple. At the beginning of the message carved in stone, however, they confirmed a confident and panoramic perception of the whole country, even the universe. The small town of Fenggao, hosting the seat of Mount Tai, was described as a "town of great significance under Heaven (*tianxia* 天下)." It attracted "people from the four directions (*sifang* 四方)." The terms "all under Heaven" and "the four directions" might be read simply as conventional references to vast areas or different places, but they were also the prevalent terms adopted in ancient and contemporary discussions of world order.[27] In the Chinese worldview, China, the Middle Kingdom, was the center of the universe and thus the heart of the civilized world. Barbarians from the four directions (*siyi* 四夷) all came and

25 兗之奉高，北有岱山焉，乃天下之巨鎮也。尊之曰：東嶽神，即天齊仁聖帝也。自秦漢而下，沿巨唐，逮我本朝，封禪之禮備焉。廟貌威崇，殿宇顯廠，一如上方制度，俾至者加其恭肅。噫，聰明正直，神之德也。福善禍淫，神之職也。幽而罔測，顯而有靈，則四方之民，咸歸仰之。在帝廟之西，有高裡山之祠，即聖帝輔相之神也。其廟號，本漢封爵也。領袖群司，掌判陰籍，光載祀典，靈威不泯。

今有古沛張平者，即長河之舟賈也。乃集社聚緡，歲賽于祠下。睹其神像，虔啟愿心，立長竿于廟庭。由是選梓木以為之材，鬱翠琰以為之硤。聳而上直，表著其壇。功畢告成，故書其始。刻之于石，以永其傳。

時大宋元豐三年庚申歲三月。

泗州船戶同糾首王政男欽，徐州沛縣留城鎮都糾首張平立石。

東平進士胡元資撰，徐民裴聳書，將仕郎守東嶽令□□□守德篆額，張希白刻。

26 The record dated the earliest is a rubbing of stone inscription describing the pilgrimages of an incense society based in Chanzhou 澶州 from 936 to 941. The rubbing is preserved in Tai'an Museum in Shandong province.

27 For the discussion during the Song, see examples in Ouyang Xiu, "Zhengtong lun 正統論," in *Ouyang Xiu quanqi, juan* 16: 265-275; Shi Jie, "Zhongguo lun中國論," in *Culai xiansheng wenji, juan* 10, 116-117.

submitted to China's authority. In this sense, the rhetoric in the text amplified the landscape of Mount Tai and implicated a global, cultural hierarchy highlighting the superiority of Chinese civilization. To justify the implication, the author drew on the grandest imperial *feng* and *shan* sacrifices performed in history. Except for the turbulent Five Dynasties (907-960) interregnum, the Song came directly after the great Tang. A lineage of cultural tradition was thereby created. The Han and Tang dynasties are generally considered the most glorious epochs in Chinese imperial history, especially in terms of their ability to impose a Chinese world order on their neighbors. The Song dynasty consistently claimed to have inherited the empire from the Tang, though it was greeted with suspicion and challenge during the first two decades of its creation.[28] The reference to the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices seemingly secured its legitimate position as heir to an "abstraction defined as Chinese culture."[29]

Undoubtedly, this intricacy of meanings conveyed in the inscription could not be the genuine intention of the pilgrims, who were most likely illiterate. They traveled more than 200 kilometers to erect a pole that they believed would honor the altar of the God of Mount Haoli. Why Mount Haoli instead of Mount Tai? It was pointed out in particular in the text that the honorable title of the God of Mount Haoli was granted in the Han period. The founder of this long-lasting empire, Liu Bang (劉邦), came from Peixian, the hometown of the head of the pilgrimage society and some other pilgrims. This fact indicated, or was meant to indicate, the relationship between the town and the god. The pole, erected to honor the altar of the god, and the stele, set up to pass on the story, were reminders of the connection to ensure long-lasting blessing and protection from the god.

The author, however, was a scholar with the title of *jinshi*. Fostered by a standard education curriculum, he tended to, or felt obligated to, connote in his writing a broader picture in alignment with the officially approved ideology. Therefore, the popular pilgrimage was placed in the context of the imperial expeditions throughout history, and the *sai* rituals performed by the boat people seemed a microcosm of the grand imperial ritual of *feng* and *shan*. What was the message that the author was trying to convey? As an outsider in the pil-

28 Wang Gungwu, "The Rhetoric of a Lesser Empire: Early Sung Relations with Its Neighbors" in *China Among Equals*, ed. Morris Rossabi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 47.

29 James L. Watson, "Standardizing the Gods: The Promotion of T'ien Hou Along the South China Coast, 960-1960," in *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan, and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 292.

grimage community (he was from Dongping, the local area of Mount Tai, not from the hometown of the pilgrims), did he wish to transform the practice in the text? These questions force us to reflect upon the relationship among politics, religion, and power. In the interpretation of rituals, how were values and symbols transformed as they crossed social boundaries? How did the influence of imperial ritual percolate into the quotidian experience of people at different positions in the hierarchy of power? In order to analyze these questions thoroughly, we need to review the imperial *feng* and *shan* sacrifices in the Song era, as they defined the framework of the broad picture into which the author tried to locate the popular ritual.

The Chanyuan Treaty and the Imperial *feng* and *shan* Sacrifices

In early Song times, the biggest menace to the empire came from the state of the Khitans (Qitan) or the Liao (遼). Continuous Khitan raids on the Song borders escalated in the early eleventh century. A peace treaty between the Song and the Liao was concluded in early 1005 after their military confrontation in Chanyuan (澶淵, also known as Chanzhou 澶州, modern-day Puyang 濮陽 in Henan province). According to the treaty, the Song court would grant annual payments to the Liao. In return, the Khitan army evacuated occupied territories and agreed to enter into friendly relations with the Song.[30]

According to some official sources, though the treaty was at first hailed as a diplomatic victory, an equal treaty with "barbarians" was still seen as upsetting the Chinese view of the Middle Kingdom as the center of the world. Emperor Zhenzong, under such circumstances, decided to perform the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices at Mount Tai in order to wash away the shame of the Chanyuan agreements.[31] After claiming in front of his officials that he had received the "Heavenly Text,"[32] and with numerous purportedly auspicious omens being reported from different places, the emperor, in the tenth month of 1008, made

30 Lau Nap-Yin and Huang K'uan-Chung, "Founding and Consolidation of the Sung Dynasty Under T'ai-tsu, T'ai-tsung, and Chen-tsung," in *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 5, pt. 1: *The Sung Dynasty and Its Precursors, 907-1279*, ed. Denis Twitchett, and Paul J. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 262-270.

31 CB, *juan* 67: 1506; also see Kou Zhun's 寇准 biography in SS, *juan* 281: 9531-9532.

32 The Heavenly Text was reported to have appeared three times in the year 1008: at the Chengtian Gate 承天門 in the first month (BM, *juan* 22: 135); on the Tower of Merits and Virtues 功德閣 within the imperial palace in the fourth month (CB, *juan* 68: 1530); and at Mount Tai in the sixth month (BM, *juan* 22: 136).

the controversial expedition to Mount Tai, where he performed the imperial sacrifices.[33] Subsequently, in 1011, he carried out the Earth sacrifice at Fenyin (汾陰),[34] another great occasional imperial sacrifice, second in prestige only to the *feng* and *shan*. In the first month of 1014, he left the capital again on a religious mission to pay a formal visit to Laozi's temple in Bozhou (亳州). Beginning with the appearance of the first Heavenly Text in the first month of 1008 to the last one in the third month of 1018, the Heavenly Text affair featuring grand imperial rituals and ceremonies and the construction of Daoist temples lasted for ten years.[35]

The Domestic and International Situation

Some scholars regard the imperial sacrifices as a climactic stage in building up the legitimacy of imperial power since the founding of the Song dynasty.[36] The Song started as just another short-lived dynasty of North China during the Five Dynasties period. The founder of this dynasty, Zhao Kuangyin (趙匡胤), also known as Emperor Taizu (太祖), ended the fragmentation and turbulence with military force and established a highly centralized government. Military force, however, might achieve only temporary results if it failed to legitimize itself in the eyes of the people.

One of the urgent tasks for the new government of the Song was, therefore, to resume the classical system of rituals and ceremonies through which an announcement of the dynasty's reception of the Mandate of Heaven could be made. During the period of formation and consolidation of the Song dynasty, a series of measures was taken to establish a ritual and symbolic pattern as it moved from reliance on military force to more efficient and stable means of exercising power. In 960, the first year of the new dynasty, Emperor Taizu sent emissaries to Mount Tai to offer sacrifices.[37] The Song mostly adopted the dynastic ritual code of the period of Kaiyuan (713-741) in the Tang.[38] As

33 Zhenzong's decision met with plenty of criticism from scholar-officials. See some officials' critical memorials in BM, *juan* 22: Sun Ji 孫籍, 165; Zhou Qi 周起, 165-166; Sun Shi 孫奭, 166-168.

34 Fenyin is in modern-day Wanrong 萬榮 county in Shanxi province. Both Han Wudi and Tang Xuanzong sacrificed to the Earth god at Fenyin.

35 For detailed accounts of the affair, see BM, *juan* 22; CB, *juan* 67-71; SS, *juan* 7-8; *Sushui jiwen, juan* 6: 113-116; for descriptions in English, see Suzanne E. Cahill, "Taoism at the Sung Court: The Heavenly Text Affair of 1008," *Bulletin of Sung-Yuan Studies* 16 (1980): 23-35.

36 Ge Zhaoguang, *Zhongguo sixiang shi* (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2001), 2: 168-172; He Pingli, "Song Zhenzong dongfen xisi luelun," *Xueshu yuekan*, no. 2 (2005).

37 Tang, "Dailan," *juan* 3: 36.

38 *Shilin yanyu, juan* 1: 8.

in the Tang period, the sacrifice to Mount Tai was listed as one of the middle-ranking rites.[39] In 963, fire was chosen among the five elements to symbolize the Song Dynasty; its corresponding color was red.[40] In the eleventh month of 968, Emperor Taizu offered sacrifices to Heaven and Earth at the southern suburban altar. A great amnesty was declared and the regnal name (era-name) was changed.[41] As Wechsler observed in his study of the techniques of control used by the first Tang ruler, "the employment of rites and symbols . . . arouses a deep sense of identification with the regime and its authorities. . . . Such rites and symbols can cause the regime and its authorities to be positively evaluated."[42] Zhenzong's commitment to the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices, the most solemn imperial ritual for the declaration of receiving the Mandate of Heaven, was an important step in this process of attaining legitimacy.

At the international level, the Song Dynasty had lived under the ever-present threat of military invasion and conquest since its beginning. The Liao, which had interfered in the policies of the various Chinese states prior to the establishment of the Song, was arguably the most powerful state in East Asia at the time. They founded a Chinese-style dynasty and had their own emperor, who challenged the supremacy of the emperors and kings in China proper by claiming to be the Son of Heaven.[43] Before the Song, the Khitans and the Five Dynasties had already formed an international order in which the Khitans drew upon the historical experience of Sino-foreign relations in dealing with the Chinese states.[44] After Yelu Deguang (耶律德光) destroyed the Later Jin (936-947) and seized the capital Bianjing (汴京, modern-day Kaifeng 开封), he began to use the imperial carriage and regalia of the Chinese court and the imperial seals, a symbol of imperial authority. The seals of office and instruments of state ceremonies were moved to the Khitan court after his death. The Chinese rulers of later periods had to refashion them based on illustrations in books, which was a painful and humiliating experience.[45]

The early Song rulers never engaged in military action to remove the external threat, though they did engage in campaigns to regain the sixteen prefectures

39 SS, *juan* 102: 2485.

40 CB, *juan* 4: 113.

41 Ibid., *juan* 9: 212.

42 Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk*, 4.

43 Yelu Abaoji 耶律阿保机, the founder of the Khitan state, crowned himself Heavenly Emperor in 907 (*Liaoshi, juan* 1: 3); in an edict of 924, he proclaimed he had received the Mandate of Heaven (ibid., *juan* 2: 19).

44 Tao Jing-shen, *Two Sons of Heaven: Studies in Sung-Liao Relations* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1988), 25.

45 Ibid., 27.

of Yan and Yun (the northern part of modern-day Shanxi and Hebei provinces as well as modern-day Beijing). Emperor Taizong (太宗), Taizu's brother, launched two military campaigns, in 979 and 986, to achieve the goal. Both, however, ended disastrously. At the same time, the leader of the Tangut people on China's far northwest border, nominally a vassal of the Song, declared their independence. During the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, the entire Chinese northern border zone, from the Liao in the northeast and north to the Tanguts in the far northwest, was unsettled and in peril.[46]

When Emperor Zhenzong succeeded his father, Taizong, in 997, the internal consolidation of the state was completed and the Song was the uncontested master of South China and much of North China. But Zhenzong still had to contend with the Khitans.[47] The Chanyuan treaty had revealed his military weakness. Chinese cultural superiority and the traditional concept of the Chinese emperor as the Son of Heaven were also constantly challenged. Yuan historians described this awkward situation in a "critical essay" appended to the annals of his reign in the *History of the Song* (*Songshi* 宋史):

> At a later time when compilation of the Liao History was in progress, [features of the] old Khitan customs were observed. This permitted discovery of subtle implications in the Song histories. From the time of Taizong's defeat at Youzhou, the Song hated to discuss warfare. As for the Khitan, their ruler relied upon Heaven and their consorts praised earth. In a single year they sacrificed to Heaven innumerable times. Upon hunting they were able to seize flying wild geese with their hands, while the wild birds seemed to spread themselves on the ground of their own accord. They considered all these things to be gifts from Heaven. In their sacrifices they would report such things and praise the glory.[48]

The text implies competition from the Liao for the Mandate of Heaven. The wild geese as auspicious birds remind us of the famous red geese that Emperor Wu of the Han caught during an expedition to the ocean.[49] The auspicious

46 F.W. Mote, *Imperial China 900-1800* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 112-113.

47 Rossabi, "Introduction." in *China Among Equals*, 7.

48 SS, *juan* 8, 171; the translation comes from Cahill, "Taoism at the Sung Court," 36. 他日修《遼史》，見契丹故俗而後推求宋史之微言焉。宋自太宗幽州之敗，惡言兵矣。契丹其主稱天，其后稱地，一歲祭天不知其幾，獵而手接飛雁，鴇自投地，皆稱為天賜，祭告而誇耀之。

49 *Hanshu, juan* 6: 206.

omens were usually interpreted as Heaven's explicit signs of its blessing for the royal house.

Motivation and Purpose

In this sense, Zhenzong's motivation for the performance of the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices could not be simply to wash away the shame of the Chanyuan Treaty, as suggested in the standard sources. As some contemporary and modern scholars have argued, the Heavenly Text affair and the imperial *feng* and *shan* sacrifices were more likely part of a rationally calculated plan to impress the Khitan with manifestations of Song power.[50] For instance, when Zhenzong embarked on his journey to Mount Tai and returned from the mountain to the capital, he made symbolic visits to Chanyuan on both trips.[51]

After the military conflicts between the Song and the Liao were resolved, a contest for political legitimacy and cultural supremacy ensued. With the more frequent exchange of envoys, the Song court must have gained a better understanding of Khitan customs. The Khitans listed sacrifices to mountains as grand rites.[52] Mostly the imperial rulers of the Liao offered sacrifices to the Muye and Black Mountains. For the former, there were spring and autumn sacrificial rites, and for the latter, the ritual was usually performed on the winter solstice.[53] The Khitans believed that the Black Mountain, like Mount Tai, was a sacred place where the souls of the dead went. The mountain deity had power over life and death.[54] Wang Chengli, in his study of the Khitan sacrifices to the Black Mountain, argues that the royal rites performed on the winter solstice were influenced by the dynastic ritual code of the Tang and the Song and possibly the imperial *feng* and *shan* sacrifices.[55] The mountain rituals undoubtedly carried a political overtone of the Khitan ruling house's reception of the Mandate of Heaven.

In a sense, Zhenzong's spectacular campaign of the *feng* and *shan* to Mount Tai and his declaration of receiving the Heavenly Text can be rendered as

50 See Du Hao's 杜鎬 conversation with Zhenzong in Sima Guang, *Sushui jiwen, juan* 6: 120. For an analysis in the secondary literature, see Cahill, "Taoism at the Sung Court"; He, "Song Zhenzong dongfeng xisi luelun."

51 For the outbound trip, see CB, *juan* 70: 1569; SS, *juan* 7: 137, and; for the return trip, see CB, *juan* 70: 1576.

52 *Liaoshi*, *juan* 56: 905.

53 Zhang Guoqing, *Liaodai shehui shi yanjiu* (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2001), 221-222.

54 Wang Chengli, "Qidan ji heishan de kaocha," in *Liao-Jin shi lunji*, ed. Zhang Changgen (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe), 6: 21.

55 Ibid., 22, 25.

communicating orthodoxy and cultural hierarchy through rituals. The measures he adopted were linked more to antiquity than to the so-called policies of the ancestors (*zuzong zhi fa* 祖宗之法).[56] Zhenzong's father, Taizong, rejected repeated petitions from officials and the local people of Mount Tai to perform *feng* and *shan* rites in 984.[57] He also strongly disapproved of the auspicious omens. In an edict in 988, he prohibited all local officials from offering any rare animals or birds as auspicious omens.[58] In his memorial dated the ninth month of 1100, an official at a later time criticized Huizong's hobby of collecting auspicious objects. He mentioned Taizong's edict and referred to it as ancestors' (*zuzong*) ideas.[59] Kubota Kazuo argued that Zhenzong's policies were peculiar in the Northern Song period in his reverting to ancient ways.[60]

If we place his policies in the context of the broad intellectual background of the time, however, they seem more reasonable and less idiosyncratic. The Northern Song period witnessed the booming of the scholarship of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chun Qiu Jing* 春秋經) as well as the prevalence of the notion of honoring the king and crusading against the barbarians (*zunwang rangyi* 尊王攘夷).[61] Northern Song intellectuals expressed unprecedented anxiety over the concepts of the Middle Kingdom (*zhongguo* 中國), Chinese and barbarians (*huayi* 華夷), and orthodoxy (*zhengtong* 正統).[62] On his return journey from Mount Tai, Zhenzong visited the ancestral temple of Confucius and the shrines of his disciples, as well as the temples of other Zhou Dynasty (c. 1046-256 BCE) paragons, including that of the duke of Zhou. He bestowed

56 Regarding policies of the ancestors, Professor Deng Xiaonan has given a thorough discussion in her book *Zuzong zhi fa*: *Beisong qianqi zhengzhi shulue* (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2006).

57 Taizong initially accepted the petitions, but decreed a renunciation of the *feng* and *shan* pilgrimage in the sixth month of 984 (SS *juan* 4, 74).

58 SHY, *Ruiyi* 瑞異 1.8, 2068.

59 See Chen Shixi's 陳師錫 memorial to Huizong (1100) in *Songchao zhuchen zouyi, juan* 36: 360.

60 Kazuo Kubota, *Songdai Kaifeng yanjiu*, trans. Guo Wanping (Shanghai: Shanghai guiji chubanshe, 2010), 260-262.

61 For a study of the Northern Song commentaries on *The Spring and Autumn Annals*, see Alan Wood, *Limits to Autocracy: From Sung Neo-Confucianism to a Doctrine of Political Rights* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995), 15-16, 19-20, 27-29, 71-78, 83-110, 96, 115, 121, 129; see also Hilde De Weerdt, "Recent Trends in American Research in Song Dynasty History" (paper presented at a workshop at Osaka City University, January 28, 2006), 22-23.

62 Ge Zhaoguang, "Songdai Zhongguo yishi de tuxian—guanyu jinshi minzu zhuyi sixiang de yige yuanyuan," *Wen shi zhe*, no. 1 (2004): 9.

on them honorable posthumous titles.[63] His stops signified the connection of the undertaking to the figures of Confucian orthodoxy and the Chinese ruling house of antiquity. Conjuring up the spirits of the ancient sage-kings on their imperial tours, Zhenzong's trip to Mount Tai and the performance of *feng* and *shan* can be seen as efforts to demarcate the territory of Chinese cultural influence and reaffirm the hierarchy of the sacred landscape. The orthodox cultural lineage was therefore re-established. The line between Chinese and non-Chinese was carefully drawn in a reconstructed system of honoring the king and crusading against the barbarians.

Impact on the Population

Zhenzong's spectacular pilgrimage to Mount Tai lasted for forty-seven days. Its legacy lingers even now.[64] Despite the constant criticism by the literati, which can be observed in official and non-official historical documents, one wonders how it was actually received by the populace. This type of question might be the most intriguing, yet challenging one to social historians. It is always difficult to give a satisfying and well-documented answer. I start with Zhenzong's efforts from on high to communicate with his subject during this pilgrimage.

Benefactions of the Emperor

The declaration of great amnesties and the bestowal of beef and ale or the holding of a bacchanal (*cipu* 賜酺) were age-old ways of showing the ruler's benefaction to his subjects, especially following a new emperor's enthronement or change in the era name. Immediately after his completion of the *feng* and *shan* rites, Zhenzong announced a great amnesty and a three-day bacchanal.[65] During the ten-year Heavenly Text affair, he ordered seven amnesties and three bacchanals.[66] In addition to the sacrificial performance, he also exempted people in the prefectures of Yanzhou (兗州) and Yunzhou (鄆州) from the summer and autumn taxes of the coming year and the property tax. They were also exempted from the compulsory labor services for two years. All prefectures had their property tax reduced by at least 20 percent.[67] In the seventh month of 1009, he exempted people from taxes of 12,660,000 strings of

63 BM, *juan* 22: 165; CB, *juan* 70: 1574; SS, *juan* 7: 138-139.

64 The Song Cliff Inscription composed by Zhenzong can still be seen at the top of the mountain.

65 BM, *juan* 22: 165; CB, *juan* 70: 1572, 1573; SS, *juan* 7: 138.

66 BM, *juan* 22: 161-176.

67 CB, *juan* 70: 1572-1573.

cash (*min* 緡) due before the *feng* and *shan* rites.[68] In addition to these conventional beneficiary measures, he went even further and met local people in areas adjacent to Mount Tai in person, especially the respected elders (*fulao* 父老), and rewarded them with clothing, tea, and silk.[69] On his return trip to the capital, he held banquets with officials and local respected elders in Yunzhou, Puzhou, Chanzhou, Weicheng county, and Changyuan county.[70]

We can view Zhenzong's strategies as a means of gaining support from the people for his regime and were part of the meticulously designed spectacle of declaring his reception of the Mandate of Heaven. By responding to the pecuniary motives of subjects, Zhenzong's orders and actions constituted an appeal that served to promote bonding with his subjects and solidifying political stability or, as it can be called, "legitimacy."[71] In his examination of the development of the imperial power structure through the Qin and Han Dynasties, Lei Ge argues that one of the indispensable elements of the emperor's authority is his ability to establish a personal and transcendent connection with his subjects, which allows the populace to perceive his presence in their everyday life.[72] During Zhenzong's campaign, the emperor's personal concern for his people served positively to engage their emotions. And the personal contacts with members of local elite facilitated the fostering of loyalty from the local denizens.

Visual Attractions

The *feng* and *shan* pilgrimage was one of the grandest spectacles in the Song Dynasty. The whole process, from the beginning of the trip to the sacrificial performance at the mountain, was carefully designed by the top officials and Zhenzong himself. On the day of departure, the Heavenly Text was taken reverently out of the palace to the Qianyuan Gate (乾元門). It was put in a jade carriage surrounded by an honor guard carrying yellow flags.[73] They were followed by rows of musicians with drums and flutes and sizable retinues. Court officials saluted and prostrated themselves at the sides of the road. After a short while, the emperor appeared, wearing the Skyscraping Crown (*tongtian guan* 通天冠) and crimson silk robe and riding in the grand sedan chair. He stopped

68 SS, *juan* 7: 141.

69 CB, *juan* 70: 1573.

70 Ibid., 1575-1577.

71 Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk*, 3.

72 Lei Ge, "The Heavens Are High and the Emperor Is Near: An Imperial Power System That Is Open to the People," *Journal of Chinese Humanities* 1, no. 1 (2015).

73 The jade carriage was usually taken by the emperor.

on his journey in twelve places before he finally arrived in Qianfeng county, where Mount Tai was located, sixteen days later. On stops at the Chanzhou and Yongding (永定) courier stations, the size and scale of the honor guard and the grand sedan chair were too large to pass through the city gate. Zhenzong stopped the officials' attempt to dismantle the gate and ordered the honor guards to go around the city walls to bypass the town. The entourage included emissaries from southwestern "barbarian" tribes who paid their tribute for the first time and wanted to witness the imperial sacrifices. Envoys from the kingdom of Champa (Zhancheng 占城) and the Abbasid Empire (Dashi 大食) also waited along the road to Mount Tai, offering their local specialties as tribute.[74] On the day of the imperial rites, the emperor again was dressed in his crimson silk robe and Skyscraping Crown. He was riding in a gold carriage and keeping the Statutory Carriage (*fajia* 法駕) for possible use.[75] Guardsmen were standing along the "winding path" (*pandao* 盤道) from the foot of the mountain to the Great Peace Summit (Taiping ding 太平頂), one every two paces. It was reported that clouds in five colors were rising above the top of Mount Tai, upon which auspicious lights were shining. When the sacrifices were completed, the accompanying civil officials, led by the grand chancellor, extended their congratulations. Then, from the top of the mountain to its foot, people called out, "Ten thousand years!" According to the account, the voices were so loud that they reverberated across the valley, shaking the mountain.[76]

Because our sources are incomplete, we are not certain about the commoners' perceptions of this event. We are told that people from the capital Kaifeng, the Huai River basin, the regions to the east of Kaifeng, and the regions to the north of the Yellow River lined the roads from Mount Tai to Kaifeng, waiting to view the emperor's carriage. They ran back and forth to see his majesty's "heavenly countenance." The onlookers were so dense that they were packed along the route, forming an endless line.[77] For the people living outside the capital, it was one of the rare occasions to see an imperial procession in person. It must have been dazzling for them to see the luxurious grand carriage,

74 *Zhancheng* is in what is now southern and central Vietnam. *Dashi* is a general term in Chinese history loosely referring to the Muslim or Arab countries.

75 According to Patricia Ebrey, the carriage employed was linked to the weight of the occasion. The Statutory Carriage was employed for formal occasions such as imperial visits to Bright Hall, the holy Mount Tai, and on other provincial ritual journeys. See Patricia Ebrey, "Taking out the Grand Carriage: Imperial Spectacle and the Visual Culture of Northern Song Kaifeng," *Asia Major* (Taipei), 3d ser., no. 12 (1999): 34.

76 The narrative of this entire procession is based on CB, *juan* 70: 1567-1572.

77 Ibid., 70: 1577.

the spectacular honor guard, the impressive entourage with high-ranking civil officials, and exotic foreign envoys. Viewers did not necessarily comprehend the full significance of each element and symbol that was employed by the throne to present itself to the general public. However, it is not difficult to infer that the imperial procession with all its visual details would be talked about over and over by local people as the most spectacular event they had ever seen and passed down to later generations.

The imperial symbolism meant to create or reinforce the legitimacy of the throne was, in the spectacle, associated with the pluralism of the identities of Mount Tai embodied in the popular beliefs about the mountain. The emperor's concern about the northern threat and the legitimacy of his authority, his intention of acquiring potency through association with the Heavenly Text, and the literati's anxiety over the orthodoxy of Chinese civilization and their vigilance against penetration by "barbarian" culture, might seem remote and inconsequential to the people on the street. Yet the emotions of awe and passion that the grand royal tour aroused were shared by those who saw the event and heard the story, thereby generating mutual identification and pride in being a member of the cultural complex. After the ephemeral event was over, its legend lingered. Mount Tai stands as a reminder forever.

Mount Tai as a Palimpsest of Inscribed Symbols

During Zhenzong's imperial pilgrimage to Mount Tai, the state sought at every level to establish its monopoly over the symbolism of the mountain. Using the Heavenly Text as a medium, the imperial pilgrimage closely linked the mountain to the legitimacy of imperial power and institutions. The association between the pilgrimage and the Daoist religion reinforced the potency of the mountain as a symbol of imperial power. The official bestowal of the imperial title *di* (帝) to the deity of Mount Tai secured the state's monopoly over the channels of communication with the deity. In other words, the state's efforts outlined the interpretive framework for Mount Tai as a symbol in which other versions of interpretation were compelled to reorder their status in relation to it.

The stele inscription commemorating the popular pilgrimage to Mount Tai in 1080 perfectly illustrates what Prasenjit Duara has called the "interpretive arena."[78] The common pilgrims went on the journey to worship the God of the Haoli Mountain, a folk deity subordinate to the God of Mount Tai, whom they believed to be ruling the underworld. Their humble purpose was to erect a pole

78 Prasenjit Duara, "Superscribing Symbols: The Myth of Guandi, Chinese God of War," *Journal of Asian Studies* 47, no. 4 (November 1988): 780.

to honor his shrine. In the text written by a literate man from the local area of the mountain, instead of a straightforward account in a matter-of-fact tone, the official image of the leading mountain deity and connotation of the imperial *feng* and *shan* sacrifices was meticulously crafted to pave the way for a description of the popular pilgrimage. In this sense, the seemingly insignificant spring pilgrimage was redefined and elevated into a broader elite discourse. Mount Tai had become the metaphorical center of the imagined world order (*tianxia*) to which those living nearby flocked and those who lived far away submitted to its authority.

The Booming of the Mount Tai Cult at the Local Level

In 1010 at the request of people in Shanxi who wished to build a local Eastern Sacred Peak temple because the pilgrimage to the mountain was too far away, Zhenzong issued a decree granting permission for them to build temples and shrines dedicated to the Mount Tai god as they wished.[79] Afterward, the Mount Tai temples and the cult of the God of Mount Tai spread to every corner of the empire.[80]

The Eastern Sacred Peak temple on the Mountain of Good Fortune (Fushan 福山) in Changshu county (常熟, in present-day Jiangsu province) was one of the largest and the most famous, and it attracted pilgrims every spring from different areas of South China.[81] It started as a small temple in the mid-eleventh century. When it was restored and expanded in late Northern Song times, a local scholar Wei Bangzhe (魏邦哲) wrote a temple inscription (*ji* 記) to commemorate the event. It begins:

> Now, our Emperor Zhenzong of the Song, embarking on an eastbound expedition to Mount Tai, announced the dynastic accomplishments to Heaven through the grand imperial *feng* and *shan* sacrifices. In order to honor the God of Mount Tai, he was acclaimed in the imperial edicts and was elevated to an exalted and glorified position. The god is offering protection to our state and blessing to all the living beings. His power and merit is beyond our imagination. Should it not be our obligation to repay

79 Stele inscription at the Eastern Sacred Peak temple in Dingxiang county, Xinzhou, Shanxi province. The text can be found in SDSKWX, 1: 636.

80 Zhou Ying, "Dongyue miao zai quanguo de chuanbo yu fenbu," *Taishan xueyuan xuebao* 30, no. 2 (March 2008): 17.

81 *Qinchuan zhi*, *juan* 10, in SYDFZCS, 4 : 2740.

his favor? Therefore, people from the four directions would travel ten thousand *li*, however arduous the journey might be, to offer sacrifices to the god. [Later,] the subordinate temples were mushrooming everywhere modeled after the layout of the Eastern Sacred Peak temple. But none of them exceeded the scale and fame of [the temple of] the Mountain of Good Fortune in the area of Gusu (that is, Suzhou).

The temple of the Mountain of Good Fortune was built during the years of Zhihe (1054-1056) and has existed for sixty years. Its towers, halls, gates, and corridors, together with its attached buildings, are lofty and magnificent. People from Jiang, Huai, Min, and Yue come annually by land or water to offer whatever they have to the god to show their piety. First, they wish for the longevity of the emperor; then they pray for a year of good harvests; and finally they ask for protection of their household. They express their wishes in the prayer. They come in organized groups called "associations and societies." The sound of flutes and drums could be heard from the road. And tens of thousands of people crowded in the streets. People who cannot travel far to Mount Tai go to the Mountain of Good Fortune.[82]

Without tracing the event back to the Han or the Tang, the text immediately starts with a reference to the Song emperor's honoring of the mountain deity, which invokes strongly contemporary state culture in a symbolic way. Unlike the stone inscription composed in 1080 recording the boatmen's pilgrimage, in which the expression of the Mount Tai God's duty is rather ambiguous, it demonstrates explicitly the god's image as a protector of the empire. And, because of this, people would make the pilgrimage to the mountain and build the subordinate temples. Whatever Mount Tai may have actually meant to the ordinary pilgrims, the "superscription"[83] of its image by the state is so dominant in the text that it dictates the prayers of the celebrators of the deity's birthday. There is no reference to the popular image of the mountain god as the ruler

82 *Qinchuan zhi*, *juan* 13, in ibid., 2793; *Wujun zhi*, *juan* 13, in ibid., 2330. 維我宋真宗皇帝，東幸泰山，告功于天，大修封禪，禮泰山之神，顯冊褒嘉，位號崇隆，得非衛社稷、福生靈、運功烈于冥冥之際，宜有所報稱歟？是故四方萬里，不以道途為勞，往奉祀事，往往規模岱廟，立為別廟多矣。然未有盛于姑蘇之福山也。

福山廟，經始于至和之中，垂六十年。樓殿門廊，并諸從舍，巍然而輪奐。江淮閩粵，水浮陸行者，各自其所有，以效歲時來享之誠。上祝天子萬壽，且以祈豐年。以後保其家，凡有求必禱焉。率以類至，號曰會社。簫鼓之音，相屬于道，不知幾千萬人，不及之乎太山，則之福山焉。

83 Duara, "Superscribing Symbols," 81.

of the underworld. Rather, it is said that people go to pray for longevity of the emperor, good harvests, and protection of their household. We cannot be certain whether it was their true purpose or it illustrates the efforts of the literati to wrest control over the vernacular of religious practices and bring them to a hegemonic discourse. The official image of the god, however, was perpetuated by the state and the literati as an ally and even managed to replace the popular one, at least as illustrated in the temple inscription.

In the prescription of the prayers of the local believers, the author attempted to link the state ceremony to community-based religious cults. Ensuring good harvests and protection of households usually fell into the jurisdiction of local tutelary deities such as the city god or the earth god.[84] The God of Mount Tai, symbolic of the state and the imperial culture, permeated local areas by assuming duties as a community protector. Thus a relationship of the local with the state was established, and the interpretations of the image of the god both at state and social levels were brought into a hegemonic discourse. The local festive scene, set in the context of the interaction between the state and the local, accentuates the prosperity of the local under the guidance of state culture.

To justify the fact that the Mountain of Good Fortune had become an efficacious pilgrimage site of the Mount Tai cult in South China, the author continued,

> The Mountain of Good Fortune borders the river and the sea. The mountain, rising high, is covered with dense forest, while its ranges form a stretch of curves. It is certainly a scenic place. The respected elders said, on the day when sacrificial rites were about to start, a painting appeared floating on tidal waves. It was a portrait of the Mount Tai god. After receiving the portrait, the local denizens became more devoted to the god and served him more respectfully. The mountain was initially named "upturned wok," because it looks like one. Later its name was changed to the Mountain of Good Fortune. The temple was built on the top of it. It is by no means coincidental that the mountain has become the sacred site for people near and far to pray for good fortune. Composed by Wei Bangzhe, the presented scholar of Kunshan county in the eighth month of the seventh year of Zhenghe (1117).[85]

84 David Johnson, "The City-God Cults of T'ang and Sung China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 45, no. 2 (December 1985): 363-457.

85 *Qinchuan zhi*, *juan* 13, in SYDFZCS, 4: 2793; *Wujun zhi*, *juan* 13, in ibid., 2330. 福山臨江海上，鼇焉蓊鬱，岡巒環回。殆亦勝地。父老云：肇祀之日，有幅畫乘潮水至，乃嶽神像也。居民得之，欽事而加信焉。山初號覆釜，蓋因其形似。後易

The Mountain of Good Fortune, 40 *li* north of the Changshu county seat, is located at the lower reaches of the Yangzi River. In the local gazetteer of Changshu, its location is considered strategically important, with its steep cliffs facing the fast-flowing river. It was usually guarded by a large number of forces.[86] In this text, however, the mountain is presented as a beautiful scenic spot with no implication of any defensive tension. The portrait of the Mount Tai God, carried by the river from places unknown, symbolically connects the locality to the outside, that is, it puts it within a wider context, such as an imperial perspective, state patronage, and imperial culture, which were imbedded in the Mount Tai cult. The landscape of the Mountain of Good Fortune, as it emerges from the temple inscription, reveals an idealized spatial hierarchical relationship between the state and the locality. Mount Tai in the Central Plains of China, superscribed by the imperial pilgrimage, represents overarching state power and imperial culture, with the mountain god acting as a protector of the empire. Mountains in other parts of China where the subordinate temples and shrines were built, such as the Mountain of Good Fortune, served as supplementary pilgrimage centers for the local inhabitants. Local communities were protected by the presence of the god within their landmarks.

Reordering the Local Spatial Hierarchy

This idealized spatial hierarchy was bound to be shattered after China lost the geographical seat of Mount Tai to the Jurchen state. In 1130 the Jurchen armies crossed the Yangzi River and reached the wealthy and culturally refined Jiangnan area, including Suzhou, Wei Bangzhe's hometown. The damage was catastrophic. The town of Suzhou was wiped out, according to a temple inscription composed by Li Xun (李薰) in 1133, when the temple on the Mountain of Good Fortune was restored. Changshu county, around 50 kilometers away from Suzhou, however, remained intact, despite being the home of grain-filled barns and commodities and wealth accumulated by high-ranking officials and businessmen, not to mention its strategic significance. The invaders cruised along the outside of the town and fled without looking back. Li explained that it was because the town was protected by the Mount Tai god. People from near and far, therefore, served the god more devoutly.[87] The temple restoration proj-

名為福山，廟據其上。遂為遠邇祈福之地，豈偶然哉。政和七年八月乙亥，鄉貢進士昆山魏邦哲記。

86 *Qinchuan zhi, juan* 5, in ibid., 2696.

87 *Qinchuan zhi, juan* 13, in ibid., 2794.

ect was initiated by the county magistrate. After it was completed, the locals, led by the respected elders, held a great celebration in front of the temple, culminating in the writing of the temple inscription. Li attached an ode to the god at the end to praise him for his blessings of the country in such a difficult time.

Though the geographic location of Mount Tai was taken by the enemy, its image as a protector of the empire and local communities was enhanced, at least in scholarly writings. For instance, Han Yuanji (韓元吉, 1118-1187), a famous poet and scholar, wrote a temple inscription for the construction project of a new Eastern Sacred Peak temple in Quanzhou, a seaport along China's southern coast. The locals believed that due to the guardianship of the God of Mount Tai, the area had been spared from the ravage of warfare ever since the Five Dynasties. A new and grand temple was therefore built in 1151 to repay the god for his blessings.[88]

Another scholar in the Southern Song period, Huang Zhen (黃震, 1213-1280), wrote in a prayer essay (*zhuwen* 祝文) dedicated to the local temple of the Mount Tai cult in Guangde (in present-day Anhui province),

> Mount Tai is in charge of rain, including the whole process from the condensation of water vapor to rainfall. Though the territory [of our country] may change, the god's blessings, sincere and profound, are extended to every corner of China. The ramparts of Tongchuan county are low, but the town is surrounded by mountains. Local people serve the deity [of Mount Tai] for his power of presiding over the weather, wet or dry.[89]

The dynastic ritual code dictates that sacrificing to the five sacred peaks is one of the official rituals of praying for rain.[90] The text indicates that although the geographic possession of the mountain was lost to the people in the Middle Kingdom, the mountain deity continued to carry out his duties to protect the empire and bring rain to the people. In Huang's prayer essay, therefore, the mountain deity's official duty of taking charge of rain is associated with his image as the protector of the empire. The popular religious activities were

88 *Nanjian jiayi gao*, vol. 5, *juan* 19: 373-374.

89 *Huangshi richao, juan* 94, in SKQS, 708: 1005. 起膚寸而雨天下者，泰山也，地域有變遷而神之福吾中國者，無往不拳拳其間也。桐川小壘，而所多者山也，民之事神于茲，正以水旱所關也。

90 For the study of the official rituals of praying for rain in Tang and Song times, see Lei Wen, *Jiaomiao zhi wai*: *Sui-Tang guojia jisi yu zongjiao* (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2009), 293-339; Pi Qingsheng, *Songdai minzhong cishen xinyang yanjiu* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2008), 143-203.

redefined within this context. When China was under attack by foreign "barbarians," the identification of the Eastern Sacred Peak with the Chinese and their civilization, shaped by the imperial state and the elite, was invoked strongly in defense of its enduring legitimacy.

Conclusion

The imperial *feng* and *shan* pilgrimage was one of the most important events in the Song Dynasty and is worthy of deeper scrutiny. It can be understood as an effort by the throne to acquire potency for Song power through association with the Heavenly Text. More importantly, it could be used to establish Song ownership of Chinese culture in order to compete with the Khitan, who had long adopted Chinese institutions and ideology. Various strategies were deployed by the throne during the campaign to reach out to the masses and to communicate the imperial symbolism of the mountain.

Its impact on the population may be difficult to evaluate objectively. It is evident, however, that the mountain, superscribed by the state, had become valuable symbolic capital. As such, the literati elite, through the composition of temple inscriptions, created a link between the imperial pilgrimage and the popular ritual of the Mount Tai cult. In this way, they were able to redefine the popular ritual and managed to channel the popular cultural memory into the imperial context. This link facilitated the construction of an imperial cultural identity accessible to all social groups. It also allowed an abstract concept of Chinese culture to be communicated through the fabric of society.

List of Abbreviations

BM	*Songshi jishi benmo* 宋史紀事本末
CB	*Xu zizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑑長編
SDSKWX	*Songdai shike wenxian quanbian* 宋代石刻文獻全編
SDWXJC	*Shandong wenxian jicheng* 山東文獻集成
SHY	*Song huiyao jigao* 宋會要輯稿
SKQS	*Siku quanshu* 四庫全書
SS	*Songshi* 宋史
SSJ	*Shisan jing zhushu* 十三經注疏
SYDFZCS	*Song-Yuan difangzhi congshu* 宋元地方志叢書

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Rethinking "Traditions": Reading the Classics as Ritual

Shen Yang

Abstract

How do generations of Chinese remain connected across history? How do the anthropological studies of religion help us to reconceptualize the realm of sociality and historicity? This paper argues that reading the classics is a ritual to bring together many heterogeneous traditions in a subjunctive historical community. In the Chinese context, reading is first done aloud in the presence of other people, in what can be broadly envisioned as a teacher-student relationship. Reading as such is rhythmic, public, and historical, by which both the deceased and the yet-to-be-born are brought together by readers' embodied acceptance of "sages." Thus "traditions" in China could be discussed more in terms of orthopraxy than orthodoxy. This perspective of reading suggests one is capable of understanding by "doing" rather than by "thinking" alone; and reading activities serve not only to regenerate but also to create new relationships among and between contemporaries and their historical relatives.

Keywords

Historical community – reading classics – ritual tradition

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Ritual: Creating Subjunctive Worlds and Synchronizing Movements

Many global historians and anthropologists have been concerned with the problem of the coexistence of multiple modes of history, in which perspective the idea of "tradition" is particularly troublesome. The questions may be put in this way: given that there are many routes to many traditions in China and in many other places in the world, how does any community of people reconcile the different traditions and live together? How do we identify the way that common experiences are formed here and now, when that which each of us calls the past can be so different? And, as social analysts, how do we find a plane on which some or any shared future is theoretically possible?[1]

This paper suggests an approach to answering these questions that makes use of recent studies on the public dimension of rituals in religious studies and on the anthropology of religion. In a more differentiated, privatized, fragmented, and changing society, religion and ritual seem to have a capacity for creating and recreating bonds that both sustain the flux of change and bridge individualized temporalities.[2] The theoretical potential of this perspective is not only that religion and ritual offer a source of preexisting authority whose effects and conditions could be explained rather than invalidated.[3] In a way, rituals show us how a community stabilizes itself over time when the flows are

1 Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); David A. Bell, "This Is What Happens When Historians Overuse the Idea of the Network," *New Republic*, October 25, 2013; Maurice Bloch, "The Past and the Present in the Present," *Man* 12 (1977); Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Arif Dirlik, "Confucius in the Borderlands: Global Capitalism and the Reinvention of Confucianism," *Boundary* 2 (1995); Keith Hart, "What Anthropologists Really Do," *Anthropology Today* 20, no. 1 (2004); Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

2 Robert N. Bellah, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Robert W. Hefner, "Religious Resurgence in Contemporary Asia: Southeast Asian Perspectives on Capitalism, the State, and the New Piety," *Journal of Asian Studies* 69, no. 4 (2010); Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000); Robert P. Weller, *Alternate Civilities: Democracy and Culture in China and Taiwan* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999).

3 See Maurice Bloch, "Symbols, Song, Dance and Features of Articulation: Is Religion an Extreme Form of Traditional Authority?" *European Journal of Sociology* 15, no. 1 (1974); Richard Gombrich, *Theravada Buddhism: A Social History from Ancient Benares to Modern Colombo* (London: Routledge, 2006), 6.

no longer homogeneous, as well as the possibility of a space in which heterogeneous time achieves synchronization. Or, as Seligman and colleagues express it concisely, rituals, by their performative and authoritative nature, construct a common subjunctive "as-if" world, thus generating a shared reality, "creat[ing] and re-creat[ing] a world of social convention and authority beyond the inner will of any individual."[4] As long as ritual practices remain central to given traditions, however "such traditions understand the world as fundamentally fractured and discontinuous," so there is space for synchronizing various entwined histories. Ritual theory suggests that it is by doing and feeling together, rather than believing and thinking together, that people gradually construct a historical "community of fate."[5]

The empirical example I use to illustrate the way in which rituals help construct a historical public is the ritual tradition of reading the classics in China. I consider the ritual of reading the classics a tradition not in terms of orthodoxy but in terms of orthopraxy.[6] The Confucian, Buddhist, Daoist, and many other traditions all stress reading the classics as a ritual; they share important formalistic characteristics at the level of practice, even though their choice of scripture, their intellectual principles, and the many concrete ways in which they read their scripture are not the same. In fact, even a casual observer would note much diversity in doctrine even within one such tradition. My point is that reading the classics constitutes a mode of action, in which knowing is embodied and implicated, more than a mode of knowing, by which action is necessitated. The former approach leads to the community in practice and the latter framework seeks community by precepts. Therefore while my case examination is based on reading Confucian classics, the ritual is not peculiar to the "Confucians" and does not preclude other traditions in China.[7] By considering reading the

4 Adam B. Seligman, Bennett Simon, Michael J. Puett, and Robert P. Weller, *Ritual and Its Consequences: An Essay on the Limits of Sincerity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 11.

5 Ibid., 105.

6 While Bourdieu's concept of "habitus" has invited much criticism since its publication, especially regarding its emphasis on its un-reflexivity of given conduct, my usage of "orthopraxy" in this paper nonetheless shares this concern for plain but proper actions. Here it can be pointed out that the usefulness or effectiveness of "habits," which themselves are neutral, deserves further elaboration especially because both "good" and "bad" habits can be formed over time. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); see also Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution, and Epistemology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), especially pages 128-152; 446-453.

7 This paper does not deal with debates regarding the difference between humanistic "classics" and religious "scriptures."

classics as a ritual tradition in practice—a sort of practical intuition—I try to explore how this Chinese example offers a way for us to think about how people cross temporal borders, first diachronically, and then synchronically. The diachronic aspect will bear more weight in this article; the synchronic aspect deserves more careful study, and I plan to discuss it in a future paper.

Reading Confucian Classics as Ritual: Crossing Temporal Boundaries

This paper considers reading the classics as one of the ways in which many heterogeneous traditions come together for the Chinese. In other words, I argue that reading the classics in China constitutes a ritual action, in the sense that it creates a subjunctive space in which contemporaries are brought into a historical community. I certainly do not mean that those who read the classics will necessarily agree with what the text says. This is simply impossible, as generations of anthropologists devoted to fieldwork have informed us. Texts as "symbols are not in themselves the representation of ideas; their power of meaning arises in the conjunction of an image and the knowledge and experience you bring to it."[8] The agreement lies not so much in the selection or meanings of the texts as in a minimalist common action: "we" all read.

The Chinese have lived with multiple interpretive traditions, and there is not a single text like a blank sheet of paper on which one message is automatically inscribed but not another. An interesting example is the endless disputes among the Confucians, Buddhists, and Daoists over constant appropriations and reinterpretations of "their" canons by the other parties. Even the Christian missionaries in the seventeenth century noted the flexibility of books and joined this collective activity of reinterpreting the Chinese popular classics.[9] I am not concerned with their respective arguments here. A practical consequence of these debates is that they have broadened the readership of a wide range of classics and enlarged the common discourse on every side. More importantly, such debates render reading the classics a preeminent and important activity for any respectable person regardless of her interpretive framework or level of understanding. Reading the classics is not limited to a

8 Fredrik Barth, *Balinese Worlds* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 332.

9 Jacques Gernet and Janet Lloyd, *China and the Christian Impact: A Conflict of Cultures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 7-16; Henrietta Harrison, *The Man Awakened from Dreams: One Man's Life in a North China Village, 1857-1942* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 24-26.

"small group of elites." Literacy is important to the Chinese, but they never consider it a privilege exclusive to a closed group. Anyone who reads would read the classics (and not just because in imperial China one became literate only by reading them), and one who does not read worships the classics. This extends to the popular belief of worshiping written words; historically, the Chinese even built temples and pagodas for this purpose.[10]

Therefore, what I mean by "historical community" does not refer primarily to the accumulation of interpretations and relevant knowledge that generations of people associate with given texts, even though this dimension is implied. The community's defining characteristic is people's willingness *to read what is written down and to read in specific manners*. They may agree or disagree with one another's interpretations, but their repeated reading activities create a common imaginative space for different walks of life. In this "as-if" space, in contrast to an "as-is" space, people living in later periods in history feel the presence and influence of earlier generations, and they, too, leave their mark for those yet to come. The more a classic is read, the livelier the space becomes. This enactive and performative aspect of reading the classics can be seen as a form of ritual, in line with Seligman and Weller's insight into the constitutive capacity of rituals.[11] In their recent book following up on their ritual theory, they write that ritual actions, by a series of iterated acts that are "not entirely encoded by the performer," generate a shared sense of empathy, or, more precisely, "a shared acquiescence to convention."[12]

10 The decline in this worship can be illustrated by an anecdote of Liu Dapeng, a local gentleman in the late Qing. He wrote in his diary, "And there were cigarette wrappers all over the ground with writing on them. So I collected them up and brought them home, following the ancient teaching that we should respect paper with writing on it. People today do not know this teaching, and actually laugh at me for being so unworldly." See Harrison, *The Man Awakened from Dreams*, 157. Nonetheless, worshiping written words constituted a crucial element in Chinese popular belief before the Chinese dominant culture of reading was challenged by a culture of speaking and oratory. My sense is that it still exists, but in indirect forms. The Chinese willingness of educational investment disproportional to their affordability may be the continuance of such belief. See also Andrew B. Kipnis, *Governing Educational Desire: Culture, Politics, and Schooling in China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

11 It should be pointed out the efficacious/utilitarian aspect of rituals are not dealt with in this paper. See also note 6.

12 Roy A. Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 24; Adam B. Seligman and Robert P. Weller, *Rethinking Pluralism: Ritual, Experience, and Ambiguity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 93.

Although this paper does not attempt to relate reading the classics to religious behaviors (which are defined by intention), it understands Chinese society as lacking distinctive religious and secular spheres. Chinese people *do* religion "not only by praying and presenting offerings to the deities but by building temples, organizing and participating in temple festivals, sponsoring and watching local operas, making and buying incense and spirit paper money, bribing local state officials, networking with other temples and other institutions, fighting over temple leadership positions, and even planting trees and building schools."[13] Adam Chau was describing the way in which people "enable the establishment of human-deity relations and interactions," yet the actions he listed must sound striking to those who are not familiar with the Chinese spiritual landscape. I think the description is honest, if one becomes accustomed to less conventional paradigms of religiosity.[14] Indeed, the presence of spirits and the deceased is much more diffuse and accessible in Chinese society than in others.[15] This sometimes leads to an insufficient appreciation of the subtleties of Chinese life.

Here it suffices to say that there is a unique subjunctive space in Chinese spiritual life. Reading the classics, especially the Confucian classics in imperial China, involves behaviors that constitute rituals like those practiced in many traditions, such as alternate modes of reading, learning by heart, burning incense before the altar of Confucius, and kowtowing. Studies of Confucian reading movements at the grassroots level particularly emphasize this ritual aspect.[16] The comprehensive bodily and sensuous experiences thus involved are believed to trigger self-transformation and transcendental unity and to facilitate integration of knowing and being. These auxiliary actions, with their formality, help to induce crucial commitment from the participants and engage them in a unique space.

In addition to these auxiliary aspects, reading the classics deals with reading directly. Reading is not simple. One needs a long period of training in order to become a skilled reader. The process has multiple levels and dimensions,

13 Adam Yuet Chau, *Miraculous Response: Doing Popular Religion in Contemporary China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 2.

14 See also Robert P. Weller and Lizhu Fan, ed., *Jiangnan diqu de zongjiao yu gonggong shenghuo* 江南地区的宗教与公共生活 [*Religion and Public Life in Greater Jiangnan*] (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press, 2015).

15 Francis L.K. Hsu, *Under the Ancestors' Shadow: Kinship, Personality, and Social Mobility in China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1971); Ching-Kun Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961).

16 Sébastien Billioud and Joël Thoraval, "Jiaohua: The Confucian Revival in China as an Educative Project," *China Perspectives*, no. 4 (2007): 4-20.

each of which has both nuanced and direct effects. However, a comprehensive examination of the Chinese pedagogy is beyond the scope of this paper. Therefore I focus on three aspects that are crucial and have received less attention in the works of anthropology.

Reading as a Public Event

> When the learners read, they should keep their shoulders upright and their back straight. They take their time in reading; and they read it out moderately. Their heart is free and not haughty, taking in messages gradually. They reflect on their problems and learn things with their whole body.[17]

Conventional pedagogy in Chinese society calls for students to read the classics aloud. In contrast, in the English language, "reading" as an action points to visual and interior experiences that are private and silent. This reflects a gradual but decisive shift in Western civilization from reading as a public activity to a private one.[18] But in the Chinese language, *du* (讀), "to read," essentially triggers sound. In classical Chinese, reading also includes punctuating the text through the rhythm at which it is spoken aloud. As a result, when one reads, one necessarily reads out loud, stops, ponders, waits for a moment, and moves on, forming a rhythm. *Du* is a general word covering a range of specific verbs, including "to chant" (*yin*, 吟), "to sing" (*chang*, 唱), "to read aloud" (*song*, 誦), "to recite" (*bei*, 背), "to intone" (*yong*, 詠), "to exclaim" (*tan*, 嘆), and "to patter"

17 Zhu Xi, "Zhu zi yu lei 朱子語類 [Collected Sayings of Master Zhu]," 11:5, in *Zhu zi quan shu* 朱子全書 [Complete Works of Master Zhu], vol. 14, ed. Zhu Jieren et al. (Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 2002), 14: 334. Unless specified in the text, such as the quotation from the *Analects* translated by James Legge in Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), I am responsible for all English translations from Chinese sources. Regarding citation format, it should be pointed out that "Zhu zi yu lei" is closer to scriptural passages and much easier (as well as by convention of Chinese scholarly community) to locate by book and chapter number. Therefore in addition to exact page number of the reference consulted, I cite the book number and chapter number, such as 11: 5.

18 Peter Burke, *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Also Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

(*nian*, 念).[19] Small children are always encouraged to read aloud; the habit is so engrained that a major task for educators dealing with teenagers is to teach them to read silently, so that they will not interrupt others in public. This vocal aspect has its roots in the Confucian tradition of reading as public ritual. As Zhu Xi said, "When it comes to the matter of reading books, one should read and should not be preoccupied by thinking. When one reads by the mouth, one's heart becomes free and available, where learning springs out naturally."[20]

In other words, the Chinese way of reading is highly vocalized (thus public). It is very important to note that to read aloud is not to read loudly. The focus is not on the volume but on forming rhythm. Reading has a formalistic character. There are many modes of reading: a teacher reading to students; a student reading or reciting to the teacher or others; collective or group reading; alternating reading (one reads a passage and then another continues it); a teacher reading or reciting line by line followed by students repeating line by line together; varying rhythms (e.g., emphasizing words and slowness), and so on.[21] The students do not even have to read the same text when they read aloud together in the same space. In discussing this pedagogy, Xu Jianshun picked out a passage worthy of examination. Lu Xun (1881-1936), a renowned modernist Chinese writer, remembering his childhood school life, wrote:

> [The teacher called,] "Read!" Then, from a hundred throats came the voices of reading, just like a kettle on the boil. Some read "is virtue a thing remote I wish to be virtuous and lo virtue is at hand"; some read "laugh at people missing teeth, says the dog shows privy"; some read "first nine hiding dragons do not use"; and some read "rhetoric of soil under bud cross the above." The teacher read as well. In a while our voices went lower and lower; only the teacher was still reading aloud, "suave commander/ surprises all/ dripping alas/ shall not get drunk/ after a thousand cups!" I speculated this was an excellent article, because he always smiled, lifted his head, shaking gently, and bent farther and farther.[22]

19 Xu Jianshun 徐建順, "Yin song yu jiao yu 吟誦與教育 [Intonation and Education]," *Renmin jiaoyu* 人民教育 [People's Education] 23 (2009): 16.

20 Zhu Xi, "Zhu zi yu lei," 11: 5, in Zhu, *Zhu zi quan shu*, 334.

21 Billioud and Thoraval, "Jiaohua," 14; Xu, "Yin song yu jiao yu."

22 Lu Xun, "Cong bai cao yuan dao san wei shu wu 從百草園到三味書屋 [From Herbs Garden to Three Tastes School]," in *Lu Xun quan ji* 魯迅全集 [*Complete Works of Lu Xun*] (Beijing: People's Literature Press, 2005), 2: 290-291.

I did not add punctuation to the sentences read by the students and not only because I would like to be true to the essayist's original sketch. The Chinese language is composed of monosyllabic characters, constituting the elementary units of meaning; and classical Chinese does not come with ready punctuation. The characters run on and on in order to form a sentence; and conjunctions are far less useful in Chinese than in English. Therefore if one is capable of receiving a text properly (which is one extended meaning of "reading" in English), he should be able to read it aloud well, comprehending punctuation, tone, emphasis, and groupings of single characters. The students here were apparently less sophisticated readers than their teacher, who entered the subjunctive space created by his performative reading action.

More importantly, by reading aloud and by hearing the students, the teacher was not indulging in a private relationship between himself and the text-triggered subjunctive world. The nuanced point here is that the relationship is personal but not private. First, in Confucian pedagogy, the teacher's traditional duty is to assist the students in creating a personal relationship between individuals and the wider community behind and beyond a text. They do this by attending the reading performances of the students, recognizing their landmark progress (remember: "to read" includes a group of actions that I have listed), demonstrating his own way of reading (aloud) the passage, and suggesting further reading materials. Several different texts are mentioned in the above ethnographic vignette, including excerpts from *The Analects, Children's Knowledge Treasury, The Book of Changes*, and *Tribute of Yu*, the most abstruse passage in the most obscure *Book of Documents*. Not all of these are classical in the strict sense; for example, the *Children's Knowledge Treasury* was a popular book that was not compiled until the late fifteenth century. Nonetheless, they all point to a historical civilizational community in which anyone who tries to master reading is welcome to participate.

The shared subjunctive sociality comes into being in a somewhat chaotic scene of people reading together. Individuals—students and teachers alike—see, hear, effect, and respond to one another, while their reading activities also bring to life whoever may have read the same passages, through "my" breath and heartbeat. The personal willingness of the individuals is irrelevant in this unique ritual field of reading practice. The voices of the participants extend beyond their physical existence, forcing them to act upon one another. To a tranquil reader with a strong sense of privacy, such a ritual arena of reading may be disturbing. Yet this public effect lies at the heart of a ritual in which one recognizes others (rather than building walls against "the other") along with (instead of "other than") herself. The medium of the classical texts is no negligible matter. The temporal distance between the age of the text and the time

of the more contemporary readers helps establish a more or less independent status of the classics and the "as-if" world behind and beyond it. The old books evoke the presence of ancestors and spirits in classrooms visibly occupied only by living students and teachers. In a dynamic interaction between the readers and the spirits in the broad sense, facilitated by reading, one joins with a shared community across time and generations that is larger than one's own interior life but yet not engulfing.

Chinese society today continues to provide space for this tradition of reading aloud, from kindergarten all the way to university (even including graduate school). In the United States, you would not expect to find individuals bringing Shakespeare's sonnets or Thoreau's essays to campus and reciting them aloud, unless they were preparing to mount a play. Even in that case, it would be considered more proper for these students to find a separate space for privacy, such as a backstage rehearsal room, a classroom with podium, or a café. Admittedly, few people will object to such behaviors openly as long as they are only occasional and do not intrude on others. Most observers tolerate such behavior without comment, as is the custom of politeness and privacy in American society. Reading and speaking in American culture tend to be two separate activities: one belonging to the private sphere, the other to the public.

Social sentiment regarding reading in China is quite different. Even a casual observer will find students around any campus reading aloud in the early morning. In the primary and middle schools, there is actually institutional support for this reading aloud, and morning reading is part of each school's curriculum almost without exception. However, this is not a national or legal obligation. The students read in the classroom during the time slot arranged by schools; at other times, you find them in the aisles, in front of plants, around a lake, or under a tree. Reading can take place anywhere, preferably somewhere with sunshine.[23] It is not obligatory for college students to read aloud, yet morning reading remains one of the most common scenes on campus and the most common experience of university students in China. While the choice of reading materials in the modern educational system is wide, students prefer selections in the humanities and social sciences (from the *Mencius* to English essays and from Chinese history to abstract Western philosophy, such as the works of Kant) due to the convention of reading aloud. At least in the treatment of this

23 Regarding the morning activities in terms of a theory of humanistic "energy" (*qi*), see Judith Farquhar and Qicheng Zhang, *Ten Thousand Things: Nurturing Life in Contemporary Beijing* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012). Mencius is particularly relevant here; see Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*.

essay, this is a specifically Chinese convention, which I attribute to the ritual tradition of reading the classics.

Reading that Elicits Empathy

We have touched upon the rhythmic aspect of reading the classics as ritual in the previous section, with regard to the way in which the forming of rhythm shows an understanding of the text. The art of it is not so much in the sounds themselves as in the particular understandings that make sounds meaningful. As a parallel, one could contemplate the different effects made by a four-year-old learning the keys on a piano and by a fine pianist playing her favorite polonaises by Chopin.

Indeed, to intone a passage publicly is quite a typical pedagogical method in teaching the Confucian classics. In remembering his teacher Aisin Gioro Yuyun, then known as Liu Yuyun, Edward Shaughnessy described the reading part of his teaching method in detail. Again, the scene is not limited to his individual account but reflects an important dimension of reading the classics in the Chinese tradition:

> I still remember it clearly. He entered the living room wearing a long robe. His right hand was holding a thread-bound edition of *Lectures in Tao Te Ching*, and the left hand an incense stick. He said one must be devoted to the book when one read the classics; and one must burn incense for that sake. After he lit the incense, he put it in a tripod-shaped burner on the desk. The smoke was just between the two of us. Then he began to ask me if I had done any preparation. I answered affirmatively. He asked me to read the text. Once I finished reading "dao ke dao/ fei chang dao/ ming ke ming/ fei chang ming," teacher Yu asked me very loudly, "What does it mean?"
>
> I replied, "I am sorry, teacher; I am not very sure about what it actually means."
>
> He said, "You are not sure. Well, let me tell you. The meaning of 'Dao ke dao/ fei chang dao' is 'Dao—,' " his voice was sonorous and he stopped three seconds after he uttered it, " 'Ke—,' " he read as if it was very long, " 'Dao—,' " loudly, again, " 'Fei—,' " another long and drawn-out word, " 'Chang dao!' Understand?"
>
> "I am sorry, teacher; I am not clear yet."
>
> "You are still not clear. Okay, let me tell you in the vernacular. It means 'Dao-ke-dao-fei-chang-dao,' " he spoke noticeably fast, "understand?"

> "Sorry, teacher; it's somehow still unclear."
>
> "Unclear. Fine. Let me read it to you again. The meaning of 'Dao-ke-dao' is 'Dao' (loudly) 'Ke' (stressing its falling-and-rising third tone) 'Dao' (emphasizing its falling tone); the meaning of 'Fei-chang-dao' is 'Fei-Chang' (connecting 'Fei' and 'Chang' together) 'Dao' (emphasizing the fourth tone again). Understand?"
>
> We continued like this for more than ten minutes. All of a sudden, I felt as if I was getting it; it seemed the meaning of "Dao-ke-dao, fei-chang-dao" was all clear to me. . . . I continued reading. . . . In half a year we finished his *Lectures in Tao Te Ching*. I was asked to read every single sentence in every chapter to the teacher. After I finished reading, he would ask me to elaborate each sentence in my own words and explain it to me when I had questions. Occasionally he might make a note in the margin in his book and ask me to copy it in my own book.[24]

In this passage, instead of translating the classic texts read aloud into English equivalents as in the previous section, I preserve the Chinese pronunciations of individual characters. Shaughnessy and his teacher were reading the opening verses of the *Laozi*, indeed, a sentence quoted frequently in ordinary Chinese lives. It is worth noting the role of reading aloud, of uttering and hearing readings, in facilitating understanding on a substantial and not just a formalistic level. This absorption of meaning demands patience from both the teacher and the student, as the example shows: the teacher demonstrates how he himself practices reading and watches how his student works until the passage is understood; and the student also makes an effort to connect with the meanings behind and beyond these simple words. During this process, not only will mispronunciation be corrected by the teacher and other students but one also learns the connotation of the flow of words by feeling their very sensible auditory texture. Think of a fine piano teacher, strict in tempo, watching over her students as they play the instrument.

As in the account given by Shaughnessy, students are first introduced to the ritual of reading by listening to and watching it performed by teachers or other students who have already participated in a subjunctive community behind

24 Chang Hui-cheng 張輝誠, *Yu lao zhen jing shen* 毓老真精神 [*True Spirit of Teacher Yu*] (Taipei: INK Press, 2012), 110-111. As I confirmed with Professor Edward Shaughnessy via email, he wrote the passage in Chinese at the request of Chang, who was collecting memorial accounts from Teacher Yu's former students. I translated the account by Prof. Shaughnessy that was collected in Chang's book into English, and thank him for his suggestion on wording and kind permission for using his account here.

and beyond the text. The demonstration by experienced teachers in particular acquaints them with the rhythmic style of reading. When they perform the ritual themselves, the students imitate the pronunciation of words—a much easier way to grasp pronunciation than looking up words in dictionaries—read, form their own understanding, and read again. Such performances, along with the witness of one another, constitute a repetitive but positive feedback circle.

This mentorship relationship resembles the "community of practice" described by Jeffrey Samuels concerning Buddhist education for novices in Sri Lanka, which "entails a more active process of learning and more socially grounded manner of training."[25] Yet Samuels used the word "social" in its literal sense, as community of coevals. The community of practice constructed by reading activities in the Chinese tradition, however, is first and foremost a community over time and includes more dead than living readers. Such a community is fundamentally historical and thus distinguishes itself from religious communities, whose aspirations are essentially ahistorical. But it is not a "secular" community either. When readers of different ages punctuate, intone, and read the texts that have been read by their ancestors time and again, they necessarily engage in conversations with the ancients, in spite of their intangibility. An apt word for this community is "subjunctive," as Seligman and colleagues have used it consistently in their books to designate an "as-if" and "would-be" universe.[26] This points us to the third aspect of reading the classics as ritual, creating a shared temporal community over time: namely, the "as-if" presence of the sage.

Reading as Subjunctive: the "as-if" Presence of the Sage

Pattberg has suggested that perhaps the Chinese term *shengren* (聖人) could stand on its own, as do Buddha or bodhisattvas in the Buddhist tradition, or ayatollahs and imams in the Islamic tradition. He listed thirty-six translations and argued that *shengren* is neither Greek "philosophers" nor Christian "holy men" or "saints." "Sage" in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, referring to "a profoundly wise man, esp. one who features in ancient history or legend" (*OED*) might be

25 Jeffrey Samuels, "Learning to Be Novices: Monastic Education and the Construction of Vocation," in *Attracting the Heart: Social Relations and the Aesthetics of Emotion in Sri Lankan Monastic Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010), 77.

26 Seligman and Weller, *Rethinking Pluralism*; Seligman et al., *Ritual and Its Consequences*.

its closest rendering. Yet, as Pattberg pointed out, "*Shengren* is above philosophy and beyond religion."[27]

Admittedly, it is feasible to articulate the transcendent in the Chinese tradition by soliciting a discourse of "world religions" and considering Christianity a key comparative reference.[28] There are also scholars who focus on an idea of "immanent transcendence" stemming from an Enlightenment legacy.[29] I, however, am concerned primarily with other approaches, for example, the route by way of "history." In this approach, Chinese tradition is transcendent not in the sense of relating to an other-world in contrast to this-world, but by going beyond the differences between one human and another and one generation and another. The essence of Chinese sociality and sacrality is neither among the coevals nor between humans and gods, but is first and foremost expressed by constantly negotiated relations between generations, from the long deceased to the yet to-be-born.

Many historians regard the historical mindedness of the Chinese as simply looking into the past. It is true that there are "traditionalistic traditionalists," to use a phrase from Levenson when drawing the significant distinction between "Confucianists" and "Confucians."[30] Yet there are also innovations and innovators within a tradition, who aim to bring about hitherto unrealized potential implicated in one tradition, as Levenson also recognized. In other words, what is "tradition" is not a given but is to be accepted critically and developed and constructed conscientiously. For the Chinese, a term like *wanshi* (tens of thousands of generations to come) is not just hyperbole, but a valid and acceptable expression that makes imaginable sense; and this turns out to be highly culturally specific through comparative insights. This futuristic element of Confucian historicity is by no means mundane. As I have tried to argue in this paper, such a transcendent characteristic in a historical community over time is expressed and made possible by the ritual of reading the classics. The ritual

27 Thorsten Pattberg, *Shengren* (New York: LoD Press, 2011).

28 Anna Sun, *Confucianism as a World Religion*: *Contested Histories and Contemporary Realities* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013); Weiming Tu, *The Global Significance of Concrete Humanity: Essays on the Confucian Discourse in Cultural China* (New Delhi: Center for Studies in Civilizations, 2010). Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

29 Shu-hsien Liu, "The Confucian Approach to the Problem of Transcendence and Immanence," *Philosophy East and West* 22, no. 1 (1972).

30 Joseph Richmond Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*: *A Trilogy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 2: 16.

action of reading enables the living coevals to enter a lofty community beyond their immediate temporal experience.

An alert reader might have noticed my careless use of terms such as "transcendent," "religious," and "sacred." Such a reader should legitimately doubt the propriety and relevance of these terms in a discussion of historicity and temporality. After all, in the Judeo-Christian tradition, what is transcendent is inevitably beyond this world and out of the bounds of time and space. Even in discussions of the "Axial Age" in which the Chinese civilization is included, scholars, such as Tu Weiming and Robert Bellah, both following Karl Jasper, are devoted to the rise of the transcendent and reflect on the Chinese conception of "heaven," the idea of which is beyond temporal.[31] The problem is articulated by Herbert Fingarette in *Confucius, the Secular as Sacred*, published in 1972, where he comments on English commentators who try to "minimize to the irreducible, the magical claims in the Analects" because they "accept . . . an axiom in our times that the goal of direct action by incantation and ritual gesture cannot be taken as a serious possibility."[32] The sacrality of a historical community in the Chinese tradition could not be compared to Christian historiography with a fatalistic teleology, the modern discipline of the science of history, or even the ahistorical Buddhist tradition, which has been understood better in societies without distinctive Buddhist traditions.[33] But this recognition is not enough. For lack of better terms, my paper describes the transcendent quality of human relatedness embedded in the ritual of reading the classics as "subjunctive," an "as-if" possibility. Its necessary distinction from more common words, such as "imaginary" or "imagined" is that the "subjunctive" suggests more than a work of the mind or simply "lived reality," but is inalienable from the grammar of life.

In the ritual of reading the classics, the most crucial "as-if" presence is the sages or *shengren*. In the example of Shaughnessy's first class, the teacher burned incense before they read the classics and emphasized that "one must be devoted to the books." Indeed, here the reading experience is more about the people and ideals behind and beyond the book than about the book itself or objective knowledge. It is not until the modern revolution in the realm of

31 Robert N. Bellah, *Religion in Human Evolution: From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011); Tu, *The Global Significance of Concrete Humanity*.

32 Herbert Fingarette, *Confucius—The Secular as Sacred* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 6.

33 Cf. Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand Against a Historical Background* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

education that people began to read for specialized and technical knowledge, for which purpose they would have found a teacher and established apprenticeship. In the Chinese tradition of learning, reading is necessarily about the people who make knowledge relevant to specific circumstances rather than about the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake. It is a cultivation practice that turns an immature student into a mature human being who shares the ideals and basis of a sage's community over time. This concern is expressed by the Confucians most consistently but is widely shared by other traditions.[34]

Conventionally, reading involves symbolic actions like kowtowing, which would look odd to today's readers with democratic sentiments. However, bearing in mind the invisible presence of earlier teachers and later teachers-to-be, kowtowing suggests a more equal relationship between coevals, as the standard of judgment turns out to be historical and futuristic. Not only do the students kneel and bow low enough to touch their heads to the ground before the their teacher, both sides kneel down and prostrate themselves before memorial tablets or portraits of earlier venerable teachers all the way back to Confucius. Both sides are obliged to acknowledge their deep respect for the "as-if" presence of all earlier teachers to whom they are indebted and to recognize their equal responsibility to continue the line to future generations. And, as Yue shows in his ethnography, such a recognized "as-if" presence of the deceased teachers could actually be used by students to regulate their living teachers and provide legitimacy for innovations.[35]

Perhaps it is easier to understand such sages as exemplar figures embodying the efforts of self-perfection. As Tu writes, it is "not so much a state of attainment as a process of becoming,"[36] or an endless process of self-improvements. Confucius, a human example who existed in history, suggests the possibility of pursuing such ideals, even though he once said himself, "The sage and the man of perfect virtue—how dare I rank myself with them? It may simply be said of me, that I strive to become such without satiety, and teach others without

34 Again, this is not limited to Chinese traditions. Regarding the role that trust plays in what and how we know, see also Adam B. Seligman, "Trust and the Problem of Boundaries" (paper presented at the 18th ISA World Congress of Sociology, Japan, Yokohama, July 13-19, 2014).

35 Yue Yongyi 岳永逸, "Ke tou de ping deng: Sheng huo ceng mian de zu shiye xin yang 磕頭的平等：生活層面的祖師爺信仰 [The Equality of Kowtow: Bodily Practices and Mentality of the Zushiye Belief]," in his *Ling yan, ke tou, chuan shuo: Min zhong xin yang de yin mian yu yang mian* 靈驗•磕頭•傳說：民眾信仰的陰面與陽面 [*Efficaciousness, Kowtow, Legend: The Double Facets of Popular Belief*] (Beijing: SDX Joint, 2010), 302-346.

36 Weiming Tu, "The Confucian Perception of Adulthood," *Daedalus* 105, no. 2 (1976): 109.

weariness."[37] Like the teachers before and after him, Confucius views himself consciously as a transmitter whose task is to "make sure that the humanity of the former sages always remains a felt presence in the world," a mission "to assure cultural continuity."[38]

Reading is a necessary reminder of such presence. When teachers read to students, they are demonstrating a way of reading empathetically beyond mere characters, meter, or rhythm—a way by which a reader is absorbed into a subjunctive world created by the activity of reading. There are the ancients who are concrete human examples of the sage ideal; there are the teachers as transmitters sitting or standing beside the students. The ideal of the sage as a possibility and orientation also points to the future, entailing continuous efforts by current students as well as subsequent generations long after them. Both individuals and the community as a whole try to match the examples of the deceased and try to improve so as to offer better examples for the yet-to-be-born. Defined by the common activity of reading, such a relationship is essentially a flexible one—an open invitation for anyone who would like to take it up.

Conclusion

The ritual orientation of reading in China deals more with orthopraxy than orthodoxy, and this enables us to understand the ritual tradition of reading as less about a set of prescriptive doctrines than about a series of constructive practices. What is termed "tradition" here is more dynamic than static. Through reading the classics, among many other rituals, a tradition is formed and constructed exactly by inducing affirmation from later generations of the legacies of earlier generations. It sounds plain and simple, but the task is actually difficult. Note here that we are not just dealing with how knowledge is transmitted from one generation to another. That may be part of the question, but it is not the heart of it. The core is the question of how particular attitudes, especially of an affirmative sort, are able to be transmitted at all from generation to generation and how later generations can live at ease with the seemingly incompatible legacies that they may, all at the same time, inherit from earlier generations.

Before the modern period, Chinese history was not always peaceful—quite the opposite. Yet in the eyes of Western "historians" such as Hegel and Weber,

37 *Analects*, 7: 34, in Chan, *Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*.

38 Tu, "The Confucian Perception of Adulthood," 120.

the Chinese had achieved incredible historical stability or, perhaps, "ossification." If this were true, where did this stabilizing force come from? Weber pointed out that the source was the ethos of Confucian literati shaping this conservative tendency.[39] But how was such an ethos transmitted during great social changes? Historical sociologists like Weber included traditional authority in their social analyses, yet they were more interested in using it as a comparative parameter than treating it in its own right. Here, I prefer to follow the path suggested by social historians such as Gombrich, who attempt to elaborate how the "forces of conservatism" work.[40]

As this paper tries to show, the forces of conservatism are not highly structured, nor are they manipulated carefully according to certain religious doctrines or by a particular social group—say, the Confucian literati. The semantic field opened up by the ritual of reading the classics is surprisingly rich and open to very different interpretations. The subjunctive community is possible specifically because it tolerates different interpretive frameworks. After all, it is the activity rather than doctrines that defines such a community with incredible historical depth. Even when it comes to the subjunctive, the possibilities are unusually open. Whoever reads or at least worships the classics is considered a member, who recognizes other members' presences, including the deceased, the coevals, and the unborn. The realm is public, but different from the rational and reasoned public sphere that we might find in Habermasian cafés.[41] In this Chinese reading public, common opinion scrupulously examined and agreed on at an individual level is not necessary. Reading suffices as a value in itself. And to read properly, one goes beyond one's individual existence and has to consider improving oneself by reading better and more. This is not primarily for the sake of knowledge but for the sake of participating in an ever larger and grander human community.

It is here that we come to the synchronic aspect of reading the classics as ritual. This is an aspect of reading that is of great interest but, because of space limitations, should be addressed in another paper. In the light of this ritual tradition, heterogeneous traditions and temporalities are not unconquerable; they could be tamed by ever-wider reading-the-classics activities. I believe that, in the future, one could pursue this line of thinking by examining historically how various traditions in imperial China crossed each other's borders

39 Max Weber, *The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism* (New York: Macmillan, 1964).

40 Gombrich, *Theravada Buddhism*, 9.

41 Also comparing the rational model of forming a public opinion, Chau made an interesting argument about an "agrarian public sphere" in rural China. It is worth examining how an "as-if" reading public may work in rural contexts. See also note 10.

by this ritual orientation of reading. One may pursue these lines of thinking while also examining cultural history in contemporary China, which has been unequivocally involved in complicated and multi-stranded world histories in our time. Particularly workable at an observational level, the ritual approach to reading enables us to investigate how a "historical community of fate" is not only imagined and enacted but also constantly reshaped and expanded. Its religious significance also helps us to rethink the place of "tradition" in our modern public world.

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Top Ten Developments in the Studies of Chinese Humanities in 2014

Traditional Chinese culture is enjoying a resurgence in popularity. Xi Jinping's speech at the Forum on Literature and Art made waves not only in literary circles but across all walks of life. The compilation of the Longquan Archives, as well as the discovery of other new source materials, has contributed substantially to the study of the humanities in mainland China. In the past year the humanities have seen numerous new developments, including the emergence of new concepts, new areas of inquiry, and new trends, reflecting the dynamic growth of the various disciplines. On this occasion, it is fitting to reflect on the progress of the past year. Therefore, the *Journal of Literature, History and Philosohy* (*Wen Shi Zhe*), together with *China Reading Weekly* (*Zhonghua Du Shu Bao*), have compiled the first-ever "Top Ten Developments in the Study of Chinese Humanities in 2014". The final list is as follows:

1. Debate over the Yenching School and the New Qing History questioned whether Western academic discourse is capable of accurately representing China.
2. The Chinese edition of Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* inspired a generation of scholars to revisit Karl Marx's *Capital*.
3. The theory of historical nihilism received widespread attention.
4. Scholars recovered and investigated Sino-Japanese War era poetry and Ming-Qing era texts from the Diaoyu (Senkaku) Islands.
5. Controversy over critical evaluations of Republican-era scholarship sparked a heated debate.
6. Research into bamboo slips, silk manuscripts and other newly-compiled source materials deepened.
7. The debate between political Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism intensified.
8. The relationship between Marxism and Confucianism received an unprecedented degree of attention.
9. Xi Jinping's address at the Forum on Literature and Art called for a radical change in the studies and future development of Chinese literature and art.
10. The passing of Tang Yijie, Pang Pu, Tian Yuqing and other prominent scholars raised concern over the continuing legacy of the Chinese classics.

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Journal of Chinese Humanities (*JOCH*) is an English-language extension of *Wen Shi Zhe* (*Journal of Literature, History and Philosophy*), one of mainland China's most respected humanities journals. *JOCH* focuses on presenting scholarly work on various aspects of China's traditional culture and society. It is our goal to foster international dialogue on important issues in Chinese studies and provide a platform for academic exchange.

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