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The New and Revised *Journal of Confucian Philosophy and Culture*

The *Journal of Confucian Philosophy and Culture* (*JCPC*) has a distinguished history of achievement. It was first published in 2001 for the purpose of interpreting and exploring Confucianism from a modern perspective. From 2007, it sought to integrate a broader academic dialogue by publishing articles in both Chinese and English. Now, starting with this issue (Vol. 32), *JCPC* will strengthen its international network and broaden its global presence by concentrating on articles written in English, thereby establishing itself as the only English-language journal dedicated to understanding, interpreting, critically evaluating, developing, and extending the Confucian tradition.

This latest incarnation of *JCPC* adjusts the nature and trajectory of the journal without abandoning its past achievements, endeavors, and principles. In constituting new editorial and advisory boards, altering its policies and processes, introducing a different format and new features, and modifying some of the aims of the journal, we seek to follow Kongja's (Confucius', Kongzi's in Chinese) wise counsel to "cherish what is old and understand what is new" 溫故而知新. Most importantly, we remain committed to the journal's original goal of "exploring Confucianism from a modern perspective" ("what is old") but will, from this issue forward, emphasize contributions that aim to apply Confucian philosophy to the problems and challenges of the contemporary world ("what is new"). In other words, we seek to publish work that not only explores Confucian philosophy and culture *from* a modern perspective but also *for* the modern world.

The latest version of the *Journal of Confucian Philosophy and Culture* includes a new feature called "Scholar's Corner: Confucianism in and for the Modern World." Scholar's Corner is a forum for exploring aspects of Confucianism that either are parts of some contemporary society or that an author believes should be. This new

addition will appear in every issue of *JCPC* and is aimed at engaging the broadest possible audience in an intellectually robust but popular manner.

The *Journal of Confucian Philosophy and Culture* will work to publish select volumes organized by a guest editor that include groups of three or four articles that share a special topic. The idea is to present a focused set of contributions that share a common theme, which they treat in greater depth and from diverse perspectives. We invite suggestions for special topics from our readers as well as from our editors and advisors. Among possible special topics that currently are under consideration are:

- Women and Confucianism
- Confucianism and Moral Psychology
- Confucianism and Artificial Intelligence
- Confucianism and Naturalism
- Confucianism and Political Theory
- Individualism, Collectivism, and the Confucian Tradition
- Public and Private in Confucian Thought
- Nature versus Nurture in Confucian Moral Self Cultivation

The role of guest editor involves submitting a proposal for a special issue, communicating with the provisional authors, and writing a brief introduction on the topic (normally 250-500 words in length) to lead off the issue.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all new editorial members who recently have joined the board. I also would like to express my sincerest gratitude to all the contributors to this issue, members of our editorial board, and peer reviewers for all their efforts.

Phillip J. Ivanhoe
Editor-in-Chief

Declare the Independence of Confucianism from the State: *Rethinking "Outer Kingliness" in a Democratic Era*

Chenyang Li*

Since antiquity, Confucians have sought to work with the state in order to implement their philosophy through state sponsorship. And yet, whenever Confucians have sought state sponsorship, naturally the government has adopted Confucian philosophy selectively to serve its own purposes and thus compromised the integrity of Confucianism. Throughout Chinese history, countless Confucian officials attempted to help rulers to do the right thing. They often failed when their advice went against the fundamental interest of rulers. On reflection, this outcome should not be unexpected. The primary goal of rulers is to solidify power; the primary concern of Confucianism is the wellbeing of the people. When the two conflict, it is highly unlikely for a government to prioritize Confucian ideals. In a democratic era, Confucianism can influence society without joining the state apparatus. It can and must promote its social ideals through grassroots democratic participation rather than leave itself to the mercy of state sponsorship.

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1

The state has had a special place in Confucianism. From the beginning, serving the state has been one of its most important themes. The *Great Learning*, one of the Confucian "Four Classics," advocates the sequential goals of "cultivating one's person" (*xiushen* 修身), "regulating one's family" (*qijia* 齊家), "managing the state" (*zhiguo* 治國), and finally "harmonizing the world" (*pingtianxia* 平天下). Under the banner of "inner sageliness and outer kingliness," generation after generation of Confucian thinkers have tried tirelessly to cultivate themselves as persons and to promote their moral and social ideals through the operation of the state. Confucius himself sought a post in government that would give him a chance to put his philosophy into practice. The *Analects* records a conversation Confucius had with his disciple Zigong 子貢:

> Zigong said, "Here is a beautiful gem—Should one wrap it up and store it in a cabinet? Or should one seek a good price and sell it? The Master said, "Sell it! Sell it! I am one waiting for the right offer." (Ni 2017, 237)

Presumably, here Confucius expressed his wish to be offered a government post so he could realize his political ambitions. In an effort to promote his political agenda, Confucius went to see Nanzi, the notorious wife of the ruler of Wei. His act was so unseemly that even his disciple Zilu found it troubling (*Analects* 6.28). At times, Confucius's fondness for government affairs puzzled his disciples. One such case is his evaluation of the ancient scholar-official Guan Zhong 管仲. Guan was one of the two teachers of Prince Jiu in the state of Qi 齊. Later Jiu 糾 was killed by his younger brother and the killer became Duke Huan 桓 of Qi. Out of loyalty to the prince, the other teacher of Jiu committed suicide. Guan Zhong, however, not only continued to live but later even became Duke Huan's prime minister and assisted Duke Huan in establishing a strong Qi state. Guan's behavior seemed contrary to Confucius's teachings on loyalty and integrity. In *Analects* 14.16 and 14.17, his disciples Zilu 子路 and Zigong respectively ques-

tioned Guan's moral character. Apparently, they had expected Confucius to think the same way. However, it turned out that Confucius gave Guan a very positive assessment and called him "virtuous" (*ren* 仁). Confucius's justification for his assessment seems entirely consequentialist, on the ground that Guan later did something good. Confucius explained his assessment of Guan Zhong to Zilu:

> Duke Huan assembled the Lords of the states together nine times, and did it without using military force. It was all through the influence of Guan Zhong. That was his virtue (*ren*)! That was his virtue (*ren*)! (Ni 2017, 332, modified)

In the following passage 14.17, Confucius explains to Zigong:

> Guan Zhong became prime minister to Duke Huan, made him leader of the lords of states, and united and rectified the whole kingdom. Even today, the people still benefit from what he conferred. Had there not been Guan Zhong, we would be wearing our hair unbound with our clothes fastened on the left. How could this be compared to the petty fidelity of common men and women, which would have him strangle himself in a stream or ditch, without anyone knowing who he was? (Ni 2017, 333)

"Wearing our hair unbound with our clothes fastened on the left" connotes backwardness and a lack of culture. Here Confucius seems to imply that, (seemingly) immoral acts are justified in order to achieve greater purposes in politics. However, these remarks are inconsistent with what is recorded in *Analects* 3.22, where Confucius criticizes Guan Zhong as having no sense of ritual propriety (*li* 禮). In the same passage, Confucius also regards Guan Zhong as a person of "small capacity." Such remarks concern Guan's moral character, but obviously Confucius thinks highly of Guan's political capacity and achievements. The contemporary scholar Li Zehou 李澤厚 sees such a discrepancy as exposing a tension and conflict between ethics and politics in the Confucian ideal of "inner sageliness and outer kingliness" (Li 2004, 102). Whereas ethics requires one course of action, politics demands another. If we accept Li's reading, it means that Confucius was so much concerned with political success for his social project, that

when ethics and politics conflicted, he opted for politics. At any rate, this story suggests a tension between the Confucian goals of seeking "inner sageliness" and "outer kingliness." "Inner sageliness" demands moral integrity. "Outer kingliness," at least in cases like Guan Zhong, calls for compromising moral standards as far as working for the state is concerned.

This issue is related to what we today call the "dirty hands" problem in political philosophy. "Dirty hands" is a term used in political philosophy to describe the necessity at times to engage in immoral acts in order to achieve greater goods in politics. The term was taken from Sartre's play by the same name. In the play, the communist leader Hoerderer, who intends to collaborate with fascist groups in order to form a coalition government, defends himself with a rhetorical question: "I have dirty hands right up to the elbows. I've plunged them in filth and blood. Do you think you can govern innocently?" (Sartre 1955, 224). The implied answer is that one cannot govern innocently. Michael Walzer explicates the concept of "dirty hands" as follows, in a more or less affirmative light: "No government can put the life of the community and all its members at risk, so long as there are actions available to it, even immoral actions, that would avoid or reduce the risk. . . . That is what political leaders are for; that is their first task" (Walzer 2004, 42). He declares, "No one succeeds in politics without getting his hands dirty" (Walzer 1973, 164).

One may think that if true Confucians become rulers themselves, things will be different. One may think they will then practice "true" Confucianism. For the sake of argument, let us suppose Confucians can become rulers, with the full intention to implement Confucian ideals. Can they succeed in upholding Confucian ideals and implement them in accordance to their true spirit? I think not. Politics is a pragmatic enterprise. In order to be successful, it requires negotiation, compromise, and, yes, dirty hands. All these will jeopardize the true spirit of Confucianism. In contemporary times, the revered late Singaporean leader Lee Kuan Yew was probably one of the most "Confucian" among all national leaders across the world in the last century. He has been criticized for being ruthless toward his political opponents. In his defense, people may say that he did what was neces-

sary to control power so he could lead the nation towards prosperity (as Guan Zhong did). In an interview with the *New York Times* in 2010, Lee said, "Everybody knows that in my bag I have a hatchet, and a very sharp one. You take me on, I take my hatchet, we meet in the cul-de-sac. That's the way I had to survive in the past."[1] In another interview with *Straits Times* in 2012, Lee defended himself, "I'm not saying that everything I did was right but everything I did was for an honorable purpose. I had to do some nasty things, locking fellows up without trial."[2] At least Lee had the courage to admit that he used "dirty hands" in advancing his political ideals. And no one can deny that he did it successfully.

Therefore, the dilemma for Confucians in working with the state seems to be this. On the one hand, if Confucians do not get involved with state power, they become marginalized and risk becoming irrelevant. Thus, they cannot achieve their goals by constructing a good society. On the other hand, working with the state jeopardizes the integrity of Confucianism and renders it a tool used by state power for political purposes. When rulers are non-Confucian but make use of Confucianism, they use Confucianism selectively and distort Confucianism in order to serve their own purposes. Even when rulers are somewhat Confucian themselves, it is impossible for them to succeed without compromising the integrity of Confucianism. They have to commit "dirty hands" acts in violation of Confucian teachings in order to make it in politics. Mencius's ideal, that one should never commit an immoral act even if by doing so one could acquire the entire world (*Mencius* 2A2), is simply not a formula for successful politics. Throughout history, the partial success of Confucianism in gaining state sponsorship has come at a high cost. The Han emperor Wudi made Confucianism the state ideology but also made Confucianism a tool for the state, analogous to the idea of *philosophia ancilla theologiae* (philosophy is the handmaiden of theology) in the mediaeval West. For instance, by strongly aligning filiality (孝) with

1 "I did some sharp and hard things to get things right. . . ," Andrew Loh's blog, accessed 28 July 2019, https://andrewlohhp.wordpress.com/2012/09/16/i-did-some-sharp-and-hard-things-to-get-things-right/.

2 Ibid.

loyalty (忠), Confucianism was made to serve the interest of rulers in producing submissive subjects for the state. The option of involvement with state power inevitably undermines Confucianism. We may call this the Confucian dilemma of politics.

2

Recently, some Confucian scholars have been suspicious about working with the state to realize Confucian ideals. Tang Yijie 湯一介 (1927–2014) opposed politicizing Confucianism. He said, "the politicization of Confucianism may undermine the precious spirit of Confucianism."[3] In his view, "had Confucius become a king, we would not have had Confucius."[4] In recent years, the Chinese government has released signals to embrace Confucianism. Some Confucian scholars have even attempted to offer a Confucian reading of China's state leadership, either for the purpose of nudging the state to adopt more Confucian ideals or just providing a decoration to make the state leadership more palatable to a Confucian-leaning population in China.[5] Others are cautious. Zhang Xianglong 張祥龍, a prominent Confucian scholar, has reservations about the state sponsorship of Confucianism. In his view, the change of attitudes from demonizing Confucianism during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) to accepting Confucianism as a reasonable cultural and moral force in Chinese history and in today's society is a good sign of progress. However, he worries about how Confucianism can preserve its independence in today's society.[6] In his view, losing its independence, Confucianism will no longer be what it is and will become a mere tool for the state to consolidate its power of control. For similar reasons, Yu Yingshih has declared that today's state sponsorship of Confucianism is "the kiss of death."[7] The shared

3 Quoted in "Don't Make Confucianism an Ideology" 不要把儒家意識形態化, accessed 31 July 2019, http://news.sina.com.cn/c/sd/2011-01-20/145121847192. shtml.

4 Ibid.

5 For instance, see http://www.chinashixue.com.cn/.

6 張祥龍: 儒家眞正的大復興在未來, accessed on 28 May 2019, http://www.pku.org.cn/people/rwft/85370.htm.

7 https://chinachange.org/2015/07/01/the-chinese-communists-are-not-confucianists/.

message of these three scholars is that Confucianism must avoid being used by political power even if that means not collaborating with state power.

Such a view is not un-Confucian. Classic Confucian thinkers never said that one should *unconditionally* serve the state. Confucius famously said that, if the Dao 道 failed to prevail, he would take a raft to sail on the ocean (*Analects* 5.7). This comment can be read as suggesting that morality outweighs any political or social position he may have. If the ruler was no good and society was corrupt, not only Confucius would not serve the state, he would not even live in the country. *Mencius* 2B5 records a story about serving the state by giving advice to rulers. Mencius encouraged Chi Wa 蚔𧊅 to serve as the Marshal of the Guards in the state of Qi 齊 so Chi could advise the ruler. Then the ruler did not take Chi's advice. Chi quit his official post and left Qi. People then wondered why Mencius did not leave Qi. Mencius responded,

> One who holds an office will resign it if he is unable to discharge his duties, and one whose responsibility is to give advice will resign if his advice is not followed. I hold no office, neither have I any responsibility for giving advice. Why should I not have plenty of scope when it comes to the question of staying or leaving? (Lau 1970, 89, modified)

In Mencius's view, Confucian scholars can work with the state when their advice is followed. They should not cling to government posts when their advice is ignored. Mencius was free to stay or leave as he was not part of the state apparatus. We should understand this view in the context of moral consideration. A ruler's action can be morally right or wrong. The responsibility of Confucian scholars is to advise the ruler to do morally right things. When the ruler refuses and does the opposite, it is a matter of moral principle not to remain with the ruler by continuing to serve him. Such a view was echoed in the "Zi Dao" chapter of the *Xunzi* that, when the ruler does not follow the Dao, one should follow the Dao rather than follow the ruler. In Xunzi's view, serving the Dao and serving the ruler may converge. Between the two, the primary imperative is to serve the Dao. When the two

diverge, one must choose the Dao rather than the ruler. Following these ideas of Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi, we can derive the principle that, if working with the state necessitates compromising moral principles, Confucians should not collaborate with state power. My earlier discussion of the conflict between the ultimate goal of state power and Confucian moral ideals, along with the "dirty hands" problem, has established that collaborating with state power inevitably compromises moral principles. Therefore, our conclusion is that Confucianism must not collaborate with state power.

The Confucian idea of "kingliness" or *wangdao* 王道 (the kingly way) has never meant to be merely about serving in government. *Analects* 2.21 records,

> Someone said of Confucius, "Why is the master not engaged in government?" The Master said, "The *Book of Documents* says: 'Filial, simply in being filial, and befriending your brothers, the influence will extend to government.' This is also engaging in governing. Why must there be any extra 'engagement in government'?" (Ni 2017, 110)

"Engagement in government" is a translation of *weizheng* 爲政. Confucius understood "*zheng*" in terms of its homonym "正," getting things right *zhengzhe*, *zhengye*. 政者, 正也. *Analects* 12.17. Namely, government is about getting things right in society. Evidently, for Confucius, one can engage in such affairs without actually holding a post in government. Serving in government in ancient times was a way to realize the Confucian ideal of the good society, realize the kingly way. It was a means to an end, the end being the Confucian vision of the good society.

We should note that ancient Confucian thinkers operated within a social system in which their philosophy could not exert direct influence on society at large without state sponsorship. Serving in government was seen as the most effective way, to some even the only effective way, for Confucians to achieve their social ideals through political means. Caught in the Confucian dilemma of politics, they had either to seek state sponsorship at the risk of compromising their moral principles or to become marginalized in society. Some may

think Confucianism should give up on the ideal of "inner sageliness and outer kingliness" and that it should focus solely on ethics and retreat from politics. This amounts to embracing the first horn of the dilemma. I think such a move would be a grave mistake. Such a separation of "inner sageliness" from "outer kingliness" would fatally undercut Confucianism.

If Confucianism does not seek alliance with the state, nor does it accept marginalization in society, what other option does it have? This is the most important political question for Confucian thinkers today. In answering this question, we must realize that times have changed. We are now in a democratic era. Democracy opens a door for Confucianism to get out of the dilemma without having to embrace either horn. We need to reconsider the practical implications of the ideal of "outer kingliness" in our age. In a democratic era, politics is not merely about working in government; it can be effectively pursued from outside of government. In the contemporary times, Confucianism can shape society through democratic participation. In a society that is less than democratic, Confucians should first advocate democracy to create conditions for democratic participation. Confucianism can affect government policy without having to solicit favor from government. This makes it possible for Confucianism to play an effective role in shaping social policies as an independent force.

In conclusion, Confucianism should finally wake up from its long-held dream of promoting its philosophy at the mercy of rulers. Instead, Confucians should advocate democracy as a means to gain direct influence on shaping and determining the course of society, to realize their ideal of "outer kingliness." In other words, in a democratic era, the Confucian ideal of "outer kingliness" must be carried out through democratic participation. Confucians should support the state when it does things right in congruence with Confucianism while maintaining its own independence from the state; it must reserve the right to challenge and criticize politicians when they diverge from Confucian ideals. Only by so doing can Confucianism promote its philosophy while at the same time maintaining its dignity and true spirit without distortion. It is time to declare the independence of Confucianism from the state.

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Modern Times and Modern Rites

Owen Flanagan*

Abstract

Classical Confucianism says that ritual propriety (*li* 禮) is necessary to bind society and produce a harmonious and peaceful social order. Secular liberal moral and political theories are skeptical that shared manners, etiquette, rituals, and rites are necessary to bind society and produce intra-state harmony and peace. Liberalism, especially liberalism adapted to cosmopolitan and multicultural states, proposes that an overlapping consensus about values can be sufficient to bind a people, without shared norms governing *li*. It might be true that shared values can bind a liberal multi-culture without shared *li*, while at the same time there are costs associated with doing without *li*, or abiding a plural *li*. Some philosophers associate *li* with conservative social orders and are glad to see the *li* dissipate with the recession of such orders. Others think that we need to recognize the costs associated with *li*-lessness, and that liberal, multicultural orders have, and/or are in need of creating or recreating *li* in order to sustain a harmonious common life. This paper revisits this debate and explores the question of whether and how Chinese Confucian philosophy sheds light on the normative contribution *li* makes to human life, and whether and to what degree this depends on whether the culture or nation state is liberal or liberal and multicultural. This will enable us to evaluate whether we in the North Atlantic should want more, less, or none of *li*.

Keywords: Confucianism, *li* 禮, liberalism, manners, rites, rituals, *zhi* 治

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1. Rites for Liberals

One key question for the dialogue between Western and Chinese philosophy—and in particular Chinese Confucian philosophy—is whether and if so to what extent does, or better, should classical Chinese Confucian philosophy appeal to us now? To what extent does classical Chinese Confucian philosophy provide resources for us in twentieth-first century liberal societies? Are there aspects of the Chinese Confucian tradition, of this classical Chinese way of being human, that are live options for us now, and more importantly good live options, options that were we to adopt them would make us better off in our own terms?

This paper will focus exclusively on the question of whether we would be better off if we had more of the rite stuff that Classical Confucian China emphasizes and celebrates as necessary for a good human life. There are some contemporary philosophers who think that classical China holds this lesson, e.g., David Wong (2000, 2015),[1] P. J. Ivanhoe (2013), Amy Olberding (2015, 2019), and Hagop Sarkissian (2010, 2014, 2015, 2017), while there are skeptics, e.g., Chris Fraser (2012, 2013), Eske Møllgaard (2012), and Tongdong Bai (2014). Here I provide some general reflections on the debate, trying to understand what rites contribute to good human lives and how and why we might benefit from more rather than less of the rite stuff. There is pretty much no question about whether rites and debates on the right rites played an important role in classical Chinese Confucian thinking about human excellence. My question is whether rites and debates on the right rites should matter to us now and if so, how.

It is common to hear the lament that modern liberal cultures lack in good manners and respect. Classical Chinese Confucian philosophy has things to say about such matters, about what respect and

[1] Wong thinks that rites play several important roles, one is teaching the right (culturally endorsed) emotions and internal attitudes; another is honing attentional skills. These are related. Therefore, for example, if the priest knows how to perform the funeral service properly according the norms, then all those attending can focus on, attend to, what matters—the loss, the life of the loved one, their relation to the deceased individual and to the other mourners.

manners consist in, what they mean, and why they matter. Here I focus on ritual propriety (*li* 禮), and ask if classical Chinese Confucian philosophy sheds any light on what sort of normative contribution *li* makes to human lives. This will enable us to evaluate whether we should want more, less, or none of *li*.

I ask the question about *li* in terms of its normative contribution rather than its contribution to ethics because it might be that such things as good manners, ritual practices, and the like make contributions to a good life that are not distinctively moral but that nonetheless make human life better.

1.1. Varieties of Li

In classical Chinese Confucian philosophy, *li* encompasses such things as greeting practices, dress, bodily posture, deference rules, tone of voice, diet, food etiquette, marriage and remarriage rules, funeral practices, and mourning periods.

The first thing to notice is that Western liberal cultures have norms governing all these things as well.[2] It might be that all cultures have rites or rituals built around some such universal events as birth, coming of age, marriage, death, and, perhaps, being in relation to the divine. It may also be natural, in some sense of the word "natural," to create norms where order is necessary or helpful to accomplish some task,

[2] If there was any doubt about the importance of rites outside of religious institutions in America, it ended with Erving Goffman's "microsociology." *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) offers the first sociological analysis of micro-norms governing face-to-face interpersonal life in America. There are rules about manners, decorum, facial expression, posture, deference, and so on that are normative, and that signal such things as age, gender, social role, social position and so on. In America, these norms are culturally endorsed, maintained, and regulated and, at the same time, used by individuals to manage the expectations and reception by others. Goffman emphasized the theatrical aspects of controlling micro-expressions, micro-gestures and the like, referring to such first person deployment of these norms as theatrical, what he called, "dramaturgical." It may be distinctively American to adopt, or to co-opt, depending on one's perspective, certain norms of social performance to the aims of individual advancement, and to see the idea of life as a self-fashioning theatrical performance taken in a radically individualistic direction in the view that one creates or invents norms for oneself in the performance that is one's life (Flanagan 2014).

such as forming coffee lines in order to accomplish the result of first come first served. If the norm was not first come first served, but "elders first," a different practical way of getting the customers their coffee rather than queuing would need to be in place to get all the customers coffee in the right way. But still, there would be some tendency under any normative regime towards creating a method. Notice this much might make us ask what function our rites serve? What is the intended function of our rites? Supposing we can answer in terms of what I am calling a normative contribution, or more likely, normative contributions, we might ask whether our rites, our way of doing the rites, our attentiveness to our rites, our modes of passing on the rites, and so on, are good, effective, and so on.

1.2. Gentlepersons

In classical China, a gentleperson abides the rites. *Li* is necessary for being a good person, part of having a good character. But it is not sufficient (Sarkissian 2014). One also needs to be benevolent, righteous, respectful of elders, and so on. One might think of the relations among these virtues of character[3] holistically. A certain kind of attentiveness revealed in how one greets others enables and is enabled by being benevolent (*ren* 仁) or filial (*xiao* 孝) (to some degree). A loving and respectful family buries its members in certain ways. In China, there are sages who know the proper rites and rituals, these exemplars model the virtues and perform the rites in the right ways. Ideally the rites and the right way(s) of doing the rites spread and then eventually are maintained/sustained in their right form. Xunzi 荀子 is most clear among the classical *Ru* 儒 that rites are necessary for individual and social flourishing. *Li* brings order (*zhi* 治) and it works best if it functions in a society-wide manner and is enforced if necessary by the mechanisms of state power.

[3] It should be noted that calling them virtues of character does not assume that these are all straightforwardly "moral" virtues.

1.3. Learning the Rites

No one is born knowing the rites. But perhaps a disposition to acquire rites is innate (Hansen 1992). Either way, rites need to be learned or developed. Role modeling, especially via exemplars, elders, experts, or virtuosos who really have the rites down is one way for the newbies to acquire the rites. Presumably, the role models themselves model or modeled themselves on other experts. Perhaps they were themselves apprentices to real or imagined virtuosos, sage kings, and the like. Then there is self-cultivation. A gentleperson works at nailing the rites, getting them just right. It is in the nature of most rites that there are norms for how they are to be executed, not merely norms that say that some end should be achieved by any means whatsoever. If forks go to the left, they go to the left in the correct not haphazard way. This does not matter to finding one's fork; it matters to whether the rite is done correctly. If Mass must be held on Sunday morning, then it is to be done on Sunday and in the way Mass is done, not rescheduled for Saturday or Monday or shortened because there is an important football game on TV. People who perform or participate in ritual practice work at getting them right. Some people are poor at handshaking—they grasp the others hand too quickly, too, and so on (Fingarette 1972). They ought to practice more; attend to feedback, largely nonverbal, about how they are doing, and so on.

Some issues emerge: Is it best, and if so why, that rites be shared widely across all members of some society or it is ok if they are shared within groups but not across? How this might work needs to be refined. The first scenario is one in which the rites are homogeneous or global; the second is one in which they are heterogeneous and local. So one dimension is *homogeneity* and *heterogeneity*.

Another dimension is *expressive convergence* versus *cognitive convergence*. Expressive convergence refers to the norm that everyone who is performing the rite, especially if performing it together, executes it in the same way. The demand is that insofar as we are going to perform this rite, we do it in the same way. If it is a song or piece of music, we use the same version, language, and score. Every culture has rites where norms of expressive convergence are expected.

Cognitive convergence occurs when the ritual practice is judged to get at the truth or, what is different, the way things are supposed to be done. In board games, like chess and Go, and in many sports, there are ways of moving pieces or one's own body that are good or correct solutions or the next right move. Usually many other moves are expressible (in a game of Go there are more possible moves that there are atoms in the universe). Most are bad moves. Cognitive convergence on the small set of right moves is required for virtuosity in complex two person as well as in team sports. One question is whether there are only a small number of right ways to pray, greet, or hold funerals.

Both the expressivist and the cognitivist can demand conformity to having funerals in a certain way. The expressivist defends particular rites because they are ours, that is the way we do funerals around here, and thus doing the rites this way expresses and sustains certain ways we wish to orient ourselves towards deceased loved ones; the cognitivist defends his rites, or some of his rites, or better the way he executes the rites by claiming that they conform to some deeper metaphysical reality. Heaven (*tian* 天) or God mandates that the rites be executed this way.

2. What Rites Are Good For

What goods might agreement/coordination on rites, on *li*, be claimed to yield? Here is a list of five possibilities:

2.1. Order

Rites might save us from disorder, from war, from chaos. Order is better than disorder or chaos, so one might think that rites of greeting signal that I am not an agent of violence, disorder, or chaos. Think of the ways we signal that we are not dangerous to strangers in cities. Averting one's eyes, a quick smile, nervous laughter, saying "hello." One way to read all these techniques is that they mean something like "continue, I do not intend to harm you." This much of course does

not produce any positive good. It just removes an obstacle—"there is no war of each against each around here," or better perhaps: "even if there is a war of each against each around here I am not part of it or, at least, I do not intend to enact havoc on you right now." The basic rites of engagement say "I am not dangerous," "I will not create havoc, at least not here and right now."

2.2. Harmony

A second rationale for rites is positive and involves the production of the good of harmony. What harmony is or how it reveals itself is not easy to say (Li 2006, 2008). The term *harmony* derives from the Greek *ἁρμονία* (harmonía), meaning "joint, agreement, concord" the verb *ἁρμόζω* (*harmozo*), "to fit together, to join." In music, it refers to synchronic overlay and the ways they fit together, but it is also used in common speech to refer to how a melody, a diachronic musical event, hangs together. Harmony is a positive characteristic. What seems disharmonious at first can seem harmonious later, after one gets used to the sound, once one gets over the initial feeling that things are not fitting together well. Musical examples abound of audiences initially disliking, finding odd and disharmonious music that they later found beautiful, harmonious. There was, depending on the source, the rioting or disappointment of the audience to Stravinsky's "Rites of Spring" in Paris in 1914; there was the skeptical Chinese critics' response to some of the classical (high bourgeois) Western repertoire (re-)introduced to them by Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra in 1973; and there were many rock n' roll purists who thought that George Harrison's interjection of classical Indian music, especially sitar music, to rock n' roll was discordant (a funny charge when you think about the elders' view that rock n' roll was itself the paradigm of discordance, undisciplined noise).

One way that some rites signal harmony as well as order or the intention to not be disorderly is by marking deference, social role, or gender. Boys bow, girls curtsy. In Thailand the *wai* is a greeting where palms are pressed in prayer-like way, and where the height of the hands and the depth of the bow indicate the status of the other. Such

greeting practices indicate that I am not dangerous and that I know my place and yours in the social order. They signal that we are participants in some sort of structure that aims at something more than simple order: harmonious social order.

2. 3. Beauty

A third way rites might be said contribute to human life is by being beautiful or by contributing beauty, artfulness, elegance, choreography, gracefulness to what is ugly or aesthetically neutral but could be pretty. Artfulness might be taken to be its sole contribution or a certain value-added to order or harmony. One thought is that human interaction is somehow dirty, undisciplined, unattractive and that certain rituals, think greeting practices, make it look less so. They put an appealing veneer or overlay on something that is rough, gruff, or unsmooth. If one holds a view like Xunzi that humans interact grossly even if not at first meanly, then rites can be thought of as ways of softening, cleaning up, making pretty what is not so (Mower 2013). If one holds the stronger view, also available in the *Xunzi*, that all others are threats, then ritualized greeting practices can serve as artful signals that I can be trusted, that I know my place, social role, gender. They signal order, or perhaps they say that you should not expect disorder, chaos, and mayhem to be instigated by me or mine; and they signal this in an artful, aesthetically appealing way.

2. 4. Signaling What Matters

Birth, sexual coming of age, marriage, and death have perhaps a special and universal kind of significance to gregarious social animals like humans. They have significance to the lives of individuals, extended families, clans, and lineages that mark changes of importance. Rites and rituals evolve to mark these events, call group attention to them, and speak in their form, possibly in their content, about how the group conceives the coming, the going, the changing, and how it sees its significance, its mattering. Masai ritual male circumcision, Hebrew bar mitzvah and Catholic confirmation all speak, but in different ways,

about coming of age. Signaling in a ritualized way teaches via initiation, group practice, role-modeling how we do such and so, what we conceive as especially important, and how we conceive its importance.

2.5. Emotional Regulation, Extension, and Enhancement

Birth, death, and puberty are emotional events. Perhaps some of the emotions—joy, sadness, feeling sexual—are universal. However, they occur in a raw and undisciplined manner, or better, they do not initially and automatically occur in what different groups think is their right form. The norms for apt expression of the joy over a newborn or the loss of a loved one—an elder who was once welcomed with such joy and who is now lost—are typically regulated. One might think that it is mainly the behavioral expression of the emotions that is regulated, not how they are experienced first-personally. However, this seems wrong. When Daoists, Confucians, and Mohists debate proper burial practices they are not simply debating mournful facial expressions, respectful postures, burial dress, coffin design, grave depth, whether the deceased is buried with or without his possessions, and so on, they are always also debating how one, in this case the living, ought to experience, express, and conceive of the loss. In addition to stipulating the right rites from a behavioral point of view, the norms are designed to inculcate, regulate, modify, extend, and enhance certain ways of affectively and cognitively experiencing the loss of this loved one, future loved ones, and death in general.

3. Seven Challenges

Fans of rites face objections and challenges. Here are seven, not entirely independent ones.

3.1. Nostalgia

Cicero lamented "O tempore, o mores" (Oh the customs, oh the times). The lament is familiar. The youth (or foreigners) are taking us to hell

in a hand basket. It may just be that folks, typically elders, get used to what they are used to and lament change; and it may just be that other folk, typically the youth or foreigners, introduce such change. It is easy to understand nostalgia and other kinds of resistance to change psychologically and sociologically. Nevertheless, it is hard to see how they count one way or another for the importance of ritual conformity, unless there are arguments brought to bear for why homogeneity is important or why. If the answer is that homogeneity, or what is different, fixity of rites is important because it preserves or enhances order, harmony, aesthetic value, or that it best signals what matters and how it matters and fixes apt emotions, then arguments need to be given as to why the old or extant practices do these things better than new, transformed, or heterogeneous practices.

3.2. Naturalness

One way to defend a set of rites is to claim they are right because they are natural. In classical Chinese Confucian philosophy, alignment with heaven or nature's ways is a common defense for one form of ritual practice over another. There are many problems with arguments for or from naturalness, which also affect the Aristotelean and Christian versions of natural law theory. How does one specify what is natural? Is it innate in human psychobiology? Or is it what accords with nature's mandate conceived impersonally or with the wisdom and will of a non-human über-Being who is nature or being itself? And there is controversy about why what is natural is good. Internal to the Chinese Confucian tradition, for example, in the *Xunzi*, we learn that humans are naturally undisciplined, possibly bad. *Li* is required to bring discipline. So *li* is not natural in the sense of innate; it is natural in the sense that *li* accords with the wisdom of sage kings who detect and follow the mandate of heaven (*tianming* 天命). However, these are clearly different senses of "nature" and "natural." The first derives from human nature; the second from the nature of reality, which is deemed or judged to speak authoritatively about how humans ought to be and to live. Consider the debates about funerals in the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, the *Xunzi* 荀子 and in the *Mozi* 墨子. Despite

trash-talking between various philosophical schools like Ru, Daoists, and Mohists about the *li* that govern funerals—what, if anything, the deceased should be buried with, mourning periods, etc.—no party recommends indifference to death, mourning, and funeral rites and wants to leave their relatives' corpses to be eaten by vermin, coyotes, and jackals, as Mohists are sometimes accused of doing, or just getting on with life after the death of a loved one, as Daoists are said to favor.[4] Although the Mohists were radical social reformers who believed that the *Ru* overdo rituals, the Mohists almost certainly believed that the bodies of the deceased should be buried in a respectful manner and not just for public health reasons. The Daoist sage suffers the death of his loved one, but he has prepared for it. The disagreements can be understood as primarily about forms of mourning and questions about whether some *Ru* rituals—a nobleman buried with his most prized possessions, emperors buried with armies of terra cotta warriors—are elitist, resource extravagant, and thus morally pernicious.

3. 3. Enforcing Li

Suppose one knew what the right rites are, the problem remains as to how to convey, fix, and enforce them. There are many possibilities to accomplish these ends, but here are three: A Normative Authority, Fashion Contagion, and "Nudging."

3. 3. 1. Normative Authority. One idea in classical Confucian China is that the sage kings knew the will of Heaven and what the sage kings

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[4] A notable exception is the *Zhuangzi*, chapter 32:

> Zhuangzi was dying, and his disciples wanted to give him a lavish funeral. Zhuangzi said to them, "I will have heaven and earth as my coffin and crypt, the sun and moon for my paired jades, the stars and constellations for my round and oblong gems, all creatures for my tomb gifts and pallbearers. My funeral accoutrements are already fully prepared! What could possibly be added?"
> "But we fear the crows and vultures will eat you, Master," said they.
> Zhuangzi said, "Above ground I'll be eaten by crows and vultures, below ground by ants and crickets. Now you want to rob the one to feed the other. Why such favoritism?" (Ziporyn 2009, 117)

Note that even here the surprising attitude about the fate of one's body after death is reverential, reflective, and celebrates ones return to nature's bosom.

know and model is contagious, through their *de* 德—some combination of detectible virtue, wisdom, and charisma. "The sage king problem" is that there were once sage kings, but according to the tradition, what they knew about what is true, virtuous, politically sound, and so on, degraded. If the sage is an attractor and virtue is contagious, then it is hard to explain what happened, how disorder and disharmony come to be. One modern idea is this: given that virtue and righteousness and the correct rites can suffer decay and degradation due perhaps to a host of natural and social contingencies that are hard to control, it is or might be a good idea to use tools of normative enforcement: governmental authority, elder authority, legal authority, significant punishment and/or rewards for normative conformity to the right rites.

The method of authority has well-known problems, especially over long-hauls: people change, customs change, there is interaction across traditions, rebellion, and so on. The method of authority normally works to control the speed or degree of such changes and interactions; but especially in the modern world there are too many counterforces that favor the destabilizing forces.

3. 3. 2. Fashioning. Another technique for generating and fixing *li* is the method of fashion, which involves waiting and allowing for various contingencies, including conflict, rebellion, immigration, cross-fertilization, and the creative impulses of the youth to generate, fix, spread, breakdown, and extinguish various *li*. One who is comfortable with fashion fixing of rites, might also be comfortable with heterogeneity rather than homogeneity. It will be important that groups have rituals of greeting and conversational order and for marking sexual coming of age and marriage and death, but it is not so important that there is homogeneity across all groups. Places where groups intersect—when queuing at coffee shops and airports—could be thought to be governed also by fashion, or by local normative authorities, or by the invisible hand of game theoretic rules. Even under a "fashion regime," some rites, possibly many, might be long lasting and slow to change, especially ones that are extremely efficient or involve mostly the elders and which are ceremonial and fixed in and by sacred institutions; others will be more fluid, for example,

rites of greeting inside age and ethnic groups. Still, when the fist-bumpers meet the hand-shakers there will need to be some higher order *li* or else greeting is confusing, messy, awkward, as indeed it now is.

3. 3. 3. Nudging. A mixed method—neither the method of authority nor the method of fashion—of gaining *li* fluency and *li* consistency (but not fixity or homogeneity) is what social scientists nowadays call "nudging." Nudging is strategic like authority but seems non-coercive like fashion. The theory behind nudging takes advantage of research on framing. Consider deciding whether to be an organ donor. One gets significantly lower rates of offering to be a donor if one requires opting in than if the choice is framed as a question of whether the individual wishes to opt out. Benign nudging involves the powers-that-be, social planners, and public policy wonks incentivizing the best choices. Malignant nudging involves soda vendors charging only a nickel more for the 64 oz. soda than for the 12 oz. one. Often when the framing seems innocent, it is in the sense that it nudges the person to make exactly the choice she herself would want to make if she had enough time, reasoned carefully, and so on. How could this be done for *li*? How, perhaps, is it already being done for *li*? How, if we do, do we nudge individuals towards the right rites? One way we do this is by encouraging, at the least, this meta-norm: if you want something from a person with more money or power than you, abide the greeting, dress, and respect norms that they and their people (people like them, people with their type of resources) endorse, not the ones you and your people prefer, endorse, and abide. The context of wanting something from someone more powerful or at least who has something you want, frames the situation as one where you should want to know or be a sharp detector of their rites. It is not easy to see how a system of normative guidance would work that nudged people in situations, where there are multiple *li*, to choose the ones that are best for them personally unless what is best for them involves what the most powerful wish for them to abide, even if this is the rites that are the ones for people like them according to their age, gender, their station and duties.

The latter issues pertaining to gaining *li* compliance are special problems in liberal democratic societies where coercion is judged as legitimate only when extremely important matters of morality or public safety are at stake. Fashion is for trivial matters; and nudging for good ideas, which are not morally terribly important or not pressing matters of public safety. The trouble is that even if one can muster convincing arguments for *li*, one will be hard pressed to find ones that will make the right rites seem like the kinds of matters that warrant coercion.

3. 4. Group Size and the Function(s) of Li

This brings us to the next concern: How important really are rites today, especially homogeneity of rites across large numbers of people? Robin Dunbar (2010) argues that the evidence is that for the first 240,000 years or so of human existence communities were small and face-to-face. The average number of members in a human community was 150 (actually between 100 and 230) until agriculture and domestication of animals began about 11,000 years ago, and the size of human communities began to grow. At the time of Confucius, the Chinese population is believed to have been between 10-13 million, not much larger than the population of the state of North Carolina, which living there, I can say is not all that crowded, and is tiny in terms of land mass compared to China.[5]

In *Analects* 9.14, Confucius answers the student who worries about his impending visit to where the nine barbarian tribes live. Confucius reassures him that the uncouthness of the barbarians will be conquered by his own couthness. The idea is that the *de* 德 of the *junzi* 君子 is contagious. We know better (Flanagan 2008; Flanagan and Hu 2011). Some good practices spread; others do not. And the multifarious reasons that govern spread—fashion, timing, power, and authority—do not track goodness or badness, couthness or uncouthness of the

[5] See Bai (2014) for an insightful treatment of what differences population size makes to normative organization.

practices. Even if one thinks that the best practices of rites and virtue will win out over the long haul, it is not because we do (or should) think that our virtues and rites are better aligned with the will of God, the gods, Heaven's Mandate, or nature's ways. Our criteria for measuring the goodness or badness of our rites and virtues involve these things for some, but they also involve giving our own contingent history weight: these practices are good because they are ours.

The anthropological literature on groups and group size often speaks about the functions of rites. Tattooing, ritual dancing, burial practices, initiation, and marriage practices almost always begin inside small or smallish groups. They serve to mark members and distinguish them from out-group members, and they spread or fail to spread for all the usual good and bad reasons. One central function is to signal group membership and enhance feelings of membership and solidarity. Presumably rites and rituals still function in this way, and we understand better the mechanisms that cause groups to think that their ways are the right ways. However, we now think of these mechanisms as producing causes, not as producing reasons.

3.5. Generational Pressure

In the early 1960's there was a TV show called *American Bandstand*. Dick Clark was the MC who introduced new pop music (rock n' roll was just getting legs), while the audience watched teenagers dance as at a hop. My mother taught me as a small boy that gentlemen knew how to dance and play bridge. Dancing involved the sort of dances (sans the talent) that Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers did, or more plausibly, the Fox Trot and various Waltzes. There were also the more edgy Cha Chas, Sambas, and Meringues. On *American Bandstand* I watched with awe and excitement as the world of orderly gentlemanly dance came undone before my eyes in the practices of boys and girls (all white originally) just a bit older than me. The result: new kinds of dancing—the Lindy, the Twist, the Jerk. Happily, many of these did not last, did not catch on or make it, or if they did, they—in their pure form—were short lived. Arguably, in fact almost certainly, these experiments at the edges of the *li* of dancing changed the ways we now

dance. Well they did, plus emerging knowledge of world music, world dance, and so on.

There are several points: One is that *li* changes are often perceived as somewhere between objectively wrong and gratuitously annoying by the elders. It is an interesting question whether perceived disharmony is genuine. Some music, e.g., Stravinsky or 12-tone music sounded discordant until patterns were discerned and it no longer sounded discordant. However, the sounds didn't change, the hearers did. Second, social change, either via the mechanisms of youthful hormones or interaction across groups will put pressure on *li*, will work to produce changes in *li*, possibly only around the edges. Confucius mentions that he approves of changes in the fabric of men's caps for economic reasons. There must be caps, what they are made of is not essential. When the youth bow at the top of steps rather than the bottom, they violate the *li*. However, whether and when modifications of rites change only form rather than function is contestable. Third, holding to the traditional *li* always presupposes a certain conception of the right rites or practices; it almost never provides arguments for their rightness or legitimacy. Though, this does not mean that the traditional rites cannot be defended. It does mean that their defense will often involve claims about identity, claims about the way things are done by us, the conditions of group membership, and so on. However, these serve mainly to mark that these rites are ours, not —to repeat again—to show that they are right in some wider sense, or, what is different, in some deeper sense.

3. 6. The Anxiety of Influence

Many modern people get that rites matter and that different communities do the rites that matter, marking birth, death, coming of age, marriage, in different ways. The Hebrew Bible and Muslim "sharia" mark themselves in addition to advancing the faith, as vehicles for protecting communal life and virtue, property, and kinship. The texts of classical China are engaged in a similar project of cultural preservation. However, there is a very modern sensibility in the North Atlantic that expresses resentment at being asked to simply copy the

ways of the past and even to the very idea of cultural preservation. Although, how much this trend, dubbed the "anxiety of influence," by Harold Bloom, pertains to the rejection of rites is difficult to ascertain. On the one hand, the anxiety to being *Homo Xerox* involves desires to do it one's own way. There are two recent and familiar modes of challenging the dominant rites regime that have different relations to the anxiety of influence. Consider hip-hop and hipsters, respectively. Hip-hop culture overtly transgresses the norms of common decorum, hats on backwards or sideways, fist bumps instead of handshakes, pants halfway down the butt. Hip-hop expresses that there will be change of the dominant normative community or at least that the dominant culture will have to co-exist with an alternative one, one that is suspicious, possibly contemptuous of the other. Hipster-hood on the other hand can be exceedingly, even obsequiously polite, decorous; it often involves retrieval of habits of a lost age, the manners of men in fedoras, the integration of the good manners of old into an aesthetic that allows, even relishes, things that are cool, gay, queer, as well as the formally normal.

The point is that neither community is non-normative, sans rites. However, they both challenge the dominant system in ways that express the anxiety of influence, through a movement of like-minded community members. Perhaps there are some strong poets in the hip-hop community, Eminem and Jay-Z come to mind, and even among hipsters, (although I doubt it); but these rite-changing, rite-shifting, rite-challenging movements, like the beatniks, Black Panthers, panthers, hippies, feminists before them, are by and large communal, not individual offerings (Wilson 1995).

3.7. Pluralism and Cosmopolitanism

This brings me to the last challenge in modern times to the idea that we would do well to find the right rites and coalesce around them, with them. Perhaps if we were to do so then our conflicts would devolve into purely epistemic ones. This is crazy. Here again it is useful to replay the ancient Chinese debate among Confucians, Mohists, and Daoists about burial practices. Confucians say bury them deep in

tombs that are emblematic of the life of that individual, with the family jewels, and mourn for three years. Mohists say bury them deep and respectfully and get on with it. Burying one's loved ones with pottery and jewels and not working is a waste of resources. Daoists recommend an attitude of accepting the cycle of life and death, not fearing or being appalled by death. Here is a famous passage from a Daoist text, the *Zhuangzi*.

> Zhuangzi's wife died. When Huizi went to convey his condolences, he found Zhuangzi sitting with his legs sprawled out, pounding on a tub, and singing. "You lived with her, she brought up your children, and grew old," said Huizi. "It should be enough simply not to weep at her death. But pounding on a tub and singing—this is going too far, isn't it?"
>
> Zhuangzi said, "You're wrong. When she first died, do you think I didn't grieve like anyone else? But I looked back to her beginning, and the time before she was born. Not only the time before she was born, but the time before she had a body. Not only the time before she had a body, but the time before she had a spirit. In the midst of the jumble of wonder and mystery a change took place and she had a spirit. Another change and she had a body. Another change and she was born. Now there's been another change and she's dead. It's just like the progression of the four seasons, spring, summer, fall, winter." "Now she's going to lie down peacefully in a vast room. If I were to follow after her bawling and sobbing, it would show that I don't understand anything about fate. So I stopped." (Watson 1968, 190-191)

Note that this is just an anecdote and is not offered explicitly as a proposal for the right way to do a funeral. Suppose, however, that it is read as such a recommendation, and that a Ru thinker responds that it is appalling. What this would show is that normative communities feel strongly about their *li*. How could a three-way debate between a Confucian, a Mohist, and a Daoist proceed and be resolved? It would, we know, proceed in part by each advocate bringing in considerations of what is natural and appropriate. But claims about what is natural and appropriate will invoke tradition-specific views about human

nature and what makes philosophical and cultural sense, which will beg all the key questions from the point of view of the other tradition.[6] One might appeal to the other to feel his way into the possibility of conceiving of things differently and doing things differently (e.g., greeting, funerals, re-marriages, kinds of marriage, etc.). But this will almost always be an appeal to re-consider how you conceive and do your *li*, which will in part be an appeal to consider the contingency of your way of being human and the prospects for doing a life, even if not your life, in a different normatively acceptable way.

4. Conclusion

So what is the answer to the question, does classical China teach us something about rites, about how we ought to do our rites, about the right rites, and so on? This is really a three-part question; so let's take each part on its own.

First, The classical Chinese Confucian focus on rites teaches this much, or better perhaps, it reminds us of this much: Rites are one universal aspect, arena, or zone of normativity along with values, virtues, and principles. The range of rites and rituals includes practices that we consider matters of etiquette, as well as very many practices that we consider religious, e.g., birth rites, sexual coming of age rites, funeral rites, and marriage rites (Rosemont 1976). But even in our traditions

[6] The worry about question begging is raised in the *Zhuangzi*, chapter 2:

> Suppose you and I get into a debate. If you win and I lose, does that really mean you are right and I am wrong? If I win and you lose, does that really mean I'm right and you're wrong? Must one of us be right and the other wrong? Or could both of us be right, or both of us wrong? If neither you nor I can know, a third person would be even more benighted. Whom should we have straighten out the matter? Someone who agrees with you? But since he already agrees with you, how can he straighten it out? Someone who agrees with me? But since, she already agrees with me, how can he straighten it out? Someone who disagrees with both of us? But if he already disagrees with both of us, how can he straighten it out? Someone who agrees with both of us? But since he already agrees with both of us, how can he straighten it out? So neither you nor I nor any third party can ever know how it is —shall we wait for yet some "other"? (Ziporyn 2009, 19-20)

where we mark the domains of etiquette, morality, and religious practice as distinctive, they bleed into each other across permeable boundaries. Furthermore, a person who ignores or disdains matters of etiquette or spiritual convention is said, and rightly so, to be disrespectful, which is a term of moral disapproval.[7]

Second, As far as the question of the right rites goes, the situation looks this way: there may be certain aspects of human life that across almost all social ecologies will receive communal attention as significant: birth, sexual coming of age, marriage, and death. A community marks membership, acknowledges these transitions to itself, aestheticizes what is mysterious, bewildering, painful, and regulates emotions and attitudes towards these transitions in ways suited the wider ecology constituted in part by its own history. Rightness is largely a matter of fitting and being interpretable by a people who know a symbolic language. As the Chinese debate among Confucians, Mohists, and Daoists shows, there is no non-question-begging answer to the question of what the right way is to respectfully mark the passing of a beloved person.

It is noteworthy that across all rightful practices, or at least in this case across the three radically different conceptions of holding a funeral, there are the twin demands of recognizing some individuals as beloved, and of recognizing that their passing needs to be marked with respect. The Daoist can insist that he is recognizing his beloved as beloved and marking her passing with respect just as the Confucian is. Different rites both express and provide different languages, different affective, cognitive, conative schemes to accomplish these tasks. In the case of burial practices, the right way depends on a worldview, a way of world-making, a cultural system of marking and rendering intelligible love and loss. Different rites can seem unintelligible across even though they serve these twin functions. Once we get that some weird practice is trying to accomplish the tasks that we think necessary, even if it is trying to do so in a very unfamiliar way, we are less appalled; "Oh, that was the funeral?!"

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[7] Karen Stohr (2012) has many interesting things to say about the moral aspects of manners.

Third, As for what our reflections teach about how we ought to do our rites, the question cannot be framed any longer in the language of rites enforcement, but rather in the language of expectations, tolerance, negotiation, patience, pluralism, multiculturalism, and cosmopolitanism of rites. And the reason is this: we get that rites can serve all the functions that the Classical Chinese Confucian thinkers said they do, marking order, attempting to create harmony, adding aesthetic value, signaling gender, social status, mattering and group membership, and regulating, enhancing, and maintaining "apt" emotional expressions and responses to important human institutions and events. But now with some world history under our belts we are less certain about the requirements that rites need to be homogeneous. This is largely because we understand better that socialization works to make us overconfident in the rightness of our rites, makes us mistake familiarity for correctness. Rites mark communities of valuing, they display in their fabric, their inner texture, a way of being and conceiving of who one is, how one defines and situates one's self, who one sees as one's people. In the contemporary world, especially in cities like London and New York, there is increasing appreciation and less and less suspicion (although this is highly vulnerable to fluctuating to the extent that economic competition among groups is exacerbated) about alternative ways of and doing being human. There is greater patience and respect for different ways of revealing one's sense of one's historical heritage, of the ways in which, as we say, a rainbow emerges, and less fussiness and certainty about "my way or the highway." It is an interesting and important question whether modern conflicts about rites, e.g., Muslim temples in lower Manhattan, are not still largely worries about whether some rites serve as cover for disruptive cabalists, as opposed to vestiges of old fashioned ideas that there is a set of right rites or that heterogeneity bespeaks imminent chaos or disharmony. Barring such extreme situations one can hope that some modern cities raise the prospects that sometimes and happily so we are not just awaiting the emergence of some bland gruel that results from the melting pots—perhaps it is now thought of as a speedy, high octane, food processor—but rather large scale situations of cultural appreciation and respect for the wonderful varieties of *li*. Sometimes

there might be *li* fusion as there are with cuisines, but just as often, multiple practices like different ethnic restaurants can lie along the same avenues living in complex harmony, while revealing an array of truly different options.

There is still always the possibility that if we were really asked to live among people who in no way had *li* that marked some kind of respect and recognition for events of universal human significance, birth, death, marriage, that we'd be suspicious that we live in the same world. Happily, we do not live among such alien creatures. Confucians used to say this: that Mohists and Daoists didn't give a shit about their dead relations. But they were wrong. Unless and until—or only when—we find groups that don't care about the newborns or those who pass on, we will just have to accept all manner and variety of the ways that humans have discovered to express the wills to order, harmony, beauty, marking and significance. The good news is that we now live in ecologies in which all sorts of interesting and different ways of doing the *li* surround us. Better to consider this an abundance of resources rather than a threat.

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Replacing Liberal Confucianism with Progressive Confucianism

Stephen C. Angle*

Abstract

The core thesis of this essay is that "progressive Confucianism" is a clear and viable category, a label for many though not all contemporary Confucians, which succeeds in capturing what is useful about so-called "liberal" Confucianism without suffering from various problems to which I show "liberal Confucianism" falls prey. The essay begins with examples of progressive Confucians being labeled as "liberal" in ways that are misleading. I next turn to the use of "liberal" by influential twentieth-century New Confucians and then look at some contemporary theorists who are often labeled "liberal Confucians." Overall, for reasons having to do both with content and with rhetoric, I argue that even some Confucians who have been content to be called "liberal Confucians" should resist this label and identify as progressive Confucians instead, although others with "dual-commitments" may still prefer "liberal Confucian" or even "Confucian liberal." The essay concludes with some further clarification of the senses in which progressive Confucians use the idea of "progress."

Keywords: progressive Confucianism, liberal Confucianism, progress, liberalism, *ziyou* 自由, Mou Zongsan, Qiu Feng, Huang Yushun, Bao Wenxin

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We live in unsettled yet exciting times for Confucian thinkers. Confucianism faces many challenges but at the same time is experiencing a broad revival. The value of Confucianism is widely debated in China, while interest around the world in Confucianism is growing. In this context we philosophers have a responsibility to be as clear as we can be about the different approaches to Confucianism that have been proposed. Both scholars and practitioners today see Confucianism from various perspectives, such as history, philosophy, religion, and culture; some see it as capable of new growth, while others seek to return to its past. In addition, thinkers also argue about the relations between contemporary Confucianism and Western philosophies like Marxism, liberalism, Kantianism, conservativism, and republicanism. Should Confucianism engage with these schools of thought? Are the resulting changes to Confucianism positive adaptations to a shared modernity, or are they negative results of Western cultural hegemony?

Within the framework of this contested discourse, the present essay asks what the difference is between "progressive Confucian" and the various things one might mean by "Confucian liberalism" or "liberal Confucian" and argues that the category "progressive Confucian" has important advantages over these "liberal" alternatives. Let us use the following as an initial definition of "progressive Confucian": progressive Confucianism is a commitment to the ongoing development of the Confucian tradition that emphasizes the importance of critically accepting the distinctive impacts of modernity on our diverse societies. Progressive Confucianism does not aim to reproduce past institutional structures except insofar as these structures still effectively promote the realization of central Confucian values in the contemporary world. Many progressive Confucians take individual and collective moral progress to be the central value which Confucianism seeks to realize. Many progressive Confucians, in addition, see the critique of various forms of oppression as a crucial step toward moral progress. Let me emphasize that while moral progress is often at the center of progressive Confucian theorizing, progressive Confucians are also very much concerned with institution building, institutional design, and the active critique of problematic contemporary institutions (including problematic rituals, on which see further below).

Some of the specific contents of progressive Confucianism bear resemblance to the conclusions drawn by other forms of "progressive" social movements in the modern world. Progressive Confucians stress two things, however. First, there are differences as well as similarities with other progressivisms, and even where there are similarities, progressive Confucian positions retain their own distinctiveness. Second, these similarities are not the results of simple borrowing from foreign perspectives, but rather result from internal Confucian developments in reaction to changes that are similar to those that have taken place in other human societies (for example, modern trends like urbanization and industrialization).

This essay begins with examples of progressive Confucians being labeled as "liberal" in ways that are misleading. I next turn to the use of "liberal" by influential twentieth-century New Confucians and then look at some contemporary theorists who are often labeled "liberal Confucians." Overall, for reasons having to do both with content and with rhetoric, I conclude that even Confucians who have been content to be called "liberal Confucians" should resist this label and identify as progressive Confucians instead.

Philosophers East and West, ancient and modern, have generally agreed that that clarity and precision in the use of language are important. The *Analects* records Confucius advocating the "rectification of names" because misuse of key categories causes confusion and even disorder. In that spirit, I begin this essay with two examples of Confucian thinkers labeling other Confucian thinkers as "liberal" in ways that are problematic. The first comes from a recent essay by Huaiyu Wang (2016) called "Between Hierarchy of Oppression and Style of Nourishment: Defending the Confucian Way of Civil Order." Professor Wang's stated goal in this essay is to "clarify the true meaning and foundation of the Confucian civil order and defend it against liberal and feminist criticisms" (2016, 559). The first part of the essay gives a charitable and insightful reading of Ban Gu 班固's theory of "Three Norms" (*sangang* 三綱); a more common translation of *sangang* is "Three Bonds," but Wang argues quite powerfully against this understanding of the term, and in general I find his argument to be persuasive. The problem emerges when Wang turns to defending his

understanding of Confucian civil order against criticisms based on "modern liberal and egalitarian values." He writes: "Let me start with a typical liberal criticism as presented by Stephen Angle in his *Contemporary Confucian Political Philosophy*" (2016, 570). But my criticism is not meant to be a "liberal" criticism; it is explicitly presented as a "progressive Confucian" criticism. In fact, one has to read Wang's essay very carefully to even see what my concern is. He mentions in passing that my worry about oppression in traditional Chinese societies has to do with the "limited kind of virtue" to which women can aspire, but he then turns to a general discussion of liberalism (drawing, for example, from Will Kymlicka) and criticizing liberalism for failing to construct "truly nurturing and enlightening civil orders" (2016, 570–571). I am sympathetic with at least some of Wang's criticisms of modern liberalism, but they are completely beside the point as a response to my Confucian criticisms of oppression. In fact, Wang only addresses my actual concerns about oppression—namely, that it limits the abilities of those who suffer from it to develop as full moral beings—briefly and somewhat indirectly in the final paragraph of this section of his essay.[1]

By labeling my views as "liberal," in contrast to "the Confucian" position that Wang himself is defending, he rules out the possibility that Confucianism may be subject to more than one kind of development in the modern world. He also closes off discussion with the actual position that I defend, which becomes invisible as he criticizes liberalism instead. These same problems can be seen in the work of the prominent mainland Confucian thinker Jiang Qing. In 2013, three of Jiang's essays on Confucian constitutionalism were published in English translation, together with comments on Jiang's ideas by four

[1] The issue between us may be whether or not Confucians are centrally committed to individual moral progress and the ultimate possibility of becoming a sage. I believe that Confucians do hold such a commitment, and this does not rest on a "simplistic equation of *de* 德 with the English 'virtue'"(Wang 2016, 575), but rather on a broader—and, I believe, widely accepted—understanding of Confucianism. Some of what Wang says on this same page, suggests that he agrees that moral progress is important, but denies that the structural limitations I call "oppression" actually inhibits such development. This does indeed get at the heart of my argument, but his remarks here are too brief for me to fully understand.

scholars and then Jiang's responses to the commentaries. Three of the four commentators—Joseph Chan, Tongdong Bai, and Chenyang Li—self-identify as Confucian thinkers. Near the beginning of his response, Jiang writes: "Since their thought largely reflects the position of liberalism, I have also replied in a systematic way to the whole system of values of liberal democracy. . . . [This] is also an opportunity for me to present the response of China's Confucianism to these trends" (Jiang 2013, 161).[2] In the extended replies that follow, Jiang does periodically speak to specific issues raised by the commentators, but he never allows for the possibility that they may be offering an alternative way of understanding Confucianism. He alone is responsible for "the response of China's Confucianism" and interprets others as prioritizing democracy as a "universal structure of politics" with only a supplementary role for Confucian values (2013, 196). One result of Jiang's viewing the field as consisting solely of two options—his own monolithic Confucianism and an equally monolithic liberalism—is that in his extensive replies to the four commentators, he makes not a single concession to them: no revisions or supplements to his views are needed, he believes, because they simply do not understand Confucianism.

One kind of response to Jiang Qing (and to some of Wang Huaiyu's remarks) is to insist that liberalism is not monolithic and that many of its varieties are more interesting and defensible than the caricature that he criticizes. But my interest here is not so much in liberalism as in Confucianism. We have now seen two examples of scholars mislabeling Confucian positions as "liberal," but what about those cases in which Confucians explicitly embrace liberalism? Is this really what progressive Confucianism is? Let us consider the attitude toward liberalism of twentieth-century "New Confucians" Mou Zongsan and Xu Fuguan. Both men believe that Confucius and Confucianism exemplify a broad kind of liberalism or "liberal spirit." They both also believe that what they call "liberal democratic" political institutions are needed in present-day Confucian societies in order to fully realize this liberal spirit. Furthermore, to varying degrees they both also see

[2] See also the Chinese version of Jiang's reply to Joseph Chan (Jiang 2016).

problems with or limitations of contemporary liberalism, either in the West or in societies like Taiwan and Hong Kong. Below, I will discuss whether it makes sense to call this set of views a kind of liberalism. First, let us look in more detail at the views of these two thinkers.

Although the terms they use to discuss liberalism are somewhat different, the basic standpoints of Mou and Xu are quite similar. They both see liberalism as, first of all, an attitude that an individual may have. According to Xu (1980a, 459), the spirit of liberalism lies in "self-mastery" (*zizuo zhuzai* 自作主宰), which he connects to individual "conscience and rationality" (*liangxin lixing* 良心理性). Individuals must stand partly above their traditions and actively refresh them in light of new challenges, rather than being the passive recipients of an external authority. Xu says that this kind of liberal spirit is found the world over—in fact, no culture could really exist without it—and was exemplified by Confucius, although he also says that it reached its heights in China in the Neo-Confucianism of the Southern Song dynasty (Xu 1980a, 460). For his part, Mou Zongsan stresses what he calls "subjective freedom" and "moral freedom"; here we need to keep in mind that *ziyou* 自由 can be translated as either "liberty" or "freedom," and the "liberalism" we have been talking about is *ziyou*-ism. Mou says that there are four keys to being a true liberal: respecting individuality, respecting the value of human character, being tolerant, and being rational. Liberalism, that is, is in the first instance a state of individual being that can be cultivated, and Mou argues that Confucius was one of the first and greatest instances of precisely this liberal character (Mou 2003a, 36-37, quoted in Peng 2016, 363).[3]

Both Mou and Xu assert that what Mou calls "objective freedom"—that is, objective structures that protect political (and perhaps other; see below) freedoms—is necessary for subjective freedom to be fully realized.[4] Mou sometimes discusses this in traditional terms, such as when he says that there is an inherent reality-external function

3 Peng Guoxiang's recent book is extremely helpful for both its thorough collation of Mou's remarks on politics, and for Peng's insightful analysis.

4 This is a particular emphasis in Ho (2001), though Ho also says that Mou and Xu leave crucial parts of the argument incomplete, awaiting further philosophical and practical innovation.

(*tiyong* 體用) relationship between moral and political freedom. More famously, he says that our subjective moral freedom must "restrict itself" (*ziwokanxian* 自我坎陷) in accord with the objective political structures that defend objective freedom, so that subjective freedom can be achieved.[5] Xu Fuguan says explicitly that Confucianism has not been able to achieve its full development because of its inability to avoid authoritarian governments; oppression, Xu emphasizes, is often political in nature and comes from governments. Therefore, Confucianism needs "democratic government that has human rights as its soul and a legislature as its structure" (Xu 1980b, 395; 1980a, 461).

Therefore, the liberalism of traditional Confucianism is imperfect, according to Xu, at least in part because of the lack of appropriate political institutions. At the same time, though, he also says that all liberalisms are imperfect, and in particular that Western liberalism can stand to learn things from Confucianism. Mou Zongsan is even more emphatic about the shortcomings of modern liberalism. He is concerned that Western liberalism, in the long process of being "concretized," has lost touch with the spirit that animates it (i.e., subjective freedom), with the result that it advocates a value-free, "gray world." Elsewhere he puts a similar worry in terms of "pan-liberalism" (*fan ziyouzhuyi* 泛自由主義), which refers to a kind of ubiquitous freedom that challenges all norms and hierarchies, losing its connection to morality. According to Mou, in the Chinese world this can be seen as a problematic legacy of the May Fourth-era critique of tradition (Mou 2003b, 265, quoted in Peng 2016, 353). True liberals, Mou says, are steadfast not only in their commitment to the value of human character, but also in their commitment to the "norms of relationship between fathers and sons, elder and younger brothers, and husbands and wives that apply within family life" (Mou 2003b, 51, quoted in Peng 2016, 367-368). Mou repeatedly emphasizes that humanistic education (*renwen jiaoyu* 人文教育) or "edification" (*jiaohua* 教化) is essential because of the way that it shapes what people do with their freedom and rights (Mou 2003b, 432-433, quoted in Peng 2016, 359).

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5 For "inherent reality-external function," see Peng (2016, 354); for "self-restriction," see Mou (1991).

In light of what we have now seen of Xu Fuguan and Mou Zongsan, does it make sense to label them as liberals? Whatever our answer is to this question, should we call them progressive Confucians? In response to both these questions, consider the following four points. First, much of what each of them means by "liberal" spirit or subjectivity is so broad as to apply to almost any healthy tradition. No one should be content to be entirely passively, uncritically shaped by his or her tradition, just as all of us should be open-minded and reasonable in our reflections on our traditions. As Alasdair MacIntyre (1988) has emphasized, living traditions rely on the continual asking and answering of questions by their participants.[6] Second, there is also a more specific content to both Mou's and Xu's use of the idea of "liberal" that focuses on the idea of free individual moral subjectivity. Third, to a significant degree, neither Xu nor Mou spends much effort thinking through the details of what objective political structures are needed to enable Confucian subjective or moral values to be realized in the modern world. Instead, they borrow the ready-made, Western ideas and institutions of "liberal democracy" and "human rights." Their arguments that institutional protections that were lacking in traditional China are needed in the modern world are, I think, compelling. However, there is a degree to which they do not fully carry out their project of "developing a new politics" (*kaichu xinwaiwang* 开出新外王) out of Confucianism itself, and thus a degree to which critics who claim that their politics are not deeply "Confucian" are correct. Fourth, Mou parts company from the liberals in his day by insisting that traditional family norms should be maintained by modern Confucians, notwithstanding their form of liberalism. This seems to be another way in which Mou did not thoroughly rethink what Confucianism means today, given the many changes in economic and social structures that have taken place. Taken together, the first, second, and third points all give support to the idea of labeling Mou and Xu as

6 This is perhaps a good place to mention one other context in which Confucianism has been called "liberal": William Theodore de Bary's *The Liberal Tradition in China*. This book adopts a very loose sense of "liberal" to argue that Confucianism—and especially Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism—is centered on a reformist concern for humane welfare, rather than being a rigid, conformist ideology. See de Bary (1983, 6-7) and *passim*.

liberal Confucians, albeit for different sorts of reasons. The third and fourth points, though, suggest that they were not thorough-going progressive Confucians, even if in other respects they precisely model what progressive Confucians should strive to achieve.

Two critical remarks on Mou Zongsan and his legacy by Tang Wenming, a Confucian philosopher at Tsinghua University, can help to make clear where the shortcomings of Mou's development of Confucianism lie. Tang says that Mou's central theoretical device of "self-restriction" makes the question of institutionalization of modern Confucianism too easy. It seems to allow for too much of a disconnection between traditional Confucian values and institutions, on the one hand, and the modern institutions that replace them, so that Mou avoids the hard work of figuring out precisely in what ways institutions must change, and how these new institutions support Confucian values (Tang 2012, 291). Self-restriction functions almost like a magic trick, allowing Mou to endorse liberal democracy without careful consideration. Second, this lessened attention to institutional details is continued to an even greater degree, Tang says, by influential intellectuals who carried on Mou's legacy, like Liu Shuxian and Du Weiming (better known to readers in the English-speaking world as Tu Wei-ming). Tang writes that these scholars have focused on vague projects like "global dialogue" and "dialogue among religions," with relatively little concrete effect (2012, 290-291). Without wanting to completely endorse Tang's own ideas on institutionalization, I agree that the tie between liberalism and the philosophy of Mou and his followers is not well-grounded. We can agree with Mou and with Du that Confucianism has entered a new era, but perhaps not with them on the role that liberalism should play in that era. Progressive Confucianism needs to develop its own, distinctive social critiques and institutional proposals.

Let us now turn from what we might call the mixed legacy of twentieth-century Confucianism to some examples of contemporary scholars who explicitly invoke both Confucianism and liberalism. The key methodological issue on which I want to focus is: do these theorists view Confucianism and liberalism as two independent commitments that they aim to harmonize, or does Confucianism

play a more fundamental role in their thought? That is, are they hybrid Confucian-Liberals (or Liberal-Confucians), or are they better understood as liberalized (or more accurately, "progressive") Confucians? This distinction will become clearer once we look at some actual examples.

One place to begin is with a 2014 essay by Hu Yan, a scholar based at Shandong Normal University, exploring what its author claims is an emerging trend of "Confucian liberalism."[7] Hu Yan (2014) observes both that many current Confucians seem to be sympathetic to at least some liberal values and that some current Chinese liberals seem to be stepping back from the radical criticism of the Chinese tradition that we associate with the May Fourth movement. He then gives an overview of key theoretical obstacles to any sort of rapprochement between the two traditions (conceptions of self, liberty, and justice); he sees more room for agreement on issues like social justice than on the structure of formal justice. The detailed arguments of this essay are not important for our purposes, since its author's goal is to identify a trend rather than to support or critique that trend. What is important, then, is the way that Hu Yan understands the trend. He clearly treats it as a (partial) coming together of two distinct traditions, each with its own values, driven by an increasing ability to recognize the values embraced by the "other" tradition. Hu does not treat these changes as driven by internal developments within one or the other tradition; instead, he suggests there has been a mutual realization that the two have more in common than had been originally thought. Exactly what would be the motivation for further changes within one or the other tradition is left unclear.

One of the Confucian theorists briefly mentioned in the article I just discussed is the scholar and public intellectual Yao Zhongqiu, who also writes under the penname of Qiu Feng. He is particularly interesting in the present context because he began his intellectual career as a liberal—he has a background in classical liberalism and

[7] See also the earlier discussion of "Confucian liberalism" (*rujiao ziyou zhuyi* 儒教自由主義) in Liu (1998), which seems not to have made much of an impact on the intellectual world and is not mentioned in the 2014 essay discussed here.

Austrian School economics and translated some of Hayek's writings into Chinese—but over time has come to identify as a Confucian. While at one time it might have been correct to think of Qiu Feng as exemplifying the "dual commitment" model and looking for a hybrid Confucianism-Liberalism, over time his commitment to Confucianism has deepened—perhaps even to a problematic degree, as I will discuss. His basic train of thought is to emphasize the role of constitutionalism within traditional Confucianism in restraining the power of leaders, and thereby supporting a rational social order; and then to argue that under modern circumstances, this idea of Confucian constitutionalism needs to be further developed (see, for example, Qiu 2013b). He has stressed the need to "understand and reinterpret Confucianism completely from the perspective of liberal constitutionalism" (Qiu 2013a, 25). It is true that he says that as a result of being stimulated and challenged by liberalism, "Confucian values and thought will achieve a new lease on life, a 'rebirth through retreating' (*xinsheng zhuanjin* 新生轉進)"; and he subtitles a 2012 article "the standpoint of a liberal" (Yao 2012). But his views on the past strengths and weaknesses of Confucianism, and on the future direction in which Confucianism must develop, do not depend on his commitment to liberalism. Instead, they depend on his understanding that Confucianism must further emphasize certain preexisting features in order to better realize what he takes to be Confucianism's central commitment to a rational social order.

Qiu Feng's writings illustrate one of the difficulties facing any proponent of "Confucian constitutionalism": namely, the need to strike a delicate balance between showing that the tradition of Confucianism already embraces "constitutionalism" in one or more forms, but also arguing that the traditional types or degrees of constitutionalism were inadequate. After all, even the most "conservative" (or even "fundamentalist") interpreters of Confucianism today recognize that a modern Confucian politics cannot re-institute the traditional monarchy and its supporting system of rituals and other institutions. So Confucian constitutionalists must explain why things need to change. But at the same time, they need to argue that there was enough "constitutionalism" in the tradition for the modern developments to still count as "Confucian." In calling this a "delicate balance,"

I do not suggest that it is impossible to achieve. But it is easy to go wrong, and Qiu Feng is sometimes too soft on the tradition, coming close to suggesting that all the concepts and institutions needed for contemporary Confucianism were already present in the tradition. For example, in one essay he discusses the similarities between the traditional idea of "designated lot" (*mingfen* 名分) and modern ideas of rights and duties (Qiu 2013b, 138). It is true that there are some similarities, but there are also crucial differences that affect how successfully the two different sets of ideas can protect modern citizens. Similarly, in another place Qiu Feng writes about the ways in which Han Confucians were able to use interpretations of the *Chunqiu* 春秋 (Spring and Autumn Annals) as a kind of "fundamental law" and draws out a comparison with the idea of common law (2013b, 147). Once again, while there are indeed some interesting similarities, arguments based on the interpretation of canonical texts cannot serve average, modern citizens in anything like the same way that modern constitutions and laws can. I am not arguing that currently existing, Western, liberal constitutional arrangements are the only possible, or the best possible, forms of modern constitutionalism. A central tenet of progressive Confucianism is that modern politics can be distinctively Confucian. But neither "designated lot" nor *Spring and Autumn Annals* interpretation is sufficient for modern Confucian constitutionalism. Modern, progressive Confucianism needs to develop beyond this and not necessarily in ways that mimic contemporary liberalism. Since Qiu Feng's recent writings focus on the traditional side of the "constitutionalism" equation, rather than on the ways in which Confucianism needs to be further developed, I conclude that for now, it is difficult to say whether he would be willing to embrace the progressive Confucian agenda.

The most prominent contemporary mainland Confucian to overtly claim the title of "liberal Confucian" is Professor Huang Yushun of Shandong University. In an article called "How Is Liberal Confucianism Possible?," Huang emphasizes that he is not asking "is liberal Confucianism possible?": he takes the ideas and practices of earlier scholars like Xu Fuguan to be clear evidence that it is possible. His question is what explains the possibility of liberal Confucianism.

Huang also clarifies that his own understanding of Confucianism —which he labels "Life Confucianism"—is not limited to a form of liberalism. He is content to have the empirical (*xingxia* 形下), political side of his thought labeled as "liberal," but Life Confucianism also has metaphysical and existential dimensions that are distinctively Confucian, having nothing to do with liberalism. In this connection, Huang (2016a, 2) says that he largely agrees with the Taiwanese Confucian Lee Ming-huei's primarily political criticisms of the "dangerous direction" in which mainland Confucians are going, even though Huang sharply disagrees with Lee's more metaphysical ideas.[8]

According to Huang (2016a, 10-12), the reason that liberal Confucianism is possible is that like all forms of thought, Confucianism must adapt to underlying changes in the structure of social life. He sketches a general picture of social development and corresponding political change in China, leading up to the idea that China is currently experiencing a "New Axial Age" that involves both a dramatic transition to more individualistic social life and the rise of broadly democratic politics. He believes that this process began quite early in both China and the West and insists that it is a process of internal Chinese development, not something forced on China by the West or other outside factors. How else, Huang asks, can we understand Huang Zongxi's criticism of autocracy or Dai Zhen's criticism of Song-derived orthodoxy? In Huang's view, external factors like the Manchu invasion and Western imperialism help to explain not the origin of this transition to modernity, but the reasons that the transition has been such an extended, painful process. In any event, the process is now well underway and provides the underlying justification for liberal Confucianism. Huang writes that the key to any theory of justice—including the Confucian understanding of justice—is not whether an individual follows existing norms, but whether the existing norms themselves are just. This is the question of "institutional justice." Confucius himself recognized that existing norms (rituals, *li* 禮) sometimes need to change, and thus that all norms are potentially subject

8 For more on Lee Ming-huei's and Huang's criticisms of "Mainland New Confucianism," see Angle (2018b).

to critique. As Huang says elsewhere, "according to the Chinese Theory of Justice, whether an institution is proper depends on whether it has its basis in . . . humaneness" (2016b, 9; 2009). Huang concludes his essay on Confucian liberalism by stating that Confucius was not conservative, but revolutionary; if he were alive today, "he would definitely be a liberal" (2016a, 17-18).

This brief summary of Huang's argument shows clearly that he makes a number of provocative claims, but for our purposes, the key question is whether his position is best described as a form of "liberal Confucianism." It is clear that his is not a "dual commitment" model: he sees the changes to Confucianism that he describes as "liberal" as demanded by Confucianism itself, as it adapts to the underlying changes in the structure of Chinese social life.[9] But are the changes that Huang envisions best described as "liberal"? I can see three possible reasons for an affirmative answer. First, it may be that Huang believes that the package of institutions that we call "liberal democracy" is the only real option in the current era, much as Xu Fuguan and Mou Zongsan sought to directly borrow the Western version of liberal democracy as the "new politics" they believed that Confucianism required. A second possibility is that Huang in fact believes that liberal democracy is specifically required by the prevalence of modern individualism. He stresses the ubiquity of individualism in social, economic, and political life, drawing examples as much from the United States as from China, and concludes that efforts by other mainland Confucians to restore a family-based ethics and to stress traditional Confucian roles are confused, reactionary, and dangerous (Huang 2016a, 18; Huang and Angle 2017a).

Before looking at the third reason for insisting on "liberal," let me offer a rebuttal to these first two reasons. The problem with Huang's argument is that it relies on a false dichotomy between family-based society (in which only the male head of household casts a ballot,

9 In this sense, a more apt title for the essay might actually have been "Why Is Liberal Confucianism Necessary?" (自由主義儒家何以必要). In Angle (2012, 16), I label Huang a "synthetic Confucian" because of my mistaken belief that his thought was based in dual commitments. I have since had the opportunity to discuss this issue with Huang and to correct my understanding. See Huang and Angle (2017a; 2017b).

for example) and a completely individual-based society. I agree that modern social life demands something closer to individualism than to pure familism, but in fact modern Confucians should accept neither of these extremes. As I have argued in another essay, it is possible for modern Confucianism to embrace the emphasis that Confucianism has always placed on human relationships without also embracing the traditional parameters for the roles we occupy (Angle 2018a). Personhood and agency result from individuation within a network of relationships; currently existing rituals (in the broad, Confucian sense of *li*) define the starting points for this process, but the rituals themselves both are made one's own through the unique process of oneself occupying them and also are subject to criticism and change.[10] If this analysis is correct, then Huang's capitulation to the idea that modern social life is simply centered around individuals was too fast. It is true that our political institutions must respect each individual, but it is not true that the only option for our social, public life is the full package of individualistic, liberal democracy. And so long as there are other potential options that might provide viable forms of contemporary Confucian politics, Huang's argument that liberalism is Confucianism's only option is quite weak. This is by no means to reject Huang's entire analysis; as I have already noted above, he himself argues forcefully that Confucian rituals must be subject to criticism and change. But it is not clear that Huang's position is most helpfully described as "liberal."

A third and final reason for insisting on "liberal" as a label is that freedom or liberty (*ziyou*) is central goal for Confucianism. It is indeed true that a certain kind of freedom or autonomy has always been important for Confucians: people are supposed to act ethically in free, spontaneous fashion. This is Confucius who, at age 70, was able to "follow his heart's desires without overstepping the line."[11] I have already noted that Mou Zongsan and Xu Fuguan emphasize this

[10] I draw here on the seminal work of David Hall and Roger Ames (1987), and on the important clarification, emphasizing the importance of critically assessing rituals, provided by Robert Cummings Neville (2016).

[11] *Analects* 2.4. In conversation with the author, Ren Jiantao cited precisely this passage in order to justify speaking of "liberal Confucianism."

aspect of Confucianism when they speak of things like "subjective" or "moral" freedom. Given the strong resonances of *ziyou* with external liberty and with the liberalism that emphasizes it, labelling Confucianism as "liberal Confucianism" simply because it endorses inner freedom and spontaneity is highly misleading. When Huang and I had a chance to discuss this issue in public, he acknowledged the problems to which speaking of "liberal Confucianism" could give rise, though he insisted that it is crucial for Confucians to continue to be able to speak of liberty. He suggested that a possible solution—at least in Chinese—was to use "*ziyou rujia* 自由儒家" (liberty Confucianism) instead of "*ziyouzhuyi rujia* 自由主義儒家" (liberalism Confucianism) (Huang and Angle 2017b). In my view this still makes liberty more central to modern Confucianism than is appropriate, even though I absolutely agree that *ziyou* in its various senses is still an important value for Confucians, and Confucians must be able to continue to "speak of liberty." "Liberty Confucianism" also continues to be far too close to "liberalism," with all the problems this conflation brings. Instead, we should speak of progressive Confucianism and recognize the importance, for progressive Confucians, of various kinds of freedom.

One problem remains for "progressive Confucianism": I must acknowledge that "progress" and "progressive" (and their Chinese counterpart, *jinbu* 進步) are themselves complex ideas, which has the potential to render the idea of "progressive Confucianism" itself unclear. In order to conclude my argument that we should nonetheless prefer it to "liberal Confucianism," I will end with a consideration of Bao Wenxin's (2017) outstanding essay "'Progressive Confucianism': A Label with a Vague Meaning?" Bao notes that especially in the "Preface to the Chinese Edition" of *Contemporary Confucian Political Philosophy*, I acknowledge and try to resolve some of the vagueness surrounding "progressive," but he argues persuasively that things are even more complicated than I recognize. Drawing on the analysis of Gao Ruiquan, Bao tells us that modern or contemporary thinkers in China have meant as many as four different things by "progress": (1) belief in social perfectionism; (2) belief in the improvement and perfection of subjective virtue; (3) belief that human rationality, epistemic abilities, knowledge, and scientific technology will continuously im-

prove; and (4) belief that human powers to control the natural world will continuously improve (Bao 2017, drawing on Gao 1999).[12] Bao (2017) then goes on to point out that not only is the idea of individual, subjective moral progress clearly a central Confucian goal, but great Neo-Confucians like Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200) and Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472–1529) even occasionally use "*jinbu*" in more or less this sense.[13]

Bao next argues that social perfectionism—the idea that human society will or should progress towards ever-better states—is not a mainstream, traditional Confucian view, and neither are views (3) or (4). Since I regularly gloss progressive Confucianism as (in part) about individual and collective moral progress, he sees a need for clarification here: the fact that social perfectionism has come to be central to many modern Confucians, myself included, is the product of twentieth- and twenty-first century developments. This is not to disagree with the importance of social perfectionism, but to emphasize that it has emerged as part of a living, changing Confucian tradition in conversation with other traditions, rather than being a clear dimension of pre-modern Confucianism. I think there is a degree to which Bao is correct (and his careful studies of the role of "progress" in the thought of several important twentieth-century thinkers tend to bear him out),[14] but it is worth noting that the emphasis on ceaseless, life-giving generativity (*shengsheng buxi* 生生不息) that is central to Neo-Confucianism at the very least provides a solid foothold in the tradition for current Confucian social perfectionism. In addition,

12 Bao adds that for many modern thinkers, progress in one or more of the above senses is not just a matter of human action but is the cosmic Way (*tiandao* 天道) itself (using "cosmic Way" very loosely, to include the views of evolutionists, Confucians, and Marxist believers in historical materialism).

13 Zhu Xi is recorded as saying: "Emphasizing loyalty and trustworthiness is standing firm [literally, standing on one's feet]; moving toward rightness is progress [literally stepping forward]. When one gradually moves forward one's virtue naturally increases 主忠信是剳脚处, 徙義是進步处. 渐渐進去, 則德自崇矣" (Zhu 1986, 1086). For his part, Wang Yangming (1992, 171) once said, "Starting today you and your comrades must strive together and encourage each other, pledging your lives to progress" 自今當與諸君, 努力鞭策, 誓死進步" (Wang 1992, 171).

14 See Bao (2013; 2015).

I want to emphasize that as I use the term, "progress" does not imply a specific, predetermined teleology, and in this way it is very different from the Marxist notions of progress that are prevalent in the discourse of the Chinese Communist Party.

With Bao's help, in short, I can clarify that the "progress" in "progressive Confucianism" is twofold—open-ended social perfectionism and individual moral perfectionism—and does not emphasize the third and fourth of Gao's senses. This is not enough, however, because at the heart of progressive Confucianism is the idea that these two types of improvement necessarily go hand in hand. Social progress is only possible because of individual moral progress, and (more strikingly, perhaps) moral progress is only possible because of social progress. This is the "inner sage, outer king" (*neisheng waiwang* 內聖外王) duality about which I have written extensively elsewhere, and it is this connection that drives the progressive Confucian critique of all forms of oppression as well as the need for political participation. Modern Confucians who are willing to countenance continued forms of gender-based oppression or to deny people the right to robust political participation are therefore not progressive Confucians.

It is time to review what we have learned. We have observed a tendency for some contemporary Confucian thinkers to resist the idea that under the conditions of modernity, Confucianism needs to develop in significant new ways, and some of these thinkers then label any effort to develop a constructive Confucian response to modernity as "liberalism." We have also seen that twentieth-century Confucians like Xu Fuguan and Mou Zongsan saw the need for the development of a new, Confucian form of politics but to a great degree were content to borrow Western liberal-democratic institutions and did not thoroughly think through the implications of Confucianism for modern social and political institutions. Finally, we have examined various kinds of current Confucian thinking that have sometimes been labeled "liberal" Confucianism, but I have suggested that "liberalism" is generally a poor fit for the ideas involved. We need a different category, a better way to express the idea that Confucianism itself is undergoing positive developments, for reasons rooted in its own central values, during the modern and contemporary eras.

I believe that "progressive Confucianism" is a useful way to capture this important trend. To conclude, let me emphasize that resisting the label of "liberal Confucianism" is not meant to settle in advance substantive questions like the comparative importance of formal liberty versus social justice. Especially in popular Western political discourse today, "progressive" can equate to a willingness to trade away some formal liberties in order to more vigorously combat oppression or inequality.[15] Whether progressive Confucians should agree will depend on detailed argument that is beyond the scope of this essay. For present purposes, the key is to remember that progressive Confucianism is not a hybrid between a free-standing progressivism and a separate commitment to Confucianism; it is a modern form of Confucianism that must work out its responses to such challenges in its own terms. Such conversations are currently underway throughout East Asia and beyond; my goal here has been to clarify the degree to which we are all talking to one another.

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[15] Many thanks to an anonymous reviewer for raising this issue.

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On the View that People and Not Institutions Bear Primary Credit for Success in Governance: *Confucian Arguments*

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Abstract

This paper explicates the influential Confucian view that "people" (*ren* 人) and not "institutional rules" (*fa* 法) are the proper sources of good governance and social order, as well as some notable Confucian objections to this position. It takes Xunzi 荀子, Hu Hong 胡宏, and Zhu Xi 朱熹 as the primary representatives of the "virtue-centered" position, which holds that people's good character and not institutional rules bear primary credit for successful governance. And it takes Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 as a major advocate for the "institutionalist" position, which holds that institutional rules have some power to effect success independently of improvements in character. As I show, the Confucian virtue-centered view is best captured in two theses: first, that reforming people is far more demanding than reforming institutional rules; second, that once the rules have reached a certain threshold of viability, further improvements in those rules are unlikely to be effective on their own. Once we specify the theses in this way, we can catalogue the different respects and degrees to which the more virtue-centered political thinkers endorse virtue-centrism in governance. I also use this account of the major theses to show that Huang Zongxi has more complicated and mixed views about the power of institutional reform than scholars usually assume.

Keywords: government, institutions, virtue, constitutionalism, Xunzi, Zhu Xi, Hu Hong, Huang Zongxi

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1. Introduction

Let us assume for the sake of argument that we live in a time of flawed governance. Many of the basic outcomes that it is reasonable to expect of our governments are not actually met by them, whether those are to keep the peace, to provide for basic needs and interests of the people, or to resolve potential conflicts in minimally just or fair ways. What should be done to improve governance so that more of those basic outcomes are realized? One familiar set of responses will point to flaws in the institutions of government. Construed broadly, this can include problems in the laws that are applied to citizens (e.g., tax codes, criminal statutes) or more procedural problems in the rules and regulations that governing institutions abide by (e.g., judicial protocols, rules determining how laws are established or amended). But sometimes we give a different sort of answer: we say that governance will be much more likely to improve if we reform the character of those who govern. See to it that those who make and execute laws and those who adjudicate cases are altruistic, conscientious, and not susceptible to bribery or corruption, and we will see a better government. Of course, both sorts of answers can be correct. It might be that we need both institutional reforms and people of better character in order to have better government. But sometimes people will argue that character reform should be regarded as primary, that the real work of improving government consists most fundamentally in ensuring that we have virtuous decision-makers rather than in improving laws and procedures. We might call this the "virtue-centered" theory or approach to improving governance.

For scholars of Confucianism and historians of East Asia, it is well known (almost a platitude) that many of the major political thinkers in the Confucian tradition endorsed virtue-centered approaches and frameworks. As many readers know, the commitment to virtue-centered approaches was particularly strong in the Song through Ming dynasties, at least in the period that came after the New Policies (*Xinfa* 新法) of Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021–1086). A familiar historical account makes this explicit. It says that institutional reforms were a major pre-occupation of Song government from the mid-eleventh

century through the end of the Northern Song dynasty in 1126, starting with the Qinli Reforms (*Qinli Xinzheng* 慶曆新政) of Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 (989–1052) in 1043–1045, continuing in the more dramatic and systematic New Policies of Wang Anshi in 1069–1076, and culminating in a more dogmatic and uncompromising period of reform carried out by Wang's successors, who were restored to power in 1093 and had imperial favor until Jurchens conquered northern China and compelled the Song dynasty to move its capital to the south. The loss of northern China was a source of great humiliation for later Chinese thinkers and members of the political class, especially for Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), who came to define Confucian orthodoxy after the Song. For Zhu and several other major Confucian philosophers in the Southern Song and in the later Ming dynasty, these attempts at institutional reform were largely responsible for the downfall of the Northern Song. While there were some problems with the reforms themselves, the greater mistake was in thinking that institutional changes alone would be sufficient to strengthen the state. These thinkers proposed that better governance depended primarily and more fundamentally on improving the character of the people most responsible for governing. And it happens that this view is easy to reconcile with a longstanding Confucian interest in virtuous rule. The considerable attention given in Confucian classics to the moral education and cultivation of rulers and ministers seems to suggest that the character of those who govern is more important than most anything else. Furthermore, virtue-centered approaches were in many ways a defining feature of China's most influential thinkers, distinguishing mainstream Neo-Confucian philosophers like the Cheng brothers and Zhu Xi from what some modern scholars call the "utilitarian factions" (*Gonglipai* 功利派) in Confucian politics, whose members believed institutional reforms could be effective and valuable even without improving character.[1]

[1] For representative historical accounts of the reform period and Southern Song reaction, see Qian (1966, 1-5), Hao (1974), Tillman (1982, 30-67), Xiao (1982, 479-543), and Yu (2004, 156-248).

If virtue-centered approaches are a defining characteristic of much of later Confucian political thought, however, it is striking how little philosophical attention they have received. Two sorts of philosophical attention in particular are lacking. First, as described above, what makes an approach to governance "virtue-centered" is vague, encompassing a variety of overlapping but analytically distinct ways in which improving character could be prior to or more fundamental than institutional reform. Furthermore, it takes some work even to see which of these interpretations is plausible. The most influential voices for virtue-centered approaches also advocated strenuously for major reforms to laws and procedures, and there are many ways in which the development of good character and the selection of virtuous leaders depends on reasonably good laws and institutional practices, as all major Confucian thinkers readily acknowledged. Political philosophers and political theorists need greater precision and clarity if they are to bring Confucian ideas about the fundamental importance of character to bear on contemporary political debates. Second, there is scant discussion of Confucians' *arguments* for their views on these issues. The Confucians who embraced virtue-centered ideas made their reasoning relatively clear, sometimes through explicit justifications and other times through artful references to classical sources. However, we have yet to see a comprehensive review or reconstruction of those arguments.[2]

My explication proceeds in three parts. In the next section of the paper (Section 2), I offer several ways of understanding the claim that the character of those who govern bears primary credit for success in governance, highlighting those that I take to be more important for the Confucian political philosophers who embraced virtue-centered positions. There I rely on Zhu Xi and the comments of contemporary intellectual historians to refine my account. In Section 3, I reconstruct the major Confucian arguments for virtue-centered approaches, many of which either reference or build on Xunzi's 荀子 (c. 310–219 BCE) famous claim that the proper sources of social

[2] However, Stephen C. Angle and I make a start on exploring some of the arguments in two sections of a chapter in our recent book (Angle and Tiwald 2017, 189-201).

order are "people" (*ren* 人) and not "rules" (*fa* 法) and Xunzi's subsequent discussion of that claim.[3] In Section 4, I look at what I take to be one of the most notable Confucian critiques of virtue-centered theories, which comes from Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610–1695), a reform-minded Confucian of the late Ming and early Qing. There I argue that he raises a different sort of objection than contemporary readers expect, and that his views are not uniformly at odds with the virtue-centered view. I conclude in Section 5 with some observations about how we might add more depth and texture to the debate as I have reconstructed it here.

2. Ways of Bearing Primary Credit for Successful Governance

There is a wide-ranging set of questions that Confucians interested in this debate often raise, with implications for several different points of dispute in Confucian political thought, from struggles over the content of the civil service exams, to concerns about the proliferation of laws and punishments, to questions about how much incentive structures should be built around more cynical assumptions about human beings. The issue also has implications for (but is different and more focused than) longstanding debates about how best to distinguish between *wangdao* 王道 (the way of the true king) and *badao* 霸道 (the way of the hegemon), or about *fazhi* 法治 (rule by law) and *dezhi* 德治 (rule by virtue). A larger project might survey all of these issues in their most notable historical manifestations, but for the sake of having a clear and well-defined point of entry into this debate, I will focus on one particular series of arguments that have to do with the credit-bearingness of office-holding people (*ren* 人) relative to that of the institutional rules (*fa* 法, sometimes translated as "laws" or "standards") of their offices. In an influential chapter titled "The Way of the Ruler" (*jundao* 君道), Xunzi makes the case that where one finds political and social order, it is the people in positions of power who should get credit for effecting that order, with little

[3] Xunzi (1988, ch. 12, 230); cf. Xunzi (2014, 117).

credit left over for institutional rules—a point that Xunzi puts succinctly in the quotable line, "There are people who create order; there are no rules that create order" (*youzhiren, wuzhifa* 有治人, 無治法) (Xunzi 1988, ch. 12, 230; 2014, 117). Unlike some of Xunzi's other well-known views, this one was generally well received by Confucians in the Song dynasty and thereafter, and was frequently invoked by virtue-centered political thinkers or criticized by more institutional thinkers in the Neo-Confucian era (Angle and Tiwald 2017, 191-194; Tiwald 2016, 458). When Xunzi and later proponents credited good social and political order to "people," they largely had in mind their judiciousnes in moral matters and stable character traits that enabled them to remain steadfast in the service of the state and its people in the face of temptations to do otherwise, the right combination of which can be characterized as virtues. Moreover, they were largely (but not exclusively) concerned with the people who ran the institutions—rulers, ministers, clan leaders, and other people with the power to shape the social order. Thus, the guiding question of this study will be why and in what respects the virtues of those with power and influence rather than institutional rules should account for success in governance.

It is not obvious what it means for people's virtues to be more (or more fundamentally) responsible for success in governance than institutional rules. Many of the most apparent interpretations turn out to be wrong on one of two counts: either they attribute to the virtue-centered thinkers a view they did not actually hold, or they focus on something about the efficacy of virtue that is relatively uncontroversial and widely conceded by everyone (including opponents and critics of the virtue-centered approach). For example, no serious virtue-centered theorist held that a virtuous ruler could completely overcome the effects of truly vicious or perverse rules. Imagine a state in which the rules generally reward people for cheating or harming one another, which promote the most despicable characters and punish those who are team players. Furthermore, no serious virtue-centered thinker believed that a sufficiently virtuous ruler could effectively bring about political and social order without having any rules at all. As we will see in the next section, defenders of the

virtue-centered approach assume that rules are indispensable instruments of good governance.

Similarly, there are some positions that we can rightly attribute to virtue-centered thinkers, but which do not in themselves capture what is most important and controversial about their position. For example, even Confucian critics of the virtue-centered position believed that having rulers and ministers with at least a certain amount of virtue is necessary for decent governance, and many also agreed that optimal governance requires a ruler or influential advisor who is for all intents and purposes a moral paragon or sage. Thus, the distinctiveness of the virtue-centered position is not captured by saying that a certain amount of virtue (moderate or maximal) is a necessary condition for a certain amount of good governance (decent or optimal).

Finally, there are some conceptual issues that tend to obfuscate the debate between virtue-centered theorists and their critics. For example, there are various "chicken and egg" problems that arise from the fact that we need certain sorts of institutional rules in order to cultivate good character and put virtuous people in power in the first place. Among the New Policies advocated by the institutional reformer Wang Anshi, arguably he was most passionate about his changes to the civil service exam system and public education, precisely because he thought these changes would bring people of better quality into government ranks (Xiao 1982, 491-492). Historians sometimes point out that institutionalists like Wang seemed to care more about "talent" (*cai* 才, ability to get things done effectively) than "moral quality" or "virtue" (*de* 德) (Liu 1988, 154). However, it is clear enough that Wang thought a certain amount of virtue is prerequisite. A despicable and intemperate person like Cao Cao 曹操 will make for a bad ruler no matter how much he may excel at the arts of management and administration (Tillman 1982, 138). Similarly, virtue-centered thinkers like Zhu Xi conceded that social and political order would not be restored in China until the rules governing the exams and selection of ministers were reformed. Of course, systematic changes to the civil service laws and procedures would not be likely to happen without an emperor and ministers who are reasonably interested in changing those laws and procedures for the betterment of the people

and political society. Thus, it seems that reforming rules is necessary for improving the moral character of state officials, and some improvement in their moral character is necessary for reforming the rules. This is one notable chicken and egg problem that appears in many common-sense or preliminary attempts to define the terms of the debate.

A careful examination of Zhu Xi's arguments suggests that two claims distinguished virtue-centered views like Zhu's from that of his critics. First, while Zhu concedes that both institutional reform and having rulers and state officials of good moral character stand to improve governance in China, he nevertheless insists that improving character is considerably more challenging, and thus more demanding than changing institutions.

> This age suffers from two defects: defects in its institutional rules (*fa*) and defects in the current political situation. The defects in the rules can all be altered at once quite easily, but the defects in the current political situation all reside in people. How can they be changed when people go about their business with a selfish heart-mind! The rules of the last eight years of Emperor Renzong's reign can be considered defective. [Wang Anshi] changed them all soon after [becoming the emperor's prime minister], but this only gave rise to numerous new defects. This is because people are hard to change.[4]

Although Zhu does not make his reasoning fully explicit, he often responds to questions about the effectiveness of institutional versus characterological reform by noting that the latter is considerably more knotty, vexing, and demanding than the former. Perhaps it is not entirely clear why the relative difficulty of reforming people's character or rules should make a difference in terms of which bears more credit, so let me clarify. To take a page from the playbook of Xunzi (whom Zhu followed closely on this issue), we might think of rules as being like standards by which good archery is measured and virtue as being like the strength and skillfulness of individual

4 Zhu (1986, *juan* 108, 2688). The translation that appears here is modified from my published translation of Zhu in Ivanhoe (2019, 62, passage 13).

archers.[5] The standards by which good archery is measured are relatively clear: one should hit the target with an arrow; the closer to the center, the better; one should use certain sorts of instruments (a bow of certain shape and structure) to do this, from a certain distance, etc. Learning these standards does not take long, and there is little achievement in doing it. When a person is a good archer, most of the credit goes to the strength of her arms and shoulders and her skill at holding a bow, aiming an arrow, accounting for the effects of wind and gravity, etc. Those abilities demand the most of us, and thus it is by conscientiously applying ourselves to them that our efforts will reap rewards, and not by conscientiously applying ourselves to the work of learning the standards by which good archery are measured. As Zhu says, "the defects in the rules can be altered at once quite easily," but defects in the character of people—the defects of human vice—are formidable indeed.[6]

A second distinctive claim of Zhu's is subtler, better characterized by what it denies than what it affirms. It says that having decent rules is all well and good, but that after rules have reached a certain minimum or floor of acceptability or "viability," further improvements of those rules will make no further gains in the social and political order without concomitant improvements in the character of the leadership class. That is, this claim for virtue-centered politics is not so much about the efficacy of virtue alone but rather about the fruitlessness of institutional reform without virtue. Its aim is to show another political view and orientation wrong, one that we could characterize as "institutionalism"—the belief that (even after institutions have reached a certain minimum of decency) changing the rules of institutions will of itself yield meaningful improvements in the social and political order, without concomitant improvements in the character of those who govern. As noted earlier, Zhu and other virtue-centered thinkers do accept that it helps to amend truly perverse or ridiculous rules (rules that reward people for cheating and

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5 See the extended quotation from Xunzi's "The Way of the Ruler" at the beginning of Section 3 of this paper.

6 See also Zhu (1986, *juan* 108, 2683) and Ivanhoe (2019, 65, passage 17).

hurting one another, for example), so this objection to institutionalist solutions does not apply in all cases, but it does apply to most regimes where the rules have reached a certain minimum level of functionality to be viable. Zhu hints at this position in the passage quoted above, suggesting that Wang Anshi's New Policies showed that fixing defects in the rules without fixing defects in people only leads to more defects. The only way forward, he suggests, is to get people to stop being so selfish.

I have characterized this negative position as the claim that institutional reforms alone are unlikely to yield "meaningful" improvements. There are a number of specific ways of interpreting that modifier. One is to say that institutional reforms alone will yield no improvements at all. A second is that it will yield small but relatively insignificant improvements, perhaps on a diminishing marginal utility model. A third is that it could yield some improvements, but that the improvements would be transitory and not sustainable (e.g., circumstances might improve for a time, but before long the old customs or practices will reassert themselves). A fourth is that any improvements will be a mixed blessing, reducing some problems while giving rise to several new ones (trading one sort of corruption for another, for example). I have used the phrase "meaningful improvements" so as to remain neutral between these four interpretations. Scholars of Song political thought sometimes hint at the third interpretation, suggesting that any improvements that come about from institutional reforms alone will be relatively short-lived. In the next section, I will propose that Zhu was struck by the idea that many types of improvements in laws invariably require trading away some other advantage, which suggests the "mixed blessing" view. In any case, in the interest of offering an ecumenical interpretation I will say that both Zhu's position and the virtue-centered political view more generally allow that there can be some improvements, just not particularly meaningful ones.[7]

It may seem a bit surprising that a core commitment of virtue-centered Confucian politics would be more an objection to institutionalism than a positive claim for the independent efficacy of virtue,

[7] My thanks to Philip J. Ivanhoe for discussion that helped clarify this issue.

but in fact, that seems to be exactly what Zhu Xi had in mind, and also what intellectual historians of Confucian politics have often presupposed. Consider one historian's succinct description of the intellectual consensus represented by Zhu after the failures of Northern Song reforms:

> [In the Southern Song,] there was a growing perception among statesmen and thinkers alike that despite the most earnest attempts during the eleventh century by activist statesmen such as Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 and Wang Anshi 王安石 to introduce specific political and social reforms, to advance practical measures intended to address the most pressing political, military, and economic problems facing the dynasty, the empire was nonetheless still in danger. In the late eleventh century and the early twelfth century, the barbarian menace to the north continued to loom large, now in the form of the Jurchen tribespeople. The country's economy remained weak and overburdened, and the Chinese bureaucracy was embroiled in a bitter, paralyzing factionalism. Looking at the failed practical attempts at social and political reform, thinkers concluded that too little attention had been paid by men like Fan and Wang to the inner sphere, to matters of personal morality. . . . These thinkers believed that progress in political and social affairs depended on prior progress in the inner sphere or moral self-cultivation. (Gardner 2007, xxii–xxiii)[8]

Zhu makes his position clear when discussing one of the largest political issues of his day, which has to do with how political authority is apportioned and assigned to regional governors outside of the capital. According to the historical accounts Zhu shared with most Chinese scholar-officials, China had once enjoyed a relatively stable but decentralized system called *fengjian* 封建, sometimes translated as "feudalism" but which I translate here as the "enfeoffment system." Under the system of enfeoffment, regional governors were appointed for life and their authority was passed down to their sons, unless of course they had committed crimes so egregious that the monarch

[8] See also Metzger (1977, 75-76) and Tillman (1982, 50-53).

or other lords saw fit to remove them. This had the advantage of creating multi-generational, lifelong ties between regional governors and their people, and regional power bases so that the empire would remain resilient even when the central government was weak or dysfunctional. However, that system collapsed, they thought, with the Qin 秦 (221–206 BCE), and in spite of some attempts in Han to re-instate it, it never again took hold. What replaced it was a less stable but more meritocratic system called *junxian* 郡縣, variously translated as the "county-district system," the "imperial system," or (as I prefer) the "commandery system." The rules of the commandery system changed over the course of the several centuries, but the goal throughout was to ensure that regional governorships only go to those who had performed well on the civil service exams, that positions be rotated on a regular basis, and that governors be prohibited from overseeing districts that included their family or ancestral homes. The aims of this system were to ensure that only those with sufficient moral and practical education be put in positions of authority, and to see to it that regional authorities feel stronger ties and obligations to the emperor and his court than to local residents.[9]

Like most politically-informed scholars of Zhu Xi's era, Zhu too had a well-considered position, and it appears to have been exactly what one would expect of a philosopher who embraced the second core commitment of virtue-centered politics. His view is that for regimes whose rules are essentially decent, further modifications of the rules will get no traction without getting virtuous people to lead and administrate:

> The students were discussing the defects of the commandery and enfeoffment systems. Zhu Xi said, "In general established rules [*fa*] invariably have defects and no rules are without them. What's really important in this matter is getting the right person for the job [of implementing and administering those regulations]. If the person is right then even if the rules aren't good he will still amply make up the difference in score. If the person isn't right and yet the rules are

[9] On the debate about the enfeoffment and commandery systems at greater length, see Angle and Tiwald (2017, 201-206).

> good, how could this have any benefit for the actual affairs?" (Zhu 1986, *juan* 108, 2680)[10]

Thus, Zhu thought that the rules could vary quite widely—as much as found in the yawning gap between the enfeoffment and commandery systems—and yet still make essentially no meaningful difference in effective governance unless they are accompanied by more virtuous leadership. To be clear, and more precise, Zhu's mature and final view in this long debate was that reinstituting the enfeoffment system would cause a major upheaval in the social and political order, the costs of which made them more trouble than they were worth. But as the above passage shows, he nevertheless used this debate to reaffirm his core commitment to the idea that institutional reform is essentially fruitless or counter-productive without improvements in the character of the people leading those institutions (Zhu 1986, *juan* 108, 2682; Ivanhoe 2019, 62, passage 11). People and their virtues are prior to institutional rules in this sense.

With this analysis in mind, we can sum up the virtue-centered view by describing two of its "core commitments." Both are meant to show how people and their virtues rather than institutional rules are the primary credit-bearing entities for success in governance:

> **C1: Reforming people is far more demanding than reforming institutional rules:** if one wants to improve governance, by far the hardest task which calls for the most concerted effort is to see to it that state officials are virtuous.

> **C2: Merely reforming institutional rules is unlikely to be effective:** given a range of viable institutional rules and less-than-optimal social conditions, merely changing the rules without concomitant improvement in the character of government officials is unlikely to make meaningful improvements to the social order.

By taking these to be the core commitments of the virtue-centered position, we avoid some of the interpretive issues mentioned earlier.

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[10] Translation modified from Ivanhoe (2019, 61, passage 10).

For example, we observed previously that there is quite clearly a sense in which Zhu Xi admits that having good laws and regulations (good institutional rules) is necessary for successful governance. C1 admits that this is so, but notes that refining the laws and regulations is not the most demanding part of improving the social order—cultivating a virtuous officialdom is. Moreover, informed readers of Zhu Xi know that he devoted a great deal of effort to refining laws and institutional procedures that he regarded as flawed. C2 can explain how a virtue-centered thinker might find such enterprises justified. It makes sense to advocate for improvements in the rules when (1) the rules fall short of the minimum threshold of basic viability—that is, when they are so perverse or wrongheaded that they set leadership up for failure no matter what, or (2) when those improvements in the rules will be accompanied by concomitant improvement in the character of those who govern with them. This explains how Zhu could object strongly to laws that are so arcane or counter-intuitive that ordinary people find themselves unknowingly violating them—such laws do not even meet the minimum standard of viability (Zhu 1986, *juan* 108, 2683; Ivanhoe 2019, 65, passage 18). It also explains Zhu's most notable experiment in regulatory and institutional reform, his famous institution of community granaries (*Shecang* 社倉), which he developed in the interest of saving lives and maintaining productive farms during periodic famines. These were meant to enlist and supersede the "ever-normal granaries" (*Changpingcang* 常平倉) and private charities that had failed repeatedly to alleviate the worst effects of periodic famines. Zhu devoted a great deal of time and political capital to establishing and perfecting the community granaries, even pressing wealthy friends and acquaintances to donate to them. In designing and defending his nimbler, and more locally-controlled alternative to the loan and price-stabilization program associated with the ever-normal granaries, Zhu went out of his way to explain how his policies and procedures were importantly different from a notorious agricultural loan program of Wang Anshi (the "Green Sprouts" program).[11] But Zhu never thought that his reforms would succeed on their own.

[11] See von Glahn (1993, especially 237-238).

Quoting Xunzi's famous line that "people" and not "rules" are the real sources of order, he reminded his readers that his granaries would not succeed without compassionate and honest members of the wealthy and ruling classes who build trust with the people.[12]

The two core commitments of the virtue-centered position also help clarify the different dimensions or ways of measuring virtue-centrism. For example, one way to be a very strong virtue-centric political thinker is to maintain, in the spirit of C1, that the requirements of improving moral character are so demanding as to make the challenges of institutional reform trivial by comparison. The easier institutional reform is relative to cultivating virtue, the more virtue-centric one is. Applying this metric, the historian Hoyt Tillman is right to characterize the Northern Song Confucian Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032–1085) as one of the most extreme representatives of the virtue-centric view. As Tillman writes (1982, 49), for Cheng Hao, "moral intentions were primary to all external and institutional considerations, for he assumed that, once the moral will was firmly established, all else would easily follow from this moral base."

C2 is a significant core commitment because it suggests two ways of measuring the strength of a philosopher's virtue-centrism. First, one can be robustly virtue-centric because one thinks that, when the rules meet or surpass the threshold of viability, it is *highly improbable* that institutional reform alone will make a difference in successful governance. By this standard, most of the famous Song dynastic virtue-centered political thinkers were strongly committed to the view, because they tended to allow that there might be some isolated successes of merely institutional improvements, but tended to doubt that these would have a lasting effect. Second, one could be robustly virtue-centric because one *sets the floor level for "rule viability" very low*. Remember, C2 says that once rules are good enough to be viable, it is really the moral quality of state officials and not further refinements in the rules that makes a difference. On this issue, many of the Song

12 "Changzhou yixingxianshe cangji" 常州宜興縣社倉記 (Record of the Community Granary in Yixing County, Changzhou Prefecture) in Zhu (2000, v. 8, 3974-5). See also von Glahn (1993, 238).

dynasty's most famous virtue-centric political thinkers part ways. For example, perhaps one of the staunchest defenders of the virtue-centrism was Hu Hong 胡宏 (1106–1161). But Hu was also one of the most intransigent proponents of the enfeoffment system, proposing that this was the only way to create a state with lasting ties, peace, a kind of equality between members of the same class, and military strength and resilience in the face of poor leadership or succession crises in the central government.[13] By contrast, as we have seen, Zhu thinks that the range of viable institutional regimes is much broader, such that even the commandery system can succeed with the right leadership. If the leader is right, as Zhu says, "then even if the rules aren't good he will still amply make up the difference in score" (Zhu 1986, *juan* 108, 2680; Ivanhoe 2019, 61, passage 10). In contrast, Hu assumes that good leaders will succeed because they jettison the rules of the commandery system and replace them with enfeoffment, not because they can "make up the difference" between good rules and bad through virtuous management. The scope of viable rules is much wider for Zhu, and so, by this measure, Zhu turns out to be a considerably more virtue-centric political thinker.

3. Justifications for the Virtue-Centered View

The *locus classicus* for the Confucian defense of virtue-centered politics is in the *Jundao* 君道 (The Way of the Ruler) chapter of the *Xunzi*. The chapter opens with arguments that echoed through the subsequent two millennia of Chinese political thought and discourse. As these arguments were so familiar as to be frequently taken for granted by later Confucian political thinkers, it is worth looking at them in detail:

> There are lords that create chaos; there are no states that create chaos. There are people who create order; there are no rules [*fa*] that create order. The rules of Archer Yi have not perished, but not every

[13] Hu also thought the enfeoffment system must be paired with the legendary "well-field system" (*jingtian* 井田), which allocated relatively equal plots of land to all farmers and set aside one shared plot to be cultivated collectively as service to their ruler. For Hu's arguments, see Hu (1987, 82-103, 187-223) and Angle and Tiwald (2017, 203-206).

> age has an Archer Yi who hits the target precisely. The rules of Yu still survive, but not every age has a Xia dynasty to reign as true kings. Thus, rules cannot stand alone, and categories cannot implement themselves. If one has the right person, then they will be preserved. If one loses the right person, then they will be lost. The rules are the beginning of order, and the gentleman is the origin of the rules. And so, with the gentleman present, even if the rules are sketchy, they are enough to be comprehensive. Without the gentleman, even if the rules are complete, one will fail to apply them in the right order and will be unable to respond to changes in affairs, and thus they can serve to create chaos. One who tries to correct the arrangements of the rules without understanding their meaning, even if he is broadly learned, is sure to create chaos when engaged in affairs. And so, the enlightened ruler hastens to obtain the right person. The deluded ruler hastens to obtain power. (Xunzi 1988, ch. 12, 230)[14]

Xunzi's argument invokes several reasons for his claim that "there are people who create order" but "no rules that create order." He notes that the rules are by themselves insufficient to effect order ("the rules cannot stand alone"). Rules are often sketchy (or "economical," *sheng* 省) and thus leave a great deal to the discretion of state officials, but even when they are complete (*ju* 具), there will still be problems that call for invention and the good judgment of decision-makers, for there will be cases where one needs to prioritize between rules (as when two rules are at cross purposes, or when one lacks the resources to fully enforce them both, for example), and changes in circumstance will call for revisions of the rules. To be skillful in reprioritizing and revising the rules, one must have a good understanding of their "meaning" (*yi* 義), which calls for virtue.

In this passage and elsewhere, Xunzi often calls attention to the ways in which rules and models (*fa*) cannot fully determine good governance, so that state officials will invariably need to exercise personal discretion and judgment in order to execute their responsibilities well. We could call this the argument from underdetermination. Based on my limited experience as an administrator of an academic depart-

[14] Translation slightly modified from Hutton (Xunzi 2014, 117).

ment, it seems obvious that the argument from underdetermination is correct. Consider the task of choosing, assigning, and scheduling courses for a given semester. When I have devised schedules for my department, I have heeded rules so numerous that they could fill a volume of the tax code, specifying orders of priority for fulfilling faculty entitlements, seat targets, ensuring that only qualified instructors are appointed, and avoiding schedule conflicts within major programs. And yet in spite of this abundance of rules, there are still thousands of possible configurations of course arrangements that would be permitted by the rules, some of them catastrophic for students. I could schedule courses at terribly inconvenient times, such that hundreds of students could be prevented from graduating on schedule, or compel faculty to teach late at night and then again early the next morning, all whilst following the letter of the law, as it were. Good governance of a state is similarly underdetermined but to a far greater degree: the number of rule-adhering options for any complex issue can be multiplied many times over and extended into many different dimensions of decision-making. Perhaps an advocate for a certain libertarian (and utopian) "minimal state" can envision a legal apparatus that leaves less to the discretion of decision-makers, with bright red lines defined by certain basic rights (e.g., private property, bodily autonomy) and little room for positive legislation. But in my view (and certainly on the Confucian view) that would not bring about good governance, for among other things it would not provide even minimally for the legitimate needs and interests of the people, nor support thick relationships and meaningful community bonds. Moreover, some administrative units have to adjudicate and enforce those bright red lines, which invariably involves managing people, making trade-offs between desirable goals, and choosing to prioritize some tasks over others. The problem of underdetermination is inescapable.

Xunzi has other ways of showing how rules are insufficient when they stand alone, without the aid of virtuous officials. He contends that the rules of the sage-king Yu have survived to his present age, and yet it is abundantly clear to him and his contemporaries that the Central States are not well governed. Perhaps he makes this remark

only to establish that we cannot have ideal governance without an ideal ruler. But if that's the extent of Xunzi's insight into Yu's contribution to good governance, this sounds suspiciously like a weaker claim for virtue-centered politics discussed in the previous section—the claim that virtue is necessary for optimal governance, a claim that most institutionalists (at least in the Confucian tradition) can readily accept. The real point of contention, as we saw, is whether changes to the rules alone can effect positive change after they have been made good and decent enough to be viable (C2). To address that issue we must turn to Zhu Xi, who adds the following argument: once a set of rules is viable, invariably it will have "defects." There is a sense in which all sets of rules—even the very best—are defective, and the defects are such that it takes compassionate, wise, public-minded state officials to remedy them.[15] Zhu does not elaborate, but I take it that he sees that once one has a viable set of rules, improving them in some respect will invariably diminish them in another. In the case that he is discussing, he sees disadvantages in both the enfeoffment system (less meritocratic, more difficult to replace bad political authorities) and in the commandery system (impossible to cultivate lasting bonds between the governor and the local community, difficult for the state to survive when the central government is dysfunctional). In the final analysis, Zhu seems to suggest, there is nothing to do but trade one set of disadvantages for the other; there is no significantly better system that can remedy the defects of both. Similarly, Xunzi says that some rules are "sketchy" and others are "complete," the former being characterized by the fact that they leave a great deal to interpretation (think of rules meant to prevent bullying) and the latter come as close as possible to being fully determinative of state action (as for a tax table, perhaps). There are defects in both levels of permissibility. Sketchy rules are flexible but more easily abused; complete rules are harder to abuse but procrustean. Once the rules have reached a certain level of functionality, such that any further improvements require these sorts of tradeoffs, there is nothing to do

15 Zhu (1986, *juan* 108, 2680) and Ivanhoe (2019, 61, passage 10, quoted in Section 2 of this paper).

but accept one set of defects or another and then turn to virtuous administrators to contain or mitigate them.[16]

Another argument is that the virtuous person is the "origin" (*yuan* 原) of the rules, and from this it appears to follow that most of the credit for successful rules should go to the people who originate them. As he says, "The rules are the beginning of order, and the gentleman is the origin of the rules" (法者, 治之端也; 君子者, 法之原也). It is tempting to read Xunzi as making the relatively obvious point that the gentlemen both precedes the rules in time and plays some part in bringing them about. But this is probably too superficial an interpretation of "origin." Just because X precedes Y and plays some causal role in bringing it about, it does not follow that most of the credit for Y's successes should go to X. If that were true, then history's greatest villains and the law of gravity would get far too much credit for the things they caused. Moreover, if that were Xunzi's argument then he would run headlong into another chicken and egg problem. Xunzi recognizes that good rulers do not spring from the ground. Good laws, carefully calibrated ritual protocols, and other finely-tuned social conditions must be in place first. If we construe "origin" so loosely then both people and rules originate one another, without any clear bearer of credit at bottom. Finally, Xunzi in this passage is not concerned with origins for the sake of making an historical point: his point in arguing that people are credit-bearing is to show that it is by means of improving people and not improving rules that the real work of good governance is accomplished.

I propose that Xunzi is better understood as appealing not to the mere temporal and causal priority of people to rules, but to a notion that people are originators in a more robust sense. Consider his own analogy: the standards by which Archer Yi measured his success are

16 Mitigation of the flaws in the rules includes sometimes ignoring or defying them. Although Xunzi did not emphasize this himself, many Confucians came to think that wise magistrates sometimes violate or ignore laws out of virtuous motives. Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033–1107) praised his older brother's wisdom in selectively violating laws for the people's sake, a comment that Zhu Xi and Lü Zuqian 呂祖謙 included in their widely-read anthology *Jinsilu* 近思錄 (Reflections on Things at Hand) (Zhu and Lü 2008, 10.43/349; Chu and Lü 1967, 239).

the same for nearly all archers, and yet it is intuitive to say that Yi's strength and skill better accounts for his success than those standards. Of course, both the standards and strength and skill have some causal role in successful archery, but we might say that strength and skill are *more causally responsible* for the success. This notion of causal responsibility is notoriously vexing for philosophers who work on causality and action, but I think it is intuitive enough, and certainly would be intuitive to Xunzi and his audiences. Quite likely, strength and skill count as being more causally responsible because they are more demanding and thus greater achievements than mastery of the (relatively simple) rules of archery. Presumably, Xunzi means to suggest the same thing: acquiring the skills and character traits for governing and implementing rules well (fairly, compassionately, wisely) is considerably more demanding and thus a greater achievement than crafting the rules themselves.

This interpretation is consistent with how virtue-centered political thinkers in the Song tend to understand Xunzi. As noted in the previous section, one of the "core commitments" of later virtue-centered political thought was that reforming people is more demanding than reforming rules (C1). Furthermore, Song political thinkers seem to read Xunzi as proposing that the achievements of virtue are more causally responsible than reforming rules and used analogies to skill and craft to illustrate the point. Here is Hu Hong:

> Xunzi said, "There are people who create order; there are no rules that create order." I humbly submit that we illustrate this by drawing an analogy between wanting to restore order after a period of chaos, and trying to cross a river or lake [by boat]. The rules are like the boat and the people [i.e. the ruler and his officials] are like the steersman. If the boat is damaged and the rudder is broken, then even if [the steersman] has seemingly divine technique everyone nevertheless understands that the boat cannot get across. So whenever there is a period of great disorder it is necessary to reform the rules. There has never been a case where one could successfully restore order without reforming the rules. (Hu 1987, 23-24)[17]

[17] *Zhiyan* 知言 (Understanding Words), section 8, no. 18.

Hu takes Xunzi to suggest that both good rules and virtuous people are necessary ("There has never been a case where one could successfully restore order without reforming the rules"). And yet he ultimately agrees with Xunzi that people and not rules are the proper sources of order. The reason seems to have to do with the fact that rule-implementation and rule-making are more demanding, more skill-like, more like steering through rough waters or building boats. In Xunzi's passage he arguably attends more to the skill of the rule-implementers (the executives, the steersmen) than to the skill of the rule-makers (the legislators, the shipwrights), but that is a matter of emphasis or focus. Xunzi acknowledges that virtuous state officials play a role in making and revising rules as well.

4. Confucian Criticisms of the Virtue-Centered View

As we have seen, the two claims that capture what is most important and controversial about the virtue-centered understanding of politics are (C1) that improving the character of state officials is the more demanding work of governmental reform, and (C2) that after the institutional rules are good enough to be viable, further improvements in the rules will probably be ineffective without concomitant improvements in the character of state officials. We have also seen how Xunzi and the Song Confucians who follow him argue for these claims, which, in part, is to show that virtue is more causally responsible for success in governance than rules are, and to maintain that even viable laws invariably have defects which can only be mitigated by virtuous rule-makers and rule-executors. How could a critic respond to these claims and arguments? One interesting line of response goes as follows: Xunzi and his virtue-centric political disciples think it relatively obvious that people's virtues have to do the real work of ensuring good governance, that the virtues are analogous to the strength and skill of archers and the institutional rules more closely resemble the standards of archery. Part of what makes this idea appealing is that virtues are needed to ensure that certain outcomes are moral—that governance is fair, compassionate, public-minded,

and so on—and it is difficult to see how institutional rules can do that moral work. But maybe it is not so difficult. Perhaps some of the moral work can, through carefully-crafted rules, be offloaded to institutions after all.

One notable example of offloading moral work to institutions is in so-called "advocacy systems," which appoint people to advocate for opposing sides of an issue (e.g., to represent the defendant or represent the state or people in a criminal case) and incentivizes each person to make the most persuasive argument for their assigned side. When done rightly, the advocacy system is supposed to guarantee a degree of procedural fairness and perhaps even substantive justice, replicating some of the very work which traditionally would have depended on the wisdom and righteousness of the virtuous and fair-minded magistrate. Another example is the system of checks and balances of constitutional governments. At least on some views, the net effect of that sort of such systems is to offload some of the work that would otherwise come from individual virtues (self-control, moderation, loyalty to a state or its people) and substitute structural incentives instead.

If this idea of moral offloading seems odd, then consider a relatively simple thought experiment. Imagine that a savvy player of games, Mei, is joining two other people in playing a game and that she is the sole author of the rules of the game—whatever she declares to be the rules really are the rules. In this context it makes sense to say that Mei herself, as a person, is the "rules authority" for the game, and she bears credit for their success or failure. But now imagine that we develop two different procedures for determining rules of the game, adopting one procedure for the first game and another for the second. The first procedure says that the three players have to agree unanimously to the rules, so that each has an incentive to devise rules that give no one player any special advantages; the other procedure says that each player will propose her own rules and the winner will be determined by a few coin tosses. In the latter case, there is no need to compromise, and self-interested players will be inclined to propose rules that most favor themselves. The players remain the same in personality and talent whether they implement

the first procedure or the second, but the different procedures would very likely produce different results. In this light, we can see how it might make sense to give some credit for successful or unsuccessful rules-making to the procedure rather than the people who employ it. Similarly, a critic of virtue-centered politics might say that complex rules for the making of laws and regulations can make the procedures themselves, or the rules that govern those procedures, bear credit for their success.

Many scholars have suggested that Huang Zongxi is among the traditional Confucian political thinkers who comes closest to proposing a system of checks and balances.[18] In his now famous work *Mingyidaifanglu* 明夷待訪錄 (Waiting for the Dawn), he seems particularly interested in creating systems that check one another by balancing power between competing offices and units of administration. For example, he proposes the reinstitution of a more powerful and independent prime minister (*zaixiang* 宰相) and establishing ritual protocols meant to nurture mutual respect and deference between the emperor and prime minister (Huang 2011, 27-36; 1993, 100-103). He was particularly concerned that the state provide more mechanisms by which to communicate public interests, which led to his most famous proposals to give greater independence, local control, and freedom of expression to the academies, and to compel the emperor to sit in attendance (as though a student or disciple) as scholars debated public affairs (de Bary 1993, 30-34; Huang 1993, 104-110; 2011, 37-54). He also recommended that crown princes (i.e. the emperors-to-be) be educated outside the walls of the imperial compound, so that they are "informed of real conditions among the people and be given some experience of difficult labor and hardship" and do not develop "false notions of their own greatness" (Huang 2011, 46).[19]

At first glance, reforms like these appear to be examples of offloading the moral work of personal virtues to institutions, so that rules carry some of the burden of (and get some credit for) ensuring

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[18] See Chan (2018), de Bary (1993, 80; 2011, 205), Hao (1974, 51-52), and Xiao (1982, 644-645).

[19] Translation from Huang (1993, 107).

a moral outcome. So it seems, but I admit that I am somewhat ambivalent about this way of characterizing Huang's various attempts to balance powers. Firstly, there is some uncertainty about the degree to which Huang's recommendations were meant as ground-level rules that constrain or delimit the emperor's own activities, or recommendations that the emperor would be wise to take into account (insofar as he cares about the public good or wants to secure a lasting dynasty) (Chan 2018, 208-209). Secondly, at least some of the described reforms strike me as promising better governance not by offloading moral work from personal virtue to institutions, but instead by creating institutions which more reliably cultivate virtues in leadership. The recommendation that crown princes be educated outside of the imperial compound seems to be meant to make for humbler and more compassionate emperors. If the rules do not constrain rulers at the ground level and if their primary achievement is just to develop more virtuous rulers, this is largely consistent with the account of the proper sources of governance set out by the likes of Xunzi and Zhu Xi. After all, both Xunzi and Zhu Xi readily admit that state officials of good character are more likely to come about under better laws, methods of selection of civil servants, and systems of education, and they see this as quite compatible with the view that people and not rules are the proper sources of order.

Still, some of Huang's reforms do seem to be genuine examples of moral offloading. By making the office of the prime minister more powerful, independent, and respected, Huang raises the price of certain abuses of power that would otherwise come more cheaply for the emperor—namely, abuses of power that undermine and work against competent prime ministers. Moreover, the rules requiring the emperor to attend relatively free and open discussions of public issues seem to be meant to make the emperor better informed and thus concerned about the interests of his people whether or not he had the inclination and good graces to discover these things for himself. Insofar as that is the case, these would be cases of having well-crafted rules do some of the work that would otherwise be left to individual virtues.

Furthermore, Huang's political proposals read like the work of someone who appreciates the challenges of institution-building. His interest in the finer points of balancing power and redefining the responsibilities of offices suggest that he thinks that there is much skill and artistry in rule-crafting, that some rule-crafting is more closely analogous to an archer's strength and skill than to the expectation that the archer hit a target from a certain distance with certain instruments. All of this suggests that Huang would reject the strong virtue-centered claim that reforming people is far more demanding than reforming institutional rules (C1).

Another point of contention is whether reforming rules alone is enough to improve governance without concomitant improvements in character, at least in regimes that already have viable systems of laws (C2). On the face of it, Huang Zongxi seems likely to reject C2 as well. Among the many sorts of reforms that he seems to think will gain traction on their own, two stand out. First, Huang argues that there are some systems of rules that are so "restrictive" and "profuse" (*mi* 密), and so consistently devoted to protecting the interests of the ruling families, that they create a culture that is inimical to virtuous governance. Huang calls these sorts of rules "unlawful" or "unruly" (*feifa* 非法) to emphasize that they tend to encourage rebellion and exploitation of the rules, creating an outcome directly opposed to the aims of having rules in the first place (2011, 23-24; 2014, 317). In these situations, fixing the rules must come before improvements in character. This reasoning leads to Huang's memorable inversion of the Xunzian formula:

> Some pundits say, "There are people who create order; there are no rules that create order." To this I say, "Only if there are rules that create order can there be people that create order." Since unlawful rules shackle people's hands and feet, even those that are capable of creating order and unable to overcome the pushing and pulling or the suspicions and doubts that keep them constantly on the lookout. When there is something to be set up or implemented they just finish their own share. They are content to use the most expedient methods and thus unable to achieve anything beyond the sphere [defined by the letter of the law]. If the rules of the former kings

> still existed, all would have aspirations that go beyond what's just legally required. . . . This is why I say, "Only if there are rules that create order can there be people that create order." (Huang 2011, 25)[20]

One way to read this argument is to say that Huang takes the Xunzian insight that governance is underdetermined by rules but uses it against the Xunzians. When there is a proliferation of restrictive rules meant primarily to protect the interests of the ruling families, few will be inclined to do more than what is minimally required by the letter of the law, and so the extra work that Xunzi thinks so crucial will be left undone.

Although I find Huang's argument for this sort of reform powerful and poignant, I am not confident that his case is in direct opposition to the virtue-centered political views of Xunzi and Zhu Xi. For one thing, Huang's argument presupposes that virtue makes a tremendous difference between good governance and bad. It is just that certain institutional changes need to take effect before state officials become capable of developing virtuous approaches to governing. This, as we have seen, is a point that Xunzi and Zhu Xi would readily concede. Furthermore, read charitably, virtue-centered political thinkers never meant to suggest that mere changes in institutional rules would always be ineffective. Rather, they meant to say that they only worked where the rules were fundamentally perverse or dysfunctional, not meeting the minimum threshold of viability. Quite arguably, Huang's point about the rules of his era is precisely that they are not viable, for they serve primarily the interests of the ruling families and have the paradoxical effect of create disorder and exploitation.

A second set of reforms that Huang proposes work differently. They improve the social order without requiring a substantial improvement in the character of government officials to be effective. Huang sometimes characterizes these sorts of reforms as changes to the structural tendencies and incentives (*shi* 勢) of an institution, contrasting these with more ancillary changes that rely on prohibitions and punitive laws, which only work sporadically and change behavior

[20] Translation modified from Huang (2014, 317-318).

superficially. For example, Huang says that corruption amongst lower-level officials (*xuli* 胥吏) would be better controlled by reinstituting the rotational draft service system (*chaiyifa* 差役法), which ensures that officials will rotate out before they amass too much knowledge and influence, and makes their interests more continuous with those of ordinary people. Surely this is more effective than relying on prohibitions, and it does not require any meaningful improvement in the internal character of the officials in question (Huang 1993, 162; 2011, 165-166). Here we have an example of a reform proposal that really does imply a rejection of one of the core claims of the virtue-centered view of politics. Defenders of Huang-style institutionalism would do well to build their arguments on proposals like it.

5. Conclusion

The debate about the relative power of rules and human virtues to effect good governance runs deep in the veins of Confucian political discourse, and yet it is easy to misconstrue both the positions and the major arguments offered up by its participants. Both the virtue-centered thinkers and their more institutionalist opponents recognize that personal virtues and good rules are necessary for optimal governance, and both understand that rules and virtues are mutually supporting in crucial respects. In this paper, I have attempted to bring some clarity to the debate by identifying what I take to be the two core commitments of the virtue-centered position—that improving the character of state officials is the more difficult and demanding work of improving governance, and that for systems of rules that are basically decent and viable, further reforms to the rules alone will be ineffective without improvements in character. As we have seen, these two core commitments are shared by the Confucian thinkers most closely associated with the virtue-centered view, notably by Xunzi, Hu Hong, and Zhu Xi. And the core commitments are rejected by great institutionalist Huang Zongxi, although careful examination shows that some of his memorable proposals and arguments are more clearly and unambiguously opposed than others.

I see this framework as no more than a start at imposing some systematicity and order on a large and unwieldy political discourse. To do justice to the depth and sophistication of the Confucian political thinkers, more work needs to be done. For example, the virtue-centered view depends in part on the claim that virtue is more causally responsible for good governance than rules, more like the strength and skill of an archer. Huang Zongxi and other thoughtful crafters of institutions compel us to ask how true this is, and whether there are not ways in which complex rule-making can be analogous to strength and skill in effecting a desired outcome. My reconstruction of the debate here also gives relatively short shrift to Zhu Xi's interesting contention that all systems of rules have defects which only virtuous state officials can remedy. While I think this argument is quite plausible, it depends in part on how we conceptualize defects, and it is not clear that this pessimism has exactly the implications for virtue-centered politics that Zhu Xi thinks it does. Maybe the best way to mitigate defects in some rules is with higher-order rules.

There is a worry about the way that I have characterized the virtue-centered view. I have tried to show that the dispute is about what can be done to improve governance in a special range of cases—those where the rules are functional enough to be viable. But as we saw in looking closely at Huang Zongxi's objections, this makes it difficult to pinpoint an actual critic or outsider to the virtue-centered tradition of Confucian political thought, because wherever there is an institutional or legal thinker demanding reforms, one can always try to frame those reforms as a matter of improving less-than-viable rules. Xunzi and Zhu Xi admit that there will be times that the rules are so bad that fixing them will help without a concomitant improvement in virtue. Maybe we should see Huang Zongxi's proposals in the same light—as fixing deeply flawed rules so as to help them meet the minimum standard of viability.

I have two responses to this worry. First, a lot depends on how high a bar we set for rules that we deem "viable," and the criteria that the rules must meet in order to count as viable. Surely for the rules to be viable they should at least be sustainable over a long period of time and capable of preventing massive social upheaval or civil war

so long as competent administrators are in charge. We might want to stipulate that they should also provide all or nearly all of the people with the means for basic goods like food, shelter, and a livelihood, but I think neither Zhu nor Huang would set the bar so high. From their points of view in history, China had been beset with periodic famines for a long time, both were concerned about the large class of itinerant farmers and profound inequalities of property ownership in the countryside, which they saw as products in part of state corruption. And yet, I think both would have said that the rules of their era were essentially capable of sustaining themselves and maintaining the minimum of social order. So we can take their recommendations for improving governance in their own times as indicative of the sorts of things that should be done for states in the "viable" range. Nevertheless, I admit that there is a problematic ambiguity in my formulation, one that would take more space to resolve than I have here. A second point is that, whatever the ambiguities in my way of characterizing the dispute, there is little question that Confucians in the Song through Ming dynasties understood themselves to be in dispute. The Cheng brothers, Hu Hong, and Zhu Xi took themselves to be articulating a more plausible way forward from the status quo than Wang Anshi had provided, and in Zhu's own day, more institutionalist thinkers like Chen Liang 陳亮 (1143–1194) and Ye Shi 葉適 (1150–1223) took themselves to be disputing the very proposal that changes in the rules had to be accompanied by improvements in character. Their aim was to show that institutional reform alone could make genuine progress in their day (Niu 1998; Tillman 1982; Xiao 1982, 493-513). Writing more than four centuries later, Huang Zongxi's views about Zhu's politics are more nuanced, but as we have seen there are some components of his grand political vision that assume Zhu was wrong about the sources of good governance.[21]

[21] Huang identified more closely with the Neo-Confucian lineage of Wang Yangming than that of Zhu Xi, but as Lynn Struve (1988, 476-477) has argued, it seems his issues with Zhu had more to do with Zhu's metaphysics, and there was much in Zhu's political reforms that Huang liked. Huang's own proposals for reform of schools and the examination system closely followed Zhu's and several more recent reform-minded Confucians that took inspiration from Zhu's "A Personal Proposal on Schools and Recruitment" (*Xuexiao gongju siyi* 學校貢舉私議).

Finally, better elucidating the debate about the relative effectiveness of virtue and institutional rules stands to enrich contemporary political philosophy. There is no debate quite like it in contemporary political thought, and yet it is not hard, I think, to see how the arguments offered by Xunzi, Zhu Xi, and Huang Zongxi would have implications for most any approach to contemporary problems of governance. If we want to figure out how much our own problems are symptoms of defective people or defective institutions, these Confucian philosophers provide us with a much-needed framework.

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Rethinking Nationalism, Patriotism, and Cosmopolitanism: *A Confucian Perspective*

Guoxiang Peng*

Abstract

This article intends to probe the related issues of nationalism, patriotism, and cosmopolitanism from the perspective of Confucianism and present some observations and remarks. First, it examines nationalism and patriotism as two potentially related and possibly mutually transformed concepts in but not limited to the Chinese context. Second, it proposes how to properly understand cosmopolitanism in terms of the relationship between patriotism and cosmopolitanism and points out a key problem that cosmopolitanism has to address. Third, it highlights the Confucian understanding of humanity, self, and all-under-heaven, not only to present the Confucian perspective on these three issues but to locate Confucianism in regard to the contrast between patriotism and cosmopolitanism. Finally, it recommends Confucianism as a form of rooted cosmopolitanism or cosmopolitan patriotism, which, among various traditions in the world, can provide a theoretical and practical resource for reconciling the tension between cosmopolitanism and patriotism/nationalism. The Confucian perspective in this article is not based on one or more particular Confucian figures or texts. Rather, it is a view developed by a Confucian scholar, not only a scholar of Confucianism.

Keywords: nationalism, patriotism, cosmopolitanism, Confucianism, rooted cosmopolitanism

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1. Introduction

Nationalism, patriotism, and cosmopolitanism, and the complex entanglements among them have been much discussed in the fields of political philosophy and culture studies, not to mention their place in general discourses and reflections on culture. For example, Martha C. Nussbaum's 1994 *Boston Review* article, "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism," promptly generated 29 responses from readers. Such a substantial reaction to a seemingly abstract and theoretical essay was significant, especially at a time when the internet had not yet served as an instrument of instantaneous communication. The editor of *Boston Review*, Joshua Cohen (1996), realizing the importance of the issue at hand, compiled an anthology that included 11 of those responses, together with 5 invited essays and Nussbaum's replies. It appeared in 1996 as *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism*.[1] This book presents a deep, multidisciplined, and sustained analysis of many of the core issues concerning patriotism and cosmopolitanism.

Needless to say, both patriotism and cosmopolitanism are issues not exclusive to the West. Issues of patriotism and cosmopolitanism have also engaged the attention of Chinese Intellectuals and thinkers. In my view, these perennially relevant matters need to be addressed with a renewed sense of urgency, given our current geo-political conditions, in light of Donald Trump's nationalistic rhetoric and foreign policies, and China's re-invigoration of ideology as a dominant principle of governance.

In this article, I will not discuss or directly engage the views of Nussbaum or the other contributors to *For Love of Country*, although I will refer to and elaborate upon a number of issues they raise. Rather,

[1] The authors in this volume are all distinguished scholars in the humanities in North America. Apart from Nussbaum, notable names include the late Hilary Putnam, Amartya Sen, not only the 1998 Nobel laureate in economics but a great and influential philosopher, Charles Taylor, the winner of the Kluge Prize of 2015, Immanuel Wallerstein, a representative of world-systems theory, and Michael Walzer, a senior research Fellow of the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton.

my aim is to probe the related issues of nationalism, patriotism, and cosmopolitanism from the perspective of Confucianism and present some of my own observations and remarks. In doing so, I hope to highlight some of the defining characteristics of Confucianism.

My arguments will proceed in the following way. First, I will examine nationalism and patriotism as two potentially related and possibly mutually transformed concepts in but not limited to the Chinese context. I will not endeavor to survey the literature on nationalism and patriotism but instead propose how we might define, differentiate, and avoid radicalizing both of these concepts from a Confucian point of view. Second, I will propose how to properly understand cosmopolitanism in terms of the relationship between patriotism and cosmopolitanism and point out a key problem that cosmopolitanism has to address. Third, I will examine the Confucian understanding of humanity (humaneness), self, and all-under-heaven, not only to present the Confucian perspective on these three issues but also to locate Confucianism in regard to the contrast between patriotism and cosmopolitanism. Finally, based on my previous discussions and especially that concerning the Confucian understanding of humanity, self, and all-under-heaven, I will recommend Confucianism as a form of rooted cosmopolitanism or cosmopolitan patriotism, which, among various traditions in the world, can provide the theoretical and practical resources for reconciling the tension between cosmopolitanism and patriotism/nationalism.

The Confucian perspective I here present is not based on one or more particular Confucian figures or texts from Chinese or East Asian history. Rather, it is a view I have developed as a scholar of Confucianism and a Confucian scholar.[2] While preliminary and offered merely as a sketch of what could be developed into a full and robust point of view, I hope and believe it may enrich our understanding of the inter-

[2] There are recent works that approach the topic from the perspective of particular Chinese thinkers or texts. For example, Chai Shaojin (2011) explores the topic of cosmopolitanism from the perspective of Wang Yangming's philosophy. Philip J. Ivanhoe (2014) considers how passages from the Analects might open up a new and productive view of the nature and aims and cosmopolitanism.

action between nationalism, patriotism, and cosmopolitanism, which, on the surface, appear to be divergent and contending, rather than coherent and complementary, ideals.

2. Nationalism and Patriotism: *Two Mutually Transformed Concepts*

In *For Love of Country*, the debate was focused primarily on patriotism and cosmopolitanism. The issue of nationalism was not directly or extensively addressed, possibly because in North America, at least at the time the book was written, it was not regarded as an idea or ideology particularly relevant to its historical experience. In addition, in public and academic discourse, nationalism, at least in the English-speaking world, seems to have acquired a negative connotation as another word for or close relative of forms of jingoism based on notions of blood and soil. Therefore, for contributors to *For Love of Country*, there seemed no pressing need to discuss nationalism.

In the Chinese context, however, nationalism has long been a problem and continues to loom large. Particularly when the unavoidably enhanced nationalism in China since the twentieth century has been noticed and criticized by the West, a number of Chinese commentators and thinkers have questioned why similar feelings and behaviors advocated as positive patriotism in the West are regarded as negative nationalism in China? What exactly are the differences between nationalism and patriotism? For this reason alone, aside from patriotism and cosmopolitanism, nationalism needs to receive adequate attention in the Chinese context.

While nationalism and patriotism have been studied and defined, they are not that easily differentiated. It is unnecessary to enumerate all the various definitions of these two concepts. What I want to point out is that nationalism does not necessarily have a negative connotation, while patriotism does not necessarily have a good connotation either. Certain conceptions of patriotism may well yield the same negative consequences that nationalism is said to have generated. Therefore, Nussbaum made a point to examine the limits of

patriotism from a perspective of cosmopolitanism, which led to the lively debate in 1994.

Why is it difficult to differentiate patriotism from nationalism? The reason lies in the fact that both are based upon the nation-state that commands the allegiance and identity of its citizens. It is a natural result that the development of human history advances to a period in which it is the nation-state rather than civilization that constitutes the basic structure of politics and society. Either nationalism or patriotism is a kind of feeling and behavior that identifies oneself with a certain nation-state that one thinks he or she belongs to.

What is the difference between patriotism and nationalism? In my view, patriotism, generally regarded as "good/positive," gives priority to the consolidation of the citizenry of the same nation-state without focusing on the exclusion of people in other nation-states. As such, it is a moral point of view: it can and often does involve *criticizing* oneself and one's fellow citizens for not living up to the high ideals and aspirations that one takes as defining one's nation. Such criticisms can be directed at shortcomings wholly within the state, for example Martin Luther King Jr. and others called on American society to realize its highest ideals of equality, liberty, and justice for all. Such criticisms also can be focused on state actions occurring outside the state, for example, protests against the Vietnam War called on Americans to stop supporting an unwarranted military action or proponents of various aid efforts or humanitarian interventions seek to generate support to relieve suffering that is occurring outside the nation-state. By contrast, nationalism, commonly viewed as "bad/negative," seems intended on excluding or even attacking people of other political-cultural communities; it encourages our least savory inclinations and offers a license for wrongdoing. This is seen in a common feature of almost all nationalist movements: they often are based upon grievances and resentments—real or imagined—against others. They focus on the wickedness and wrongdoing of others and invoke these as justifications for revenge, demands for reparations, or excuses for greed or aggression. A patriot, as described above, always urges us higher, to be at our best—to listen to *the better angels of our nature.* A nationalist always seeks to drag us down and encourages

the demons that lie within us all. As Timothy Snyder (2017, 113) puts it, "A nationalist encourages us to be our worst, and then tells us that we are the best." In this sense, patriotism is an internal constructive and consolidating force while nationalism is an externally driven force that is aggrandizing and expansive. Patriotism almost unavoidably generates a distinction between "us" and "them" when it consolidates the shared values, but as long as this discrimination does not become overt hostility toward and an attack on other people, it is not nationalism as such. Similarly, nationalism would naturally result in the re-inforcement of people's self-identity when it is hostile to or even an attack on other people. Numerous historical examples can be given of nations that went to war for the purpose of distracting from an internal crisis. But as long as the purpose is not to consolidate the shared values of a people and community, but a tool to shift inner crisis, and hostility to an attack on other people, it is still nationalism in a bad sense, not patriotism in a good sense.

Simply put, the key to differentiating patriotism from nationalism is to check what feelings and behaviors people truly have and make: are these enlisted for and do these encourage improving themselves and their states or assaulting others? The former is patriotism while the latter is nationalism. In this sense, obviously, those people who attack their compatriots and damage the belongings of their compatriots are not patriots but nationalists; what they have done is nothing but stupid and brutal. Of course, nationalism is not always bad. When a nation-state is invaded and its political and social structure is threatened, people of such a nation-state who fight against the invaders are not nationalists but patriots. Their behavior is self-protection. In this case, we can say that such forms of nationalism already are transformed into expressions of patriotism.

If we have to acknowledge the fact that nationalism and patriotism can be mutually transformed and nationalism is not vile in every case or respect, similarly, patriotism may represent feelings and behaviors that are xenophobic, precisely the sort of pernicious possibility that Nussbaum wrote about. Indeed, since consanguinity, place of birth, mother tongue, and so on are primordial ties that cannot be chosen, patriotism can be regarded as actually a natural feeling of

most human beings. Strong evidence for such a claim is found in psychological studies that confirm a strong natural inclination to distinguish between in-group and out-group (Brewer 1999) and to act dramatically differently to people based on this distinction. Such tendencies are also found in the deep human need to belong (Baumeister and Lear 1995). Normally, there is no need to purposely advocate it. For instance, right after the 9.11 attack, so many people in the United States bought flags for their own houses. As a result, flags soon were sold out. This is no doubt a reflection of patriotism. As for the response of the American government to this phenomenon, which called on people to calm down and return to their regular daily lives, it was a wise decision aimed primarily at preventing patriotism from being transformed into vile nationalist fervor. Radical patriotism, which is actually a virulent form of nationalism, invariably leads to jingoism and imperialism often leading to attacking other people.

In this sense, what concerned Nussbaum was not patriotism but nationalism, as seen in her pointing to the potential problems inherent in the former. It is understandable that nearly all 16 of the response-articles endorsed the positive aspects of patriotism. But the more important point is not the acknowledgement of patriotism but the understanding of cosmopolitanism, particularly how to deal with the relationship between patriotism and cosmopolitanism. This is the question that I now want to probe.

3. Cosmopolitanism: *Avoiding Generalities and Abstractions*

The central idea of patriotism is to advocate loyalty and devotion to the core values of the nation-state to which a people belong. On the other hand, the main tenet of cosmopolitanism is to go beyond the particular values and identities that various nation-states respectively embrace. For a cosmopolitan, the ideal is to be a world citizen and embrace universal values such as humanity, freedom, equality, and justice. It is these universal values, and not the specific ideologies of various nation-states, that are the ground for value judgments and ethical human actions. There are voluminous works on the basic

orientation of Cosmopolitanism.[3] What I want to appeal to is not these scholarly narratives but the substantial lived human experiences on which these narratives are based. For example, when Oskar Schindler saved so many Jews, despite his membership in the Nazi Party, he personified cosmopolitanism. Another example is the long avenue of trees in front of the Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem. Each of these trees is in memory of a person or a family who also risked death to save a Jew or Jews. These "Schindlers" came from various countries and had different religious backgrounds. But just like the historical Schindler, they went beyond their respective countries and religions to save the lives of others because of their innate humaneness, with which everyone is endowed. The symbolic implication and significance of these trees are so powerful that Nussbaum, a cosmopolitan, mentioned them as a vivid example and used them as the starting point of her final reply to her critics in the last part of *For Love of Country*. Obviously, the core of cosmopolitanism is the principle that there are higher and more universal values of human beings that go beyond national and cultural boundaries. For a cosmopolitan, when universal values such as humanity, freedom, equality, and justice are in conflict with patriotism, priority is given to the former.

On the surface, there seems to be an unavoidable tension between cosmopolitanism and patriotism. Furthermore, since cosmopolitanism advocates universal values including humanity, justice, human rights and puts an emphasis on rationality and feeling unconstrained by various national ideologies, it occupies the moral high ground. But there is a fundamental problem that cosmopolitanism has to face, that is, how to avoid becoming a general and abstract idea promoted by only a few social elites. The real world is full of inequality. Patriotism and even nationalism in some cases mentioned previously are reasonable to a certain degree. For instance, without the Swadeshi Movement, India probably would still be colonialized by the British. China's fight against the Japanese invasion during the World War II, and the

[3] Nussbaum already well articulated the orientation and features of cosmopolitanism in *For Love of Country*. For more recent discussions of cosmopolitanism, see Appiah (2006), Brown (2009), and Brown and Held (2010).

anti-apartheid movement led by Nelson Mandela in South Africa, are expressions of nationalism in the positive sense. What such nationalism or patriotism pursues and embodies are universal cosmopolitan values including humanity, justice, freedom, and equality, as pointed out by most of the 16 articles in response to Nussbaum, although Nussbaum herself did not ignore the problems of cosmopolitanism.

Then, what we need to further consider is how patriotism, which emphasizes particularity, and cosmopolitanism, which advocates universality can be reconciled. Can we find a middle ground that goes beyond the conflict between and integrates the best of both? In my view, there are conceptual and practical resources in the Confucian tradition that enable us to rethink the inter-relationships between nationalism, patriotism, and cosmopolitanism. Let me begin by introducing the Confucian understanding of three concepts: humanity (or humaneness), self, and all under heaven.

4. Confucianism: *Between Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism*

Ren 仁, humanity or humaneness, is an idea and ideal that is central to Confucianism. Confucian *ren* is usually regarded as a discriminating form of love, to the extent that it emanates outward from the family, and therefore, it is not viewed as capacious as its counterparts in other traditions, such as Christian *agape* or Buddhist *karuna*, which are taken to be universal and cosmopolitan values. This is a misunderstanding. The so called idea of "*aiyouchadeng* 愛有差等," which literally means "discriminating love," does not have evidential support in the Confucian classics. Discriminating love is an empirical fact and natural feeling that everybody experiences. A Confucian is no exception. But this is not what Confucianism advocates. What Confucianism develops is a universal love based upon this empirical actuality. The goal is to move from that which is, represented by discriminating love or differentiated love—the ordinary world as it is, to that which ought to be—the empathetic world of *ren* that involves all that exists in the world.

From the Confucian point of view, the love for parents and children is the most elemental feeling we experience. Take it as the starting point; we may then fully extend it to not only to other people but heaven, earth, and the myriad things. This extended love is what *agape* and *karuna* entail. In fact, for a Confucian, this extended love, as complete humanity (*ren*), involves not only human beings but also the entire world, including mountains, rivers, land, grass, trees, and even minerals. What Confucianism distinctively suggests is that the differentiated love, which exists as a natural human feeling, should be acknowledged as a basis and starting point. Otherwise, if we advocate that we should treat our neighbors as our parents from the very beginning, the actual result is likely to be that our parents unfortunately are treated as our neighbors. If this is so, then those noble and universal values such as fraternity and compassion would become hollow, abstract, and even self-deceptive slogans, because they would be devoid of social substance and practical application. Thus, on the one hand, Confucian *ren* acknowledges the empirical fact of differentiated love; on the other, it firmly believes that only when our love can be extended to other people, heaven, earth, and the myriad things can our *ren* be fully realized.

There is also a prevailing misunderstanding of the Confucian self as a kind of collectivism that ignores the self, such that the value of a self can only be ascertained when it serves as a cog in a larger machine. In light of Confucianism, no one can be understood as an isolated individual in Kierkegaard's sense, or a monad without windows in Leibnitz's sense. The construction of every "self" has to happen in interwoven relationships. On the other hand, Confucianism does not believe that every self is originally nothing and totally constructed only after it is born. For instance, Mengzi believes that the "four sprouts" (*siduan* 四端) of the heart-mind, namely, the feelings of commiseration, shame and dislike, modesty and complaisance, and right and wrong, as original moral feelings, are innate. For a Confucian, the innate knowing of the good as Mengzi defined it, which, Mou Zongsan has argued, is also the moral principle in Kant's sense, is irreducibly the ultimate reality. This independent and irreducible personality or self is vividly indicated in many Confucians sayings. For instance,

Kongzi said, "Is humanity far away? As long as I want it, it is here in me 我欲仁斯仁至矣 (*Analects* 7.29)."[4] "The commander of three armies may be taken away, but the will of even a common man may not be taken away from him 三軍可奪帥也, 匹夫不可奪志也 (*Analects* 9.25)."[5] In addition, Mengzi said that a "great person 大丈夫" should "not indulge in money and power, not give up his dignity due to poverty and mean condition, not give in by intimidation and violence 富貴不能淫, 貧賤不能移, 威武不能屈 (*Mengzi* 3B:7)," according to which Chen Yinque 陳寅恪 (1890–1969), one of the great 20th-century Chinese historians, developed his call for "independent personality and free thinking 獨立之精神, 自由之思想" as the ideal existential goal for the citizenry. Thus, the Confucian self should be understood this way: it can only be consummated in relation to others yet, being resolutely free and independent, cannot be reduced to being simply a part of any larger structure.

The Confucian understanding of the world is epitomized by the notion of *tianxia* 天下, namely, "all-under-heaven" and is germane to the issues of patriotism and cosmopolitanism.[6] While we know that

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4 Translation from Chan (1969, 33) with minor modification by the author.

5 Translation from Chan (1969, 36).

6 Recently, there have been several works on "*tianxia*" or cosmopolitanism in the Chinese speaking-world. However, most such works are highly speculative constructions of an author's own ideas rather than interpretations of Confucianism based on an historical or philosophical perspective. Some of these are illuminating, such as the article by Liu Qing 劉擎 (2015). Some, such as Zhao Tingyang's *Tianxia Tixi* 天下體系 (2005), primarily use the term "*tianxia*" to express the author's own speculative theory, which has little relevance to its connotations as developed in the Chinese tradition. A response from the perspective of the Chinese tradition to works such as Zhao's can be found in Ge Zhaoguang 葛兆光's article (2015). While Ge's criticisms primarily emphasize that Zhao's presentation of "*tianxia*" lacks any substantial foundation in or reference to its Chinese historical context, other critiques, for example, that of William A. Callahan (2008, 753), have noted that it proposes "a system that values order over freedom, ethics over law, and elite governance over democracy and human right." In my view, this kind of speculative use of the concept "*tianxia*," which simply intends to endorse China's political status quo, has actually nothing to do with Chinese tradition in general or with Confucianism in particular. While it presents itself in the guise of a Confucian proposal, it is far removed from the letter and violates the spirit of core Confucian teachings. Works by intellectuals who truly are immersed in the Chinese and Confucian traditions, not only Chinese such Hu Shih 胡適 (1950) and Yu Ying-shih 余英時 (1997) but Westerners such as Wm. Theodore de Bary (1983; 1996) as well, have already clarified how and why an interpretation that "values order over freedom,

Kongzi travelled around many principalities in China, we should realize that such travel at that time, during the Spring and Autumn period, was truly a transnational venture, completely different from how we travel between provinces in China today. Before the Qin dynasty, the writings, languages, currencies, and clothing of various principalities were different. Kongzi did not quite need a visa but obviously he had to face the challenges of the vast differences and diversities that existed. Kongzi did not promote his ideas only in his home principality of Lu. He once said "should the way fail to prevail, I prefer to float about on the sea by taking a raft 道不行乘桴浮於海 (*Analects* 5.7)."[7] His world extended far beyond the so-called Middle Kingdom. Therefore, it is not farfetched to regard Kongzi as a cosmopolitan and a world citizen. Furthermore, both the social-political ideal of the Great Commonwealth (*datong* 大同) expressed in the *Book of Rites* and what Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472–1529), a great Confucian of 15th-century China, said "regarding all-under-heaven as a family and the Middle Kingdom as one person 視天下爲一家, 中國猶一人" in his *Questions on the Great Learning* hint clearly of a vision of cosmopolitanism. In the ultimate analysis, the Confucian universal core values including humanity, justice, civility, wisdom, and trust bespeak cosmopolitan orientations in that they seek to transcend not only individual self-centeredness but also specific cultures and nation-states.

On the other hand, Confucian cosmopolitanism, without ignoring the differences and diversities, does not advocate a general, hollow, and abstract idea of uniformity. The principle that Kongzi expounds, not only for the relationship between people but also for the relationship between countries, is "harmony without uniformity (*heerbutong* 和而不同)," the precondition of which is precisely the acceptance of and respect for the difference and diversity among different individuals. Accordingly, the "kingly way" and "humane regime" that Mengzi

ethics over law, and elite governance over democracy and human rights" cannot legitimately claim to be a modern development of Confucianism. Since my analysis does not seek to enter into debates about the various narratives concerning "*tianxia*" in the current Chinese-speaking world, I deliberately use the term "*shijiezhuyi* 世界主義" instead of "*tianxia*" as the translation of cosmopolitanism in the Chinese context.

[7] Translation by Lau (1992, 37) with minor modification by the author.

advocates also denounce the pursuit of hegemony, giving priority to peace among different countries. In this sense, the Confucian ideal of all–under-heaven does not mean to unify the world with one ideology and one social-political structure. Rather, it means the great harmony of various people and countries with their own distinctiveness.

5. The Confucian Standpoint: *A Rooted Cosmopolitanism*

The Confucian views of humanity, self, and all-under-heaven suggest that there is a middle ground between the particularity of patriotism and the universality of cosmopolitanism. When we scrutinize the history of humankind, we realize that there have been radical and extreme developments of nationalism, patriotism, and cosmopolitanism that posed threats to human flourishing.

For instance, cosmopolitanism was once promoted by the Communist International and the imperialist Soviet Union to establish a uniform world by eliminating the differences among various nations, countries, and cultures;[8] it was a pernicious ideology should reasonably be countered by patriotism or even nationalism. In this situation, the dignity of the individual then should be advocated to fight against the erosion of a hollow and abstract utopia. When nationalism and patriotism were promoted to the extreme, such as the case of the Nazis in Germany, who discriminated against other races, invaded other countries, and launched mass genocide, the spirit of cosmopolitanism stepped forward to protect human dignity. History has already indicated that radical nationalism, patriotism, and cosmopolitanism

[8] According to Wang Ban (2017, 14), Joseph R. Levenson in his *Revolution and Cosmopolitanism* (1971) connected "*tianxia*" with what he called "communism cosmopolitanism." This strikes me as specious. "*Tianxia*" as a political and social ideal of Confucianism, not speculations/imaginations advocated by some contemporary scholars in the guise of Confucianism, is essentially incompatible with communism. The twentieth-century new Confucian scholars who exiled themselves to Taiwan, Hong Kong, and North America have already pointed this out forcefully and in detail. For example, one of the lifelong endeavors of Mou Zongsan was to criticize communism and clarify this essential incompatibility. On Mou's political and social thought, see my book, Peng (2016).

all unavoidably lead to their opposites. As Nussbaum said, "To worship one's country as if it were a god is indeed to bring a curse upon it" (Cohen 1996, 16).

In short, radical nationalism, patriotism, and cosmopolitanism are not reflections of the truth, kindness, and beauty that is rooted in our humanity; these are not ideals for common good and justice. They are deceitful ideologies designed and deployed to fool the masses. The fall of Nazi Germany and the disintegration of the Communist International prove that false ideas are doomed to be punished by history and eventually abandoned by people, even though they proved popular and demagogic for a time. Hu Shih 胡適 (1891–1962), a leader of the Chinese renaissance in the early twentieth century, inspired by a Chan Buddhist master, warned passionate young people not to become befuddled and seduced by any authoritative and populist discourse, wherever it is from, Kongzi or Karl Marx.[9] His warning still rings true today.

To adjudicate the roles of nationalism, patriotism, and cosmopolitanism requires nuanced understanding of history and culture. Nussbaum pointed to the limits of patriotism and criticized radical patriotism that puts one's race and country over others', calling on people to pledge their loyalty to universal humanity rather than to the ideology of a particular people. She recommended the cosmopolitanism of the Greek philosopher, Diogenes. However, she also noted that world citizens do not necessarily need to give up their various local identifications, which are resources for individual self-enrichment.

From a Confucian point of view, the formation of a world citizen is a process of continuous extension of a concentric circle, from the inner rings of self and family, through the middle rings of community, neighborhood, and state, to the outermost ring of the world. Such a process has already been clearly elaborated in the *Great Learning*, one of the most important Confucian classics. As it says,

[9] See his "Jieshaowo zijide sixiang" 介紹我自己的思想 (Introducing My Own Thought), a preface Hu Shih (1930), a book designed particularly for young Chinese people.

> The ancients who wished to illuminate their luminous virtue throughout the world would first govern well their states; wishing to govern their states, they would order well their families; wishing to order well their families, they would first cultivate their own persons; wishing to cultivate their own persons, they would first rectify their heart-minds; wishing to rectify their heart-minds, they would first make their thoughts sincere; wishing to make their thoughts sincere, they would first extend their knowledge. The extension of knowledge lies in the investigation of things. When things are investigated, knowledge is extended; when knowledge is extended, their thoughts become sincere; when their thoughts become sincere, their heart-minds are rectified; when their heart-minds are rectified, their persons were cultivated; when their persons are cultivated, order is brought to their families; when their families are ordered, their states are well governed; when the states are well ordered, peace is brought to the world.[10]

Seen in this light, through self-cultivation, "from the Son of Heaven to ordinary people," with the establishment of a "one-body" worldview, the tensions between nationalism, patriotism, and cosmopolitanism are not insurmountable. Kwame Anthony Appiah once described his own political philosophy and ethics as "rooted cosmopolitanism," referring to both his specific cultural origins and transcultural intellectual growth. In my view, similarly, Confucianism is a kind of rooted cosmopolitanism or a cosmopolitan patriotism.[11] From the perspec-

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[10] Translation by de Bary and Bloom (1999, 330-331) with minor modification by the author.

[11] Although I borrow the term "rooted cosmopolitanism" from Kwame Anthony Appiah, this should not be taken to imply that the Confucian form of cosmopolitanism I am trying to develop and advocate here is the same as what he means by "cosmopolitanism." The cosmopolitanism that Appiah has developed is based upon his own experience and primarily embedded in the setting of Western tradition. Comparatively, a Confucian cosmopolitanism has its own features, not only originated and developed in a different cultural context but also as a way to carry out conversations across boundaries. The Confucian understanding of humanity (or humaneness), self, and all-under-heaven, which I briefly depicted in this article, exactly highlights the core features of Confucian cosmopolitanism. Compared with what Appiah elaborates in his relevant work, the nuances are not difficult to discern. But the resonance between them, in my opinion, is something that warrants that more attention be paid to the theoretical and practical implications of each.

tive of this cosmopolitan patriotism, any country and people should be understood in a context of the whole world and of the universal values shared by all the people.

The key to the possibility of either a rooted cosmopolitanism or a cosmopolitan patriotism is universal humanity and common good; the conflicts between individuals and countries stem from self-interest, which disregards these larger prerogatives. As Lu Xiangshan 陸象山 (1139–1193), the twelfth-century Confucian master once said, "Sages appeared tens of thousands of generations ago. They shared this mind; they shared this principle. Sages will appear tens of thousands of generations to come. They will share this mind; they will share this principle. Over the four seas sages appear. They share this mind; they share this principle."[12]

I believe that in a general sense, both Western thinkers such as Nussbaum and Confucian thinkers tend to think alike, though they draw from different intellectual resources. Hence, any discussion of the nexus between nationalism, patriotism, and cosmopolitanism will benefit from having multicultural perspectives; in this essay I endeavor to offer a Confucian one.

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12 Translation from Chan (1969, 579-580).

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Duan Zhengyuan's Moral Studies Society and the Political Imagination of a Religious Enterprise*

Sébastien Billioud**

Abstract

This paper focuses on Duan Zhengyuan 段正元 (1864–1940) and his Moral Studies Society, one of the important redemptive societies with a Confucian orientation of the Republican Period. It provides a brief introduction to Duan's thought and more specifically to his main defense of the "unity of morals and politics" (*zhengdeheyi* 政德合一) at a time when many intended to relegate the Confucian tradition to the dustbin of history. It also shows how Duan managed to link his political thought to concrete actions and projects, both at the top (interactions with political elites) and at the grassroots level of society (organization of *jiaohua* 教化 groups), thus promoting a Confucian political imagination still considered relevant to a modern context.

Keywords: Duan Zhengyuan, Moral Studies Society, redemptive societies, Confucianism, *jiaohua*, He Jian

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1. Introduction: Confucianism and Redemptive Societies

For a long time—maybe too long a time—prevailing westernization and modernization narratives relegated Confucianism to the dustbin of history.[1] This is no surprise considering the magnitude of the changes that affected China after the demise of the Empire and for a long time thereafter (e.g., Maoism, etc.). The problem is that these narratives largely hindered our understanding of the transformations, re-inventions, and reconfigurations of Confucianism in the modern and contemporary periods. Hence there has been a relative lack of scholarly interest in tracing back Confucianism's various modern and contemporary fates that, in particular, include its transformation in "philosophy," its appropriation by religious groups, its perpetuation in educative projects, or its ideological and political uses.[2] This is all the more regrettable since these pieces or fragments of the Confucian heritage, though bereft of the holistic dimension that Confucianism largely held at the end of the Empire, continued to play a crucial role throughout the Republican period and even later on, at least in some polities of the Sinicized world. Ongoing multi-faceted developments in China (e.g., the "Confucian revival") can just be considered, for better or worse, some of the latest manifestations of the enduring vitality of such a tradition today (Billioud 2016, 767-805).[3]

This paper tackles Confucianism in Republican China through the lenses of one of the important redemptive societies of the Republican period, the Moral Studies Society and its founder Duan Zhengyuan 段正元 (1864–1940).

Redemptive societies are religious groups; scholars have started to pay attention to such organizations since the beginning of the 2000s. As a historical category, the label primarily describes religious organisations that emerged after the demise of the empire and

1 See for instance Levenson (1958–1965). In this work, the modern fate of Confucianism largely appears to be its relegation to the Museum.

2 Some of the modern fates of the Confucianism (e.g., what we could call its "philosophical turn") are nevertheless much better documented than others.

3 For a detailed study of today's Confucian revival, see Billioud and Thoraval (2015).

were active in the Republican period. More often than not, they shared a number of prominent features (e.g., some amount of syncretism inherited from the "unity of the three teachings" tradition, an eschatology, a strong charismatic leadership) and managed to attract a massive following. Some had in fact millions of adepts. But some scholars are of the view that the label can also be understood as a sociological category: in that case, it potentially encompasses a number of groups still emerging or operating today.[4]

Among redemptive societies, a certain number asserted or still assert an obvious Confucian identity. This is for instance the case of the Way of Pervading Unity (*Yiguandao* 一貫道), probably one of the most powerful groups in the 1930s and 1940s that has now turned into a cross-national organization operating, mainly from Taiwan, in thousands of places of worship worldwide. Despite its blatant syncretism, the Yiguandao nevertheless claims to be "primarily Confucian" (*yiruweizong* 以儒爲宗).[5] Some other groups active in Republican China had an even more pronounced Confucian flavor. Such was the case for the Universal Morality Society (*Wanguo daodehui* 萬國道德會), founded in 1921 by Jiang Shoufeng 江壽峰 (1875–1926) in Shandong in 1921 and of which Kang Youwei 康有爲 (1858–1927) served as President in 1926–1927. Such was also the case for the Moral Studies Society that will be discussed in the current paper.

If redemptive societies matter so much for the field of Confucian studies, it is first because for a long time they have been a sort of missing link or dead angle: without taking them into account, it is in fact not possible to get a fair understanding of how Confucianism continued to be influential at the grassroots level throughout the Republican period and even afterwards, especially in Taiwan. But beyond their influence "among people" (*minjian* 民間), redemptive societies and their leaders could even sometimes exert some influ-

4 In an increasing body of literature on redemptive societies, see for instance: Duara (2003), Goossaert and Palmer (2011, 91-122), Ownby (2008, 24-44; 2016, 685-727), Palmer (2011, 24-28), and Broy (2015, 145-185). The distinction between historical and sociological categories is developed in Palmer's article.

5 I have explored the contemporary situation of the Yiguandao, including today, in Billioud (forthcoming).

ence in political circles and articulate a worldview that clearly took politics into account. The case of Duan Zhengyuan, introduced in this paper, exemplifies this situation.

I will try to show in the following paragraphs that Duan Zhengyuan's writings and practical actions (i.e., his religious, moral, and civilizational projects) are, first, completely integrated with each other and, second, intended to constitute a response to all those who, after the demise of the Empire, proclaimed the demise of the Confucian value system and its irrelevance in a new Republican political order. His writings and actions are also a response to a troubled era of division and warfare. Furthermore, although Duan certainly did not aspire to return to a by-gone order (imperial system, examination system, etc.), his deep critique of Western modernity, be it explicit or implicit, makes him partake in a broader global historical countercurrent whose influence endured, in a variety of forms, throughout the whole of the twentieth century. In order to tackle these points, I will first discuss some aspects of Duan Zhengyuan's political thought or "political imagination"; afterward, I will introduce how he translated his ideas into very concrete projects, both in elite circles and at the grassroots level.

2. Duan Zhengyuan and His Political Thought

Duan Zhengyuan 段正元 (Duan Dexin 段德新), founder and leader of the Moral Studies Society, was born in 1864 in Weiyuan 威遠, Sichuan province.[6] Like many charismatic religious group leaders (e.g., Yiguandao's patriarch Zhang Tianran 張天然, 1889–1947), hagiographic accounts of his birth, but also of his youth, associate it with a number of auspicious signs and posit that as a child Duan already had a clear awareness of having a life mission. His youth seemed to have been difficult; he was repeatedly struck by the death of family members and experienced poverty, which obliged him to make a living through all kinds

6 This biographical paragraph is primarily based on Fan (2017, 137-160; 2011, 161-203) and Jin (2014, 13-16).

of activities. At the age of 15, he went to Mount Xiaolaojun 小老君山 in order to find some doctors able to cure his severely ill mother. It is there that he encountered his teacher, Long Yuanzu 龍元祖 about whom very little is known but who managed to heal his mother and exerted a decisive influence on the young Duan. Long Yuanzu convinced Duan that self-cultivation and the aspiration to attain sagehood should be tightly connected to practical action in society. He saw in Confucianism and especially in the resources provided by one of its central texts, the *Daxue* 大學 (Great Learning), a means to promote self-cultivation and, beyond that, the redemption of the world. Duan's training was organized by Long. Hagiographic accounts mention that he was sent to build a hut on Mount Emei's (峨眉山) highest summit, Wanfoding (萬佛頂), and that he stayed there for three years of self-cultivation. He came back, got married, but quickly returned to his mountain life for four extra months before heading, at age 19, to Mount Qingcheng (青城山), not far from Chengdu, where he was taught by his Master. On the side, he probably developed some healing skills that would later prove useful to attract high-ranking officials to the Moral Studies Society. The subsequent two decades were primarily marked by his involvement in helping to propagate his Master's way all over Sichuan (Jin 2014, 13-14). In 1909, he encountered, in Beijing, a civil servant, Yang Xianting (楊獻廷), who became his disciple and would later serve as assistant to Hunan governor He Jian (see Section 3.1). Yang backed him in his projects to create grassroots *jiaohua* organizations (i.e., organizations promoting moral education and moral transformation of the people), both in Sichuan and in Beijing, which will be discussed later in this paper.

2.1. The Unity of Politics and Morals 政德合一

Duan Zhengyuan was the author of an astounding intellectual production amounting to thousands of pages. Interestingly, some of these texts include discussions about society, economics, and of course politics. In that later realm, Duan's thought obviously contrasts with the main trends of the time, including the May Fourth Movement and the total westernization stance (*quanpan xihua* 全盤西化) of some of its

proponents or the emphasis put by many on democracy. But more generally, it also contrasts with one of the main trends of (Western-inspired) modernity, that is, the separation or "autonomization" of different spheres of human activity. In brief, suffice it to underline first that Duan is much less interested in the institutional nature of the regime than in what he believes to be central to "the political," that is, its intertwinement with morals. Thus, he firmly advocates the necessity of continuing to "unite the political and the moral" (*zhengdeheyi* 政德合一) in the new Republic. The formula echoes other formulas such as the "unity of the political and the religious" (*zhengjiaoheyi* 政教合一) or the "unity of the political and the sacrificial" (*zhengjiheyi* 政祭合一), a "constellation of notions" that may be helpful to rethink the way Duan but, beyond him, a broad political milieu of the time (Beiyang militarists, warlords and so on) related to the political. We will see later that such an understanding (*zhengdeheyi*) of the political has two main consequences: on the one hand, it reflects a system of political thought in which institutional forms of the political may adapt to changing historical conditions but should remain subsidiary to the leadership prerogatives of virtuous leaders (*xianzhe* 賢者, *junzi* 君子); On the other hand, this intertwinement of the moral and the political also needs to translate into *jiaohua* 教化 enterprises. Whereas Confucianism-inspired *jiaohua* previously partook in the fabric of the imperial order through a number of official institutions, the end of the imperial system and the attacks against classical education created a vacuum. New instruments had to be devised to fill such a vacuum and this is precisely the reason why Duan Zhengyuan also involved himself in very concrete *jiaohua* project, including the creation of the Daode Xueshe 道德學社.

2.2 Morals as the Condition of Legitimacy of the Political

In order to introduce some central aspects of Duan's political thought, I will base myself on some of the ideas introduced in his book *Zhengzhi datong* 政治大同 (The Great Unity in the Political Realm) published in 1930 (Duan 2017, 25-94), knowing that many of the ideas discussed in that work were also tackled in numerous writings before. Duan

was not only a religious leader but also a prolific writer who produced dozens of volumes, that are often highly repetitive. This immediately raises the question of the status of such a literature. Neither merely religious nor really philosophical, the "thought" conveyed in these texts mainly serves the purposes of edification and the rhetorical promotion of a political imaginary or, in Eske Møllgaard's words, a Confucian political imagination[7] at a time: (a) when "tradition" was under severe attack by part of the westernized intelligentsia; (b) but when the political imagination associated with Confucianism still constituted the basic mental framework and worldview of a large part of a political and military elite which was, therefore, predisposed to appropriate it.

Very classically, Duan Zhengyuan emphasizes both the centrality of morals in his thought and claims that the latter inherits an ancient orthodox tradition:

> China has an orthodox moral thought that has been interrupted after Yao and Shun, Yu the Great, Tang, Wen and Wu, the Duke of Zhou and Confucius. My thought is inheriting this orthodox moral thought. (Duan 2017, 33)[8]

Whereas the appeal to antiquity and tutelary figures of Chinese civilization is a recurrent pattern of most Confucian discourses, the specific interpretation of the "line of transmission of the Dao" (i.e., claimed Confucian orthodoxy) is here interesting in that Duan emphasizes the

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7 Mentioning here a political imaginary, I have been inspired by the recent book of Eske Møllgaard (2018). Møllgaard's basic understanding of Confucian discourse is that it is a political imaginary (and no philosophy) that became dominant across Chinese culture, up to this day. Although I disagree on many of points with him, since I believe that his understanding of Confucianism does not render justice to the variety of what may be encompassed under this label, I certainly acknowledge that it is also a powerful (and useful) analysis and critique of some types of Confucian political discourses. The discourse of Duan Zhengyuan, and to a large extent the discourse of the warlords and officials he was in contact with, can largely be understood as the assertion across thousands of highly repetitive pages of a Confucian political imagination, that is, of the possibility of "an imaginary counter-state to compete with the actually existing state."(Møllgaard 2018, 11)

8 中國有一個正統的道德思想, 自堯舜禹湯文武周公孔子而絕. 我的思想, 就是繼承這一個正統的道德思想.

fact that the Confucian tradition largely went astray after Confucius. This valorization of antiquity and lesser attention paid to the subsequent development of Confucianism largely reflects his Master Long's view that "The Han dynasty Confucian style of textual criticism (*kaoju* 考據) as well as the Song dynasty neo-Confucianism (*lixue* 理學), were both limited to the study of texts. They had little to say about human nature and the way of heaven."[9]

This being said, such a critical appropriation of the tradition has its limits since Duan nevertheless emphasizes the importance of the three bonds (*sangang* 三綱), that is, of the three types of fundamental relations (ruler/minister; father/son; husband/wife) that have been asserted and promoted by Confucians first during the Han dynasty and constantly later on throughout imperial history (increasingly associated with the "five constants" especially starting with the Song dynasty).

> The three bonds are things that our contemporary fellows consider to be the most autocratic, obscurantist, and unequal teachings of rites that are (in fact) sacrificing people. But who knows the true meaning of these three bonds? They are not only non-autocratic, but point in reality to the ultimate freedom; they are not only non-obscurantist, but embody in reality the utmost (form) of civilization; they are not only not-unequal but represent in reality the utmost equality. In order to unfold, true humanism necessarily needs to start from their realization. (Duan 2017, 47)[10]

In an iconoclastic context towards Confucian culture, Duan here frontally opposes the modernist tide and slogans understanding Confucianism as autocratic, obscurantist, and unequal and strongly posits that these traditional bonds or mainstays (the ruler is the mainstay of his minister, the father of his son, the husband of his wife), far from being outdated, endure and remain as important as ever. Interestingly from a rhetorical viewpoint, Duan's discourse does not criticize the

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9 *Shizun lishi chugao* 師尊歷史初稿, 8-9, quoted by Fan Chunwu and translated by David Ownby, in Fan Chunwu (2017, 140).

10 語云, 君爲臣綱, 父爲子綱, 夫爲妻綱, 此今人所訾爲最專制, 最黑暗, 最不平等的殺人之禮教也. 豈知三綱正意, 不但不專制, 而實最自由, 不但不黑暗, 而實最文明, 不但不非不平等, 而實最大平等. 真正的人道主義, 必定有此完成而進化.

catchwords of the modernizers (e.g., freedom, equality) but appropriates them to posit that the three bonds constitute their utmost expression (e.g., they are not only non-autocratic, but point in reality to the ultimate freedom. . .). In fact, the three bonds form the ritual and behavioral cornerstone of Duan's favorite –ism (and a formal concession to a time that cherished –isms so much), that is to say, humanism (*rendaozhuyi* 人道主義) or the humane way, a form of pan-moralism pervading his whole worldview and thought system. Apart from the three bonds, Duan Zhengyuan's pan-moralism is also visible in the Great Unity of the Political Realm through the importance ascribed to the "eight virtues" (*bade* 八德).[11]

In Duan Zhengyuan's opinion, morals need to be constantly re-asserted: modern ideologies cannot ignore them and the forms of the political (monarchy, republic, etc.) cannot live without them. Two short excerpts illustrate this point.

> If you aspire to the World's Great Unity, to freedom and equality, morals should provide a direction and this would even make things much easier: Rather than relying on law, the unity of the nation could be achieved thanks to morals; Rather than relying on politics, the rights of the people could be advocated thanks to morals; Rather than relying on economics, the well-being of the people could be sustained thanks to morals. (Duan 2017, 56)[12]

Here, Duan Zhengyuan alludes to Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People (*sanminzhuyi* 三民主義)[13] even though it does not seem that his argument specifically addresses the work published in 1924

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[11] The eight virtues are: *li* 禮 (propriety), *yi* 義 (right conduct), *lian* 廉 (integrity), *chi* 恥 (sense of shame), *zhong* 忠 (loyalty), *xiao* 孝 (filiality), *ren* 仁 (benevolence), *ai* 愛 (love). The association of these different elements can be traced back to the Ming dynasty. Compared to Duan Zhengyuan's previous writings, Fan Chun-wu (2015, 244-259) emphasizes the specific importance of these eight virtues in Duan (2017): they are considered "pillars supporting Heaven" (*chengtianzhu* 撐天柱).

[12] 欲求世界大同, 自由平等, 必根據道德, 乃能事半功倍. 民族之團結, 以法律團結之, 不若以道德團結之. 民權之提倡, 以政治提倡之, 不若以道德提倡之也. 民生之維持, 以經濟維持之, 不若以道德維持之也.

[13] *Minzuzhuyi* 民族主義 (nationalism), *minquanzhuyi* 民權主義 (democracy), and *minshengwhuyi* 民生主義 (the well-being of the people) simply appear here as *minzu*, *minquan* and *minsheng*.

(where, for instance, the rejuvenation of ancient morals is also advocated). Rather, his discourse seems to be more generally orientated against projects carried out by those reformers whose ambition was to modernize the country by putting primarily emphasis on legal procedures, types of polity, and economics but neglecting morals, deemed to be the backbone of Chinese civilization. It is noteworthy that Duan's position largely resembles that of late Qing modernizers distinguishing between a Chinese moral and spiritual "constitution" (*zhongti* 中體), to be preserved and Western "function" (*xiyong* 西用) to be appropriated even though the scope of what is meant by constitution (*ti*) or function (*yong*) is not necessarily the same.

> If importance is ascribed to law and not to men . . . no society, whatever the country, can be ruled properly. The great war (WWI) that broke out in Europe or all the disorders that have struck us since the start of the Republican era have much to do with talk about law and with devilish men. Therefore, in terms of political action, whatever the state model [*guoti* 國體: republic, monarchy, etc.] or political system [*zhengti* 政體: autocratic, constitutional, etc.], there is no absolute superiority or inferiority. Only if those in office are moral men, wise and able, then it will afterwards be possible to adapt to circumstances of the time and to legislate accordingly. . . . (Duan 2017, 62)[14]

It is well-known that the First World War and its ravages had an immense impact in the ranks of many reformers, throughout the world, who had somewhat previously idealized Western modernity (and power) and struggled to import it into their own countries. To some extent, an age of delusions quickly followed an age of illusions and fueled forms of cultural nationalism and critiques of stereotypes of Western modernity. Duan's discourse certainly belongs to this brand of critical discourses that also laments China's unstable situation. This excerpt strikingly underscores Duan's relative indifference to the type of polity implemented in China ("whatever the state model or

14 若重法而不重人. . . 任何國家社會, 無一而可治者. 歐洲大戰之產生, 民國以來之個亂象, 即口法而人爲鬼蜮也. 故國家政治作用, 不論何種國體, 何種政體, 亦無絕對的優劣, 總要當國家政治之居者, 爲賢明有德之人, 然後因時制宜, 因事立法.

political system, there is no absolute superiority or inferiority. . .”). He does not dream to return to an imperial order since the form of the political regime is for him secondary in importance. He can certainly live with a republic or a constitutional monarchy. The crux of the matter is not here: whatever the polity, the legitimacy of the political is anchored in its link with morals. And morals are not considered to be the emanation of society's values at a given point of time (in Marxist terms, morals are certainly no superstructure for Duan): they are not relative and context-dependent, they have their own transcendent and ontological basis. In that sense, Duan understands the political as being, by nature, some sort of “theologico-political” or “politico-religious” order led, directly or indirectly, by those—the sages, the sage-kings—capable of actualizing the ultimate moral structure of the universe. Here, we are fully in the realm of what Møllgaard presents as Confucianism's political imagination.

2. 3. Rethinking the Conditions of Possibility of the World as One Community (Tianxia weigong 天下爲公) *Utopia*

Considering all that has been said up to this point, it is no wonder that Duan dedicates a part of his book to the selection of the “virtuous and capable.” These elements are discussed in a section of the book commenting on one of the usual shibboleths of the Confucian political imaginary,[15] the world as one community, that appeared in ancient texts, including in the *Liyun* 禮運 (Evolution of Rites), a chapter of the classical *Liji* 禮記 (Book of Rites). Duan's discussion is in fact directly based on a few characters (*xuanxian* 選賢, *yuneng* 與能, *jiangxin* 講信, *xiumu* 修睦) appearing in this classical text.[16] But of course, his

15 Other formulas of the Confucian imaginary discussed by Duan include the Great Unity and World Peace.

16 The *Liyun* text is the following: *Dadao zhi xingye, tianxia weigong. Xuanxianyuneng, jiangxinxiumiu* 大道之行也, 天下爲公. 選賢與能, 講信修睦. Legge's classical translation is the following: “When the Grand course was pursued, a public and common spirit ruled all under the sky. They chose men of talent, virtue and ability; Their words were sincere and what they cultivated was harmony.” Chinese Text Project, https://ctext.org/liji/li-yun?filter=521742.

position and comments are not that of a philologist but that of a religious leader. The context in which he advocates "the world as a community" is the China he lived in, struck by all the catastrophes of warlord politics and division, a country in which trust of the people towards politicians was low and where, in his opinion, particular private interests prevailed.

Duan underlines a difference between the "virtuous" (*xianzhe* 賢者, that is, the Confucian gentlemen *junzi* 君子), involved in self-cultivation and self-transformation dynamics (of which filial piety is a blatant manifestation) and the merely "capable" (*nengzhe* 能者)—one would maybe speak today of highflyers or those with high potential—whose top abilities may be used in totally inappropriate ways. In order to avoid this and produce capable officials (*nengchen* 能臣) Duan emphasizes that the virtuous should control those who are simply "capable" (2017, 68).[17] In his system, the virtuous should be selected by . . . their virtuous peers (who other than the virtuous is legitimate for the task of understanding and identifying virtue. . .?) and have the power of nominating the merely capable (2017, 68-69).[18]

These excerpts can also be read in relationship to another aspect of Duan's thought, that is, his emphasis on the role of moral Masters that, he believes, has been neglected after Confucius and Mencius. Thus, Jin Xiaodong highlights that Duan broadened the classical understanding of the three bonds (*sangang*) and the Confucian five archetypes of human relationships (*wulun*) so that they become four bonds and six archetypes (*sigangliulun* 四綱六倫). In each case, the new dimension is the relation between the Master and his disciples or students (e.g., the Master becomes the mainstay of the student *shiweishenggang* 師爲生綱) (Jin 2014, 175-184, 205-207). I will not delve here into the way Duan thinks of this relationship in general but merely underscore that, as we will see later, he largely positioned himself as a master of powerful warlords and officials of his time (while emphasizing his financial independence in order not to be

[17] Another way of expressing the supremacy of the the Way and morals over the political is to say that "the transmission of the Way conditions political transmission" (*daotong zhiyue zhengtong* 道統制約正統). (Jin 2014, 169)

[18] The text is not specific about the way the virtuous should be practically selected.

instrumentalized). Without being yet able to provide definite evidence on the point, it is at least possible to advance the hypothesis that he would easily see himself as a kingmaker of the new republic.

Ascribing power to the virtuous is for Duan all the more necessary because the roots of society's problems are embedded in a crisis of confidence of the people toward corrupt politicians unable to align their discourses with practical action (2017, 69-70). Hence the necessity to be able to speak truthfully (*jiangxin* 講信), the risk being otherwise to generate non-harmonious relations (*bumu* 不睦) at all levels:

> Nowadays, the difficulties between capitalists and the workforce are linked to the lack of harmony between the two; the fact that the people want to overthrow warlords is also linked to this lack of harmony.[19]
>
> The means to eliminate this lack of harmony crystallizes on one word: restoration/cultivation (*xiu*)[20]. . . . Therefore, ancient sages, pondering on the word harmony and the way to achieve it, used another word, the word restoration/cultivation (*xiu*) that includes the idea of integrating morals and politics. What is a moral politics? It means implementing a politics of filial piety and brotherly respect. . . . If the virtuous are in power, it will be like unifying the sovereign and ministers with masters and Confucian scholars. (2017, 70)[21]

These lines do not require much comment since we fall back on the integration of morals and politics already introduced before. Let us simply complement this by saying that in his comment, Duan also insists that those in charge are capable of serving as moral exemplars (*yishenzuoze* 一身作則).

> Selecting the virtuous, appointing the capable, speaking truthfully, and restoring harmony: No matter how the political regime is transformed and society reformed, if we forget these eight characters, no one will succeed.[22] (2017, 71)

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19 像現時勞動者和資本家爲難, 就是勞資不睦, 民眾要打倒軍閥, 就是軍民不睦.

20 修睦的修字, 是物舊重修的意思.

21 化除不睦的辦法, 重在一個修字. . . 古先哲對於睦字的辦法, 下一個修字. . . 就含有德政在內. 德政是什麼, 德政就是實行孝悌之政. . . 如果選得賢者在位, 就是君相師儒合一.

22 選賢與能, 講信修睦: 無論政體如何變化, 社會如何改革, 要想離開這八個字, 誰都辦不成.

This concluding sentence encapsulates the core of Duan's political thought by differentiating between what he understands as constant truths ("the political" needs to be anchored in "the moral" under the leadership of sages) that should prevail and changing historical circumstances that cannot question or challenge these truths. Writing in the 1930s, that is to say, during a period when the future was increasingly gaining importance in order to retrospectively think the present—suffice it to mention, on the one hand, the influence of the modernization/westernization paradigm, the belief in the progress of history or the influence of all sorts of teleologies including the Marxist one, and, on the other hand, all the attacks against things old—Duan largely remained a man driven by a "regimen of historicity" (i.e., a way of articulating the past, the present, and the future) where the past kept relevance to think the present and to envision the future.[23] It is however noteworthy that this relevant past was probably much less for him history in itself than the enduring validity of a more general worldview (and cosmology) that borrowed its orientations from the ancient Confucian symbolic matrix. This might explain his degree of acceptance of social and political changes (the aforementioned excerpts show that institutional changes did not matter so much for him) as long as they could remain compatible with his value-system.

Far from mere intellectual speculations, Duan attempted to contribute to the realization of his ideals through very concrete actions and projects, a point to which we now turn.

3. Contributing to a New Society and Political Order

One of the remarkable traits of Duan Zhengyuan's action is its double orientation: on the one hand, toward circles of politicians and military men and, on the other hand, among the people (*minjian*), at the grassroots level.

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[23] On the notion of "regimen of historicity," see the seminal work of French historian François Hartog (2003).

3.1. Involvement in Circles of Power

I previously wrote about Yiguandao's patriarch Zhang Tianran, a prominent religious leader in the 1930s and 1940s (Billioud 2017, 209-240). Zhang had an incredible impact and turned the Yiguandao into a mass organization. However, it is difficult to find solid evidence or even traces of his relationship to important social and political figures of the time. This might be linked to the fact that Yiguandao is a group for which politics certainly matters but that does not aspire to reshape the social and political order. Its horizon is the longer time span of its millenarian eschatology. The situation is completely different for Duan Zhengyuan whose action is much more linked to the historical context in which he lived and to his ambition to contribute to the perpetuation of a moral and political order at a time of historical uncertainties.

Involvement in circles of power translated into numerous interactions with powerful people of the time, some of whom took him as their Master or, at least, consulted him about political matters. From this perspective, it is possible to understand why some contemporary revivalists call him "the Confucius of Modern China" (*xiandai Zhongguo Kongfuzi* 現代中國孔夫子). Not unlike Confucius travelling across the kingdoms of ancient China, he frequently travelled across the polities or fiefdoms of warlord China in order to give his advice about how the country should be managed and peace restored.

Duan Zhengyuan had for instance some exchanges in 1924 with warlord Wu Peifu 吳佩孚 (1874–1939), a prominent leader of the so-called Zhili clique, about the way to pacify and unite China. Invited by Wu in Luoyang, he tried, without success, to convince him to appropriate his ideal of the unification of morals and politics and give up the recourse to mere military might (Jin 2014, 128). In 1930, he also tried to convince Chiang Kai-shek to rule the country "by the means of moral politics" (*yidezheng zhiguo* 以德政治國) (Baoju 2015, 15). However, one of the most interesting cases of his relationships with warlords is perhaps his relationship with He Jian 何鍵 (1887–1956).

He Jian was born in 1887 in Hunan province in a modest family that nevertheless valued education and had produced some imperial

examination degree holders in previous generations. He received a combination of modern and traditional schooling, including at Changcha's Yuelu academy (McCord 2014, 113) and finally embraced a military career in the context of the 1911 Revolution. He participated to the KMT's Northern Expedition and gained a reputation thanks to his military victories and, later on, because of his anti-Communism. He Jian was able to cleverly navigate the troubled waters of KMT factional politics, earn the trust of Chiang Kai-shek, and consolidate his position as overlord of Hunan province until his demise in 1937.[24] His embrace of traditional culture preceded his encounter with Duan Zhengyuan. Thus, in 1928 He Jian was already involved in the promotion of a movement to "honour Confucius and read the classics" (*zun Kong dujing* 尊孔讀經). At the beginning of the 1930s (1931?), He Jian invited Duan Zhengyuan to visit him in Hunan in order to advise him how to handle problems of "communist banditry" and subsequently took him has his master. He would also implement some policies such as a local "New Life Movement" on the basis of Duan's recommendations (Yang 2005, 479; Fan Chunwu 2017, 147).[25] He Jian's diary regularly mentions Duan Zhengyuan. The following excerpt was part of what he wrote on May 11, 1931 after discussions with emissaries sent by Duan Zhengyuan:

> May 11, 1931, Clear weather.
> 6:30 a.m.: Practice of Taijiquan, Baguaquan.
> 7:40 a.m.: Letter written to Master Duan Zhengyuan.

[24] On He Jian, see McCord (2014, 107-146) and Yang (2005).

[25] I mentioned above the importance of the "eight virtues" (*bade*) in Duan Zhengyuan's *The Great Unity of the Political Realm*. It is noteworthy that the first four of these eight virtues are those that would be at the center of Chiang Kai-shek's New Life Movement launched in 1934. Considering (1) the importance of these virtues in Duan's thought; (2) the proximity between Duan Zhengyuan and He Jian (who actively promoted these virtues in territories he administered, along with the Confucius cult and classics reading); and (3) the exchanges on cultural and moral matters existing between He Jian (who himself wrote a lot about traditional culture and the eight virtues) and Chiang Kai-shek (e.g., in fall 1932 in Hunan), one could ask to which extent Duan Zhengyuan's ideas might have contributed to the New Life ideology of the Chiang Kai-shek's regime. Further research would be necessary to gather evidence on that point. On this point, see also Fan Chunwu (2015, 253).

8:20 a.m.: Master Duan sent Mr. Chen Yaochu, Wang Tunan, and Jiang Zhongru to visit me. The recommendation in terms of priorities for the resolution of the current political situation is to reform politics. The method is the following: (1) promoting the true and original spirit of the Chinese nation, putting into practice moral consciousness, [natural and true morals][26] in order to rectify the humane heart/mind of the people and strengthen the original vitality of the country. (2) Selecting the virtuous and the capable for the sake of a true [implementation] of the ideal of the world as a community (*tianxia weigong* 天下爲公) (3) if the previous recommendations are not taken into account and implemented, then, as a last resort, it will be necessary to consider other good policies to protect ourselves and quietly await an opportunity to be saved.

Besides, there are several means to eliminate noxious red bandits: (1) Face and explain the current situation of banditry so that the Master may [find a way to] exert a subtle influence on it [on us?][27]; (2) summon one's moral heart-mind, display spirit in order to align oneself totally with the Way of the Master so that officers and soldiers of each department also benefit from the warmth of the way; thus, heresies will be swept away and we will return to the right path. Hunan's general policy about how to cope with the current political situation should be: (1) implement the Middle Way; it is explicitly for the people but in fact it is (also) for us; (2) use the force of the central government in order to cope with the armies of Guangdong and Guangxi. This is what is considered appropriate. More than anything else, it is necessary to try our best to deal with the opposite side and only as a last resort use full military force to oppose them. (3) As regards He Jingzhi (He Yingqin), it is necessary to get in touch with him in the spirit of the Way, mentioning the responsibility to implement the Great Unity (Datong). Globally, it seems to me that what

26 There is probably a typo or a mistake in this group of words: 中天然眞道德.

27 This sounds a bit arcane and further research would be necessary to clarify the role that Duan could play here. It is well-known that many disciples believed that Duan was endowed with miraculous powers, including the ability to prevent natural disasters. Here it is not impossible to think that He Jian or the envoys of Duan that he had met on that day discussed about some sort of possible miraculous intervention of the master. I do not have any evidence, but this is in any case a possible interpretation of this sentence that would square with miraculous interventions evoked elsewhere. On these points, see Fan Chunwu (2017, 147-148).

> was discussed is the (adequate) treatment to cure the problems of the current period and I take good note of this. I have already sent a telegram to invite the Master (Duan Zhengyuan) to come to Hunan to deliver his advice. (He Jian 1993, 48)

This excerpt, though sometimes arcane (we sometimes lack background information), nevertheless provides a fascinating insight into the influence of Duan Zhengyuan and his Confucianism on prominent leaders of the Republican era, including He Jian but also He Yingqin who was at that time (since 1930) minister for military affairs of the nationalist government. From the perspective of political thought, the ideas summed up in this journal totally reflect Duan's writings discussed above: the *Great Learning neisheng-waiwang* 內聖外王 continuum is emphasized and self-cultivation is reaffirmed as the backbone of political reform ("putting into practice moral consciousness"; "in order to rectify the humane heart/mind of the people and strengthen the original vitality [*yuanqi* 元氣] of the country," etc.); practical measures encompass the selection of the virtuous and the capable, the importance of trust and cultivation of harmony; The political imagination of the Great Unity is emphasized and so is the way of the master (*shidao* 師道), reflecting the superiority of the words of sages over political elites.

Apart from this excerpt, the diary is also interesting in that it shows how a high-ranking official such as He Jian related to Duan Zhengyuan. Thus, he frequently mentions the text of the master that he is reading and on which he is taking notes. He also regularly points elsewhere in the journal to the quiet-sitting sessions (*jingzuo* 靜坐) carried out ahead of these readings. If we include the martial arts (Taijiquan and Baguaquan) practices taking place in the morning, we have in fact a rough picture of the self-cultivation regimen of a prominent disciple of Duan.

Another famous disciple of Duan Zhengyuan, He Yingqin 何應欽 (1890–1987), is mentioned here in He Jian's diary. To a large extent, his relationship to Duan Zhengyuan seems to echo He Jian's. Thus, Fan Chunwu explains that after he had become Duan's disciple, He Yingqin was given pieces of advice by his Master about the way to

get rid of the communist soviet base on the Fujian-Jiangxi border. But we also have elements that potentially further broaden the scope of Duan's involvement in "big history": in a context where, following the Mudken incident, He Yingqin was assuming responsibility for the military situation in Beijing, he seems to have followed Duan's recommendations to look for peace with the Japanese ("Asian countries should no longer fight one another"). Thus, the "armistice" signed with the Japanese (Tanggu truce?) and the conclusion of the "He-Umezu" agreement (何梅協定) signed in Tianjin between He and his Japanese counterparts would have also been advocated by Duan (Fan Chunwu 2017, 146-147).[28]

Duan's political thought was not only an intellectual reaction to a wave of modernization, westernization, and emancipation epitomized by the May Fourth or the New Culture Movements (broadly understood). His discourse was also a timely source of updated symbols—i.e., classical political views and discursive symbols reformulated to take into account the new Republican context—re-invigorating the political horizon and imagination of conservatives whose worldviews had largely remained fashioned by Confucianism and its value system. In fact, the "market" for such a reprocessed classical/Confucian political imagination was broad in Republican China (much broader than what the "total iconoclasm" narrative sometimes leads us to feel) and, delving into the itineraries of warlords and strongmen of the political stage of the time (He Jian and He Yingqin here but also Yan Xishan, Chen Jitang, Chiang Kai-shek, Dai Jitao, Wang Jingwei, etc.), it would probably not be too difficult to show that many—most of them outside of Communist ranks?—were highly receptive to this kind of discourse. A charismatic figure such as Duan had the ability to instill new life into ancient political utopias and turn them into a

[28] The He-Umezu agreement was a secret agreement between China and Japan according to awhich Japan gained a *de facto* control over Hebei province. I do not have so far any solid element to crosscheck the validity of the pieces of information provided in Fan's paper (primarily based on the Moral Studies Society's society literature) and the real importance of the role of Duan Zhengyuan in these negotiations with the Japanese. On He Yingqin, see also Peter Worthing (2016). However, Worthing does not tell much about the relationships between He and Duan Zhengyuan or He and Confucianism.

quasi-religious creeds appropriated and integrated by disciples such as He Jian within their self-cultivation regimen and, afterwards, their political action.

Duan's influence was not limited to circles of power. As mentioned before, his global understanding of the way to save the nation also fueled his *jiaohua* (education/transformation) enterprises at the grassroots level.

3.2 Duan's Jiaohua *Enterprises*

The Daode Xueshe was not Duan Zhengyuan's first *jiaohua* entity. A research society focusing on morals, rites, and human relationships (*Lunli daode yanjiuhui* 倫禮道德研究會) had already been opened in Chengdu in 1912. In a way which is not without formally echoing the Christian model, members gathered each Saturday in order to listen to Duan Zhengyuan's lectures on morals.[29] Before that, they would eat a vegetarian meal and participate in a self-examination session during which they had to recall and ponder over their deeds of the past week, repent and attend a ritual ceremony in front of Confucius's tablet. . . . Things seemed to develop well but in 1914 Duan decided to leave and go to Beijing anticipating that, due to the proximity of all kinds of powerful elites, his enterprise could take a completely different dimension (Jin 2014, 135-136):

> I have heard that today's government intends to reform things that do not work, that the people expect a Republic of the five nations. . . . Not doing this [moving to Beijing] is impossible; I simply have to accomplish my task (Jin 2014, 137).

Commenting on these words of Duan Zhengyuan, Jin Xiaodong (2014, 137) emphasizes that the main incentive to go to Beijing was to implement his ideal of unity of the political and the moral. Beijing would give him the social and political capital lacking in Sichuan and neces-

[29] On the importance of Christianity as a normative model in Republican China, see Goossaert and Palmer (2011, 73-79).

sary for any further expansion while providing a convenient basis for his *jiaohua* activities.

The Daode Xueshe was officially established in 1916 in Beijing with Duan Zhengyuan as its Master. Its Director and patron was Wang Shizhen 王士珍 (Wang Pinqing 王聘卿 1861–1930) who had been Minister of War and Premier of China from 1917 to 1918 (and at some point involved, along with Kang Youwei, in the 1917 attempt by Zhang Xun 張勳 to restore Pu Yi as Emperor). A number of key members of the Daode Xueshe were politicians and military cadres, many of whom had studied in Japan. Among them were Chen Jingnan (Chen Raochu 陳堯初, Chen Quansan 陳全三 1881–?), a graduate from Waseda University who became a member of congress, and Lei Baokang 雷保康 (雷壽榮), a graduate from the Imperial Japanese Army Academy and Lieutenant-General.[30] Fan Chunwu emphasizes that Duan Zhengyuan originally managed to attract a number of Beiyang officials, starting with Wang Shizhen, thanks to his (quasi-magical) healing abilities, which nuances the merely rational image of Confucianism often available in existing research about the society (Fan 2017, 136, 143).[31] Incidentally, one could underscore that the same ability to heal also contributed to popularize the figure of Wang Fengyi 王鳳儀 (1864–1937), the leader of one of the other main redemptive societies with a Confucian orientation of the Republican era, the Universal Morality Society. At a time when "science" was becoming a totem, it is as if quasi-magical healing had also contributed to drive the Confucian modern.

The objectives of the Daode Xueshe were the promotion of the way of Confucius in order to advocate the Great Unity and, ultimately, universal peace. In other words, they perfectly reflected the political imagination developed in Duan's writings throughout the years and that was briefly introduced above. Given the number of high-ranking officials, including military officials, that joined its ranks,

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30 As mentioned above, other prominent figures of the Republican era such as He Jian or He Yingqin also later took Duan Zhengyuan as their Master but I am not able at that point to clarify to which extent they actively supported or were involved in the activities of the Moral Studies Society. Fan Chunwu (2017, 142-149; 2011, 165).

31 Fan Chunwu emphasizes the religious charisma of Duan Zhengyuan and the religious dimension of his organization.

the society could have easily benefitted from public funds, but Duan Zhengyuan always refused to proceed in that way and preferred to rely on membership contributions. This probably helped him to keep some independence vis-à-vis the authorities. However, this decision did not stem from any modern concern about the need to circumscribe and differentiate spheres of activities. As was mentioned before, Duan's worldview totally endorsed and even advocated the intertwinement of the moral and the political. Simply stated, morals—and its embodiment, the figure of the sage—should prevail within such an intertwinement. Financial independence was probably the price to pay to protect the sage's role in relation to the political.

From the end of the 1910s to the 1930s, the Moral Studies Society opened branches across the country and, among other places, in Nanjing (1917), Hankou (1918), Zhangjiagkou, Hangzhou (1925), Shanghai and Suzhou (1925), Jiaxing, Ningbo, Xuzhou (1925), Fengtian (1930), Tianjin (1935), Taiyuan (1934), Xi'an (1937) and so on. Altogether, at least 83 branches (in the countryside some were named Yueshushi 閱書室) would have been opened with Beijing as the headquarters of the group (Jin 2014, 137-151, 249-251).

Recorded accounts of people who participated, directly or through relatives in the activities of the society provide insights about how things were organized. Thus, a retired teacher recalls memories of 1946 when he moved to Xi'an with his father, a merchant deeply involved in the society's activities. He mentions a number of branches that were opened in the area along with schools (*zhonghe xiaoxue* 中和小學) where traditional morals and education/transformation (*jiaohua*) could be promoted. It is noteworthy that some of the redemptive societies with a Confucian orientation (here, we have the case of the Morals Studies Societies, but this would also apply to the Universal Morality Society) chose to open schools as a means to expand their activities. Such a pattern is long-lasting since it can still be observed today in the framework of the Confucian revival in China.

The retired teacher also mentioned that among the regular activities the group organized conferences about the Dao (*jiang Dao* 講道) on Sundays that were opened to a large outer public as well as a number of ritual sessions: thus, on the first, eleventh, and twenty-

first days of the lunar calendar, the societies' members (*xueyuan* 學員) all gathered in the main hall of the society's premises and performed kowtow rituals (*sanguijiukou* 三跪九叩) in front of paintings of Confucius, Mencius, and Laozi as well as pictures of Duan Zhengyuan. Meals shared on these days were also vegetarian, as they were in Sichuan a few decades before. Interestingly, a number of the activities of this Xi'an Daode Xueshe group, especially in the educational realm, could continue until 1958 (Jin 2014, 145-147).

The recollections of another elder of the group from the village of Shangyanghua 上陽化 located in the West of Xi'an complements the first account. The local branch of the society was opened in 1937 and activities took place first in a traditional school (*sishu*) operated by one of the members before being delocalized to a local temple. Gathering days, lectures and ritual modalities, refusal to count on any other financial resource than that of the followers, all those patterns corroborate what was already mentioned above. This, group also had its special characteristics: it engaged in operations to suppress opium consumption (lectures and supply of some sort of medicine—the account is not very precise); and also operated a school (*zhonghe xiaoxue* 中和小學). All these activities were not for profit, carried out by volunteers of the group (Jin 2014, 147-150).

Apart from the specific activities of its branches, the Moral Studies Society also operated a publishing house located in Beijing (Dacheng Yinshushe 大成印書社) with local branches. Fan Chunwu's research emphasizes the importance of this activity and the way the society managed to "combine modern, capitalist publishing technologies and marketing systems with the traditional market of morality books" (Fan 2017, 153). In brief, the group was extremely efficient in the massive dissemination of its literature, which was another way of serving its *jiaohua* ambitions.

Conclusion

In the last 15 years quite a lot of research has been produced about "redemptive societies" with attempts to define the category, circum-

scribe its realms of application and, to some extent, differentiate between the different types of groups. The case of the Moral Studies Society and its founder, especially if we compare it with groups such as the Yiguandao, provides some elements that may help us to further refine the category. It seems to me that we could at least distinguish between two types of groups (or two ideal-types of groups) operating in Republican China: (a) those that are primarily conveying an ideology (including an eschatology) where the ultimate ambition is the salvation of mankind; this doesn't mean that these groups are necessarily devoid of any political or social ambition, but at least that they advocate a grand salvation project where a largely ahistorical eschatology and a strong otherworldly dimension prevail; besides, although the historical context may immensely favor their development, they were not emerging as direct reactions against such a historical context. The Yiguandao is a typical example of groups encompassed in such a category; (b) The second type points to those groups for which the immediate objective is less the salvation of mankind before an apocalypse (even though that dimension might also exist) than salvation of the nation and culture at a time of crisis. These groups (e.g. the Moral Studies Society, the Universal Morality Society, the Heart-cleansing Society, the Confucian Religion Association, etc.) primarily have blatant social and political orientations and often (but maybe not always) a very pronounced "Confucian flavor."[32] They are largely reactions—modern reactions, at least to some extent—to a specific historical context that includes the arrival of (Western) modernity with its plurality (some would say its relativism) in the realm of values and process of differentiation in the realm of human activities. In sum, they were both modern fruits of the context (be it formally, in the way they were structured, or due to some of their specific stances, for instance regarding the role of women[33]) and

[32] This in no case means that the first group doesn't promote Confucianism (thus, it is also a central teaching for the Yiguandao).

[33] The work of Prasenjit Duara on the Manchukuo provides some very interesting treatment of the way an organization such as the Universal Morality Society promoted women education (Duara 2003). Duan Zhengyuan also paid a lot of attention to the issue of women.

reactions to this context (especially in the educative, moral, and political realms).

Duan Zhengyuan's thought and enterprises (be it in elite circles or at the grassroots level) not only reflect an opposition to total westernization narratives sometimes typical of some participants in the May Fourth Movement and their heirs. They in fact took shape as a direct reaction against these narratives and against what was perceived as a loss of moral compass. This does not mean that Duan does not garb his promotion of a Confucian political imagination in a veil of modernity. But he belongs to a more global trend of thinkers, political and religious activists who emphasized the limits of Western-style modernization and the need to preserve local spiritual and moral traditions often deemed superior to the overarching Faustian greed of the West. Thus, to some extent, Duan Zhengyuan is also part of a global history that encompasses figures as different as Jamal al-din al-Afghani in the Muslim world, Rabindranath Tagore, Aurobindo Ghose and even Gandhi in India or Liang Qichao and Liang Shuming in China.[34] All of them, though not necessarily to the same extent and with the same means and agendas, both incorporated the Western modernization discourse and tried to oppose its transformative impact on value-systems shaping their worldviews.

Interestingly, there is currently in Mainland China a posterity of Duan Zhengyuan and its Morality Society. It does not take the same popular form as the Yiguandao that now operates again in the country (most of the Morality Society's activities seem to have ceased after 1952) but is obvious in the academic world, especially in those circles where academic activities and Confucian activism overlap. It seems that Duan's thought has become or has the potential to become a source of inspiration for those dreaming to infuse an extra dose of Confucian imagination into the China dream and contribute, by reactivating ancient ideal such as the great unity, to the promotion of a "universality with Chinese characteristics."

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[34] On this topic, see Pankaj Mishra (2012).

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Reflections on Lao Sze-Kwang and His Double-Structured "Intracultural" Philosophy of Culture*

Roger T. Ames**

Abstract

In his own time, Lao Sze-Kwang formulated his own intra-cultural approach to the philosophy of culture that begins from the interdependence and organic nature of our cultural experience. In this essay, I address three questions: Why did Lao abandon his early reliance on the Hegelian model of philosophy of culture and formulate his own "two- structured" theory? Again, given Lao's profound commitment and contribution to Chinese philosophy and its future directions, why is it not proper to describe him as a "Chinese philosopher?" And why is the much accomplished Lao Sze-Kwang not installed in the CUHK pantheon as yet one more of the great "New Confucian" philosophers (*xinruxuejia* 新儒學家) to be associated with this institution?

Keywords: intra-cultural, philosophy of culture, Hegel, New-Confucian philosophers, double-structured philosophy of culture, "aspectual" language

* I have benefitted from the critical comments of two peer reviewers and have made several important revisions to this article based on their suggestions.

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Lao Sze-Kwang 勞思光 (1927–2012) was an "*intra*-cultural" philosopher. As the progeny of a distinguished and much accomplished family lineage, Lao in his early years had had the benefit of a traditional Chinese education that set the foundation for his continuing studies. Then he attended Peking University and National Taiwan University for his studies in philosophy. Beyond this formal training, he as a consummate teacher over a long lifetime continued to pursue his prodigious intellectual intimacy with both the Western and Chinese philosophical canons. He was thus philosophically ambidextrous, as comfortable with Confucius as he was with Kant. And through an assiduous personal discipline, his singular contribution to the best kind of "*intra*-cultural" or "world philosophy" has made him one of most distinguished philosophers of culture in our times.

I use this neologism "*intra*-cultural" in describing Lao's philosophy of culture to distinguish his hard-won approach from the presuppositions of those who would classify their avocation as "*com*-parative" or "inter-cultural" philosophy. The prefixs "com-" (or co-) and "inter-" suggest a joint, external and open relationship that conjoins two or more separate and in some sense comparable entities. "*Intra*-" on the other hand, as "on the inside," "within," references internal and constitutive relations contained within a given entity itself—in this case, philosophy. In this essay, I will argue that for Lao Sze-Kwang, philosophy in all of its complexity, is one thing.

Of course, this same perception of Lao's understanding of philosophy as "one thing" is much remarked upon by many of his colleagues and students. Favorite targets of Lao Sze-Kwang's ire were the romantic and idealizing traditionalists, who in advocating for Chinese philosophy, exaggerated its moral profundities while ignoring its cognitive, analytic, and scientific limits. For Lao, these partisans, rather than using reason and rigor to enlighten their interrogation, used it only to rationalize the dictates of their occulted ethnocentrism. Lau Kwok-ying 劉國英, for example, remembers his teacher's exhortations:

> Professor Lao would constantly remind us: We should not and cannot set China up in contrast to the world (the May Fourth reformers who advocated for complete Westernization and the traditional

> cultural purists were both guilty of making this same mistake). We can only see the way forward for Chinese culture from the vantage point of "China in the world."[1]

Cheng Chung-yi 鄭宗義 in his reflections on Lao's attitude toward Confucianism makes the same point:

> Professor Lao would repeatedly stress that it is only when we deliberate upon and analyze Chinese philosophy within the context of world philosophy (or universal philosophical problems) that we begin to fathom its real meaning.[2]

I want to appeal to Lao's *intra*-cultural approach to the philosophy of culture to address three questions: Why did Lao abandon his early reliance on the Hegelian model of philosophy of culture and formulate his own "two-structured" theory? Again, given Lao's profound commitment and contribution to Chinese philosophy and its future directions, is it not proper to describe him as a "Chinese philosopher?" And why is the much accomplished Lao Sze-Kwang not installed in the CUHK pantheon as yet one more of the great "New Confucian" philosophers (*xinruxuejia* 新儒學家) to be associated with this institution?

Lao Sze-Kwang was not alone in reading Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* as a philosophy of culture. The distinguished philosopher Albert William Levi also observes:

> The publication of the *Phenomenology* in 1807 was, in short, an unprecedented philosophic event. The work is so rich, and it has had such an ambiguous and controversial destiny since Hegel's time that it is easy to forget just where its epoch making character lay, and this, I think, was not as most believe in its dialectic or its absolute idealism or in its theory of development as such, but rather in that

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1 See Lau Kwok-ying (2003, 28). 勞先生不斷提醒我們: 我們不要也不能把中國與世界對立起 (五四時的全盤西化論與傳統主義者都犯上這同一錯誤), 我們要從《世界裏的中國》的高度, 才可望爲中國文化找到新的出路.

2 See Cheng Chung-yi (2003, 58). 勞先生再三強調必須將中國哲學放在一世界哲學 (或曰普遍的哲學問題) 的配景中來考量評析, 始能充分揭示出其中的涵義.

> here for the first time since Aristotle the subject of philosophizing is taken to be neither a particular science nor an aspect of social living, nor a segment of external nature, but the entire range and compass of human culture as a total and developing entity. (Levi 1984, 447)

Lao's own earliest forays into philosophy of culture are found in his *Shaozuoji* 少作集 (Early Works) and in his original 1965 *Zhongguo wenhua yaoyi* 中國文化要義 (The Essentials of Chinese Culture). Lao was steeped in German idealism and, sharing the same exuberance as Levi expresses here for Hegel's genius, in these early works relied heavily on Hegel. Specifically, and on his own reckoning, Lao was deeply committed to a Hegelian teleologically-driven "externalization" model of culture where the higher objective spirit overcomes and "externalizes" (*waizaihua* 外在化) the lower subjective spirit within the dialectical evolution of human culture. In this commitment to Hegel's model, Lao saw himself as walking the same road as his contemporary New Confucian philosophers, Tang Junyi 唐君毅 and Mou Zongsan 牟宗三 (Lao 2003, 277). But in the fullness of time and with his own going philosophical reflection, Lao found that Hegel and his teleological dialectic could not answer many of his questions about cultural diversity, and most importantly, his concerns about the integrity of Chinese culture and its future directions. At the same time, under the influence of Kant, perhaps, he grew suspicious of the metaphysical assumptions of his contemporaries, Tang and Mou, who in their work were much enamored of German idealism.

What then were Lao's reservations about Hegel's philosophy of culture? Beyond his panegyric on Hegel rehearsed above, Levi goes on to give a summary of the several dialectical stages in Hegel's philosophy of culture that will assist us in understanding Lao's reluctance to stay with the Hegelian model as Lao's own thinking about philosophy of culture continued to develop and mature. Levi explains the Hegelian cultural dialectic in the following terms:

> The new direction taken by Hegel is based upon the central conviction that the human spirit is the proper subject of philosophy and that the general character of spirit will differentiate itself in

> a series of cultural forms or phases of development culminating in philosophy. Subjective spirit is the lowest level: it includes sensory knowledge and reasoning, mathematics and the natural sciences. Objective spirit is the intermediate stage: it includes all that makes for the institutional life of man including law, ethics, political philosophy and world history. Absolute spirit is the culminating stage and it includes art, religion, and philosophy. (1984, 277)

What is of greatest moment in Hegel's philosophy of culture is its assumption that because truth must be whole, the evolution of human culture is a synthetic development in search of its culmination as a holistic vision of the human experience. Said another way, Hegel is convinced that common institutionalized cultural expressions in art, religion, and philosophy as the highest level of the human cultural experience are superior to all subjectivity and individuality. Again, in Levi's words:

> Hegel's view is that philosophic experience is of intrinsic value, not merely because it is in sharpest contrast to the thinking of the mathematician and natural scientist, but because its essence is a nisus toward wholeness—because it is a forming and a synthetic activity. Because philosophy knows that "truth is the whole" (*das Wahre ist das Ganze*), it attempts, perhaps fruitlessly, but at least courageously, to know the whole truth about human culture. . . . (1984, 277)

A fundamental and much remarked ambiguity in the methodology of Hegel's philosophy of culture is his dualistic juxtaposition and appeal to a seemingly static logically and structurally ordered whole on the one hand, and on the other to the temporally driven history of human culture in which such forms are manifested in the lives of conscious individuals. Hegel is certainly systematic, but there seem to be clearly two competing senses of system: the logical ordered cultural forms and institutions available for conceptual analysis, and the exploration of the human cultural experience as an historical phenomenon within a determinate historical tradition.

While keenly aware of this tension in Hegel's methodology, Levi gives Hegel his best argument in claiming that perhaps both systems

are necessary to do justice to the complex nature of the human experience itself. As Levi observes:

> But opposite as they are in terms of categorial analysis, cultural forms and cultural history are cognate dimensions of a single comprehensive "experience" of mankind, and they provide respectively the genetic and the morphological theory of a comprehensive cultural reality. (1984, 453)

And while Hegel's eliding of logic and history might be a source of ambiguity for us, on one interpretation of Hegel at least, his commitment to a strong, objective principle of teleology as an *a priori* concept provides the explanatory principle needed to discipline our empirical investigations and carry us beyond the limits of our empirical sciences. Hegel's strong teleology that is decidedly theological in its cast would bring logic and history together by conceptualizing both nature and history as having an inherent logical necessity.

The limitations, univocity, and the exclusions that the Hegelian model of the philosophy of culture brought with it were not lost on Lao Sze-Kwang. This kind of teleological necessity, for Lao, contrasts with the special and distinctive occupation of the "orientative" (*yindaoxing zhexue* 引導性哲學) Chinese philosophical tradition that has a continuing open-ended emphasis upon personal and world transformation. It was thus that in Lao's own evolving philosophy of culture at least, Hegel lost his hold on an honest philosopher who was quite comfortable in changing his mind and quite capable of deliberately formulating a more capacious theory that would serve his own intellectual needs. We might summarize the gist of Lao's reflections on his intellectual development that led him away from Hegel as he remembers his own philosophical growth and transition in his preface to the 1998 second edition of the *Zhongguo wenhua yaoyi xinbian* 中國文化要義新編 (The Essentials of Chinese Culture: Newly Revised).

In his prefatory remarks, Lao certainly appreciates the power of the Hegelian model to conceptualize and explain the process of a single culture's evolution. But he is also worried that when we want to

distinguish between a specific culture's growth and development and the mutual influence that obtains among various ostensibly distinctive cultures—how these cultures influence and draw upon each other —we encounter questions that Hegel's dialectic cannot answer. Hegel can perhaps say something about the unique spirit of Chinese culture and how this culture undergoes a process of "externalization" to assume its objective institutional forms and achieve its complete cultural life. But how is Hegel going to explain the evolving way forward for Chinese philosophy and culture? From Hegel's holistic and synthetic point of view, cultural differences among either individuals or groups are in fact only a matter of degree rather than kind. Hence, in the light of Hegel's theory, if Chinese culture has modernization as its goal, it will have to understand its own evolution in terms of growing the fruits of a modernized Western culture. Moreover, as Lao observes, such an outcome has in fact been advocated in so many of the competing efforts to modernize China from the May Fourth down to the present—that is, a commitment to a thoroughgoing Westernization. Scholars who would resist such wholesale colonization, emphasizing as they do the intrinsic value of traditional Chinese philosophy and culture, and who thus want to preserve its distinctive spirit in undergoing any kind of change, are left behind. For Lao, these two positions—preserve the distinctive and substantial contributions of Chinese philosophy and yet at the same time, modernize to become wholly Western—are contradictory and cannot accommodate each other. And Lao was not ready to embrace the idea that traditional Chinese values will recede and whither as Chinese culture is subsumed into the Western canopy. Indeed, Lao rejected fundamentally what still continues to be the profound asymmetry of our own historical moment in the accelerating evolution of a changing world cultural order: that is, for the younger generation of Chinese themselves and their western counterparts who have little interest in Chinese philosophy and culture, there is an uncritical assumption that modernization is westernization.

Appealing to the language that Lao's contemporary, Tang Junyi, has drawn from *Yijing* cosmology—"the inseparability of the one and the many" (*yiduobufenguan* 一多不分觀)—it is clear that Hegel's philo-

sophy of culture, entailing as it does clear traces of an old theology, provides us with the "one" Absolute Spirit as it is synthesized from the "inter-cultural" "many" as the singular ultimate goal of the evolution of human culture: "the separation of the one and many" (*yiduoweier* 一多爲二). Lao on the other hand embraces a model of philosophy of culture that would resist this strong teleology by insisting upon the inseparability of the one and the many in the evolution of distinctive yet hybridic traditions. That is, Lao wants the "*intra*-" rather than the "inter-cultural" model in which vital cultures and their philosophies remain distinctive and yet are organically related to and have influence upon each other as always unique aspects of a complex, continuous, unbounded organism called philosophy itself.

In formulating his own philosophy of culture, Lao introduces an important distinction between the actual creation of culture as "initiation" (*chuangsheng* 創生) and cultural borrowings as "imitation" (*mofang* 模仿) that serves him in preserving the cultural integrity of the Chinese tradition. For Lao, the initiating processes of our cultural histories are fundamentally creative and are not a process of reduplication. On the other hand, if a particular cultural form has already been initiated—the introduction of a particular institution, for example—it requires borrowing and imitation from the population of a second culture who want to incorporate this same form into their cultural *ethos*. For Lao, the changes that have been occurring within Chinese culture are a largely matter of such learning and imitation, and they do not constitute the "initiative" process of creating a completely new stable cultural structure that Hegel's model would assume. Importantly, while endorsing cultural borrowing as a resource for enriching our philosophical narratives, an immediate corollary of Lao's *intra*-cultural philosophy is that the integrity guaranteed by the "initiation" nature of culture precludes the simple interpretation and assessment of one tradition in terms of another.

As another step in formulating his own theory of culture, Lao appropriates and adapts Talcott Parsons' sociological model of "internalization" (*neizaihua* 內在化) for his philosophy of culture as a counterweight to Hegel's "externalization"—that is, internalization as the process of one culture learning from and imitating the contents of

a second culture. Parsons argues that the source of social behaviors, institutional structures, and whole cultures is an external experience in the sense that it is the product of internalizing what other people or other cultures have themselves internalized.

In Parsons' own words, "the function of pattern-maintenance refers to the imperative of maintaining the stability of the patterns of institutionalized culture defining the structure of the system" (1985, 159). The internalization of culture is an important aspect of this function of pattern-maintenance at the level of the individual or of individual cultures. Parsons (1985, 141) notes that "internalization of a culture pattern is not merely knowing it as an object of the external world; it is incorporating it into the actual structure of the personality as such."

In formulating his own philosophy of culture, Lao wants to retain autonomy and cultural integrity on the one hand and allow for the growth available to us through our organically related social and cultural realities on the other. For Lao, the first "aspect" (*mianxiang* 面相)—and his deliberate appeal to inclusive "aspectual" rather than exclusive analytic language is significant—has intuition or self or cultural consciousness as its root, and out of this comes the externalization of the structures that shape the spirit of culture and gives rise to the cultural life itself. And the second aspect takes the mutually influencing social and cultural realities as its root, and out of this comes the internalization of the structures that shape our world of experience and our cultural consciousness. Together these two aspects provide us with what he calls the necessary elements for a "panoramic picture of culture" (*wenhuaquanjing* 文化全景), where neither aspect can take the place of the other.

Lao calls his own philosophy of culture a "double-structured theory" (*shuangchong jiegouguan* 雙重結構觀), and in formulating his theory about these two structures, insists that while each has its own proper function, it also has its functional limits. Importantly, we might say that Lao would regard the Hegelian teleologically-driven dialectic of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, and the Parsonian individualistic and realist model of internalization as each having its own functional limitations. Far from "combining" Hegel and Parsons,

Lao rather replaces them with an aspectual, correlative, and holistic model that we might capture in the "forming and functioning" (*tiyong* 體用) language of an always emergent, hybridic cultural order, a familiar cosmological vocabulary appealed to ubiquitously in explaining the evolution of Chinese culture broadly.[3]

David Hall and I in our own reflections on how to think about the relations among distinctive cultures—perhaps the most important question that Lao ponders for himself—were also adverse to overly determinate teleological models. And we ourselves arrived at a position on "the value of vagueness" that I think in many ways but in a different language, resonates with Lao's "*intra*-cultural" conclusions. We formulated our argument in *Anticipating China* in the following terms:

> Our claim is that there is no plausible argument distinguishing, in any final sense, cultures and their languages. The conclusion we draw from this is that there is only one language (at most) and one culture (at most), and that many of the paradoxes involved in interpreting across cultural boundaries are dissolved when one recognizes there is but a single field of significance that serves as a background from which individual languages and cultures are foregrounded. (Hall and Ames 1995, 166)

Far from making any kind of a universalistic claim here, we are arguing for the primacy of relationality and the value of complexity and vagueness. We insist that first at the level of the theoretical and practical distinction:

> The comparative philosopher, at least as much as the intracultural thinker, must be aware that the important questions do not so much involve the translation of a term from one semantic context to another, but its translation into (or from) practice. . . . We must be at

[3] Lau Kwok-ying summarizes the sequencing of Lao's internalization and externalization dynamic in some detail with the process of transitioning from belief to thought being the internal dimension and from custom to institutionalization being the external dimension. See Lau (2003, 3-4, ft. 1).

> least as concerned with the rationalization of practices and their illustration of ideas and beliefs as we are with "defining our terms." (1995, 173)

Again, our focus-field theory of philosophy of culture like Lao's "double-structured theory" can also be explained in the holographic and aspectual vocabulary of "forming and functioning" (*tiyong* 體用) and Tang Junyi's postulate, "the inseparability of the one and the many" (*yiduobufen* 一多不分):

> A productively vague model of cultures would construe them as local distortions of a general field which is itself without specifiable boundary conditions. This focus/field model contrasts readily with both positivist and idealist models by offering an alternative sense of abstraction. . . . Any "part" abstracted from the whole adumbrates the whole. As a consequence, the partiality of the elements of a cultural field advertises the complexity of the field. (1995, 178)

We in our own work like Lao have aspired to be "*intra*-cultural" philosophers for whom the subject of philosophy itself, far from being fragmented by focusing on the comparison among, or the conjoining of erstwhile discrete elements, is one complex thing. For us too, philosophy having no outside, can be reconnoitered only from within. Philosophizing so conceived is a kind of Wittgensteinian "criss-crossing": the selecting and correlating of some episodes of insight from among the boundless many within the wholeness and continuity of our ever-evolving personal and philosophical narrative.

Hegel in positing his strongly teleological philosophy of culture is in many ways making explicit (if not overdetermining) what is implicit in the traditional understanding of the term "culture" itself—that is, the traditional understanding of culture as it has evolved under the influence of Western cultural metaphors in the European languages. We might begin from first acknowledging that it is our horticulture and husbanding occupations with their strong teleological presuppositions that serve as the metaphors underlying our term "culture." Such assumptions are wont to persuade us uncritically that the "cultivation" of "culture" has to do with conserving, nurturing, and

actualizing a specific set of inborn potentialities that are driven by a given *telos* or inherent design. As I observed above, Hegel's strong teleology with its seemingly theological implications brings logic and history together by conceptualizing both nature and history as having an inherent logical necessity. Simply put, calves are raised to become cows and seed corn is cultivated to become cornfields, and clearly seed corn cannot grow into pigs nor can pigs grow into wheat fields.[4] I want to suggest that it is because we are influenced by, if not default to, these same kind of generic, teleological assumptions in how we are given to think about the actualization of human culture broadly that we stand in danger of uncritically projecting just such an understanding onto the Chinese tradition when in fact "culture" as *wenhua* 文化 within this alternative context seems to be grounded in a much more open-ended, aesthetic and hence particularistic metaphor for the evolution of culture.

In his *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Raymond Williams (1976) famously describes "culture" as one of the two or three most complicated terms in the English language. He attributes this complexity in part to the relative recency with which the meaning of "culture" has been metaphorically extended from its original sense of the physical processes of nurturing and cultivation—that is, the perhaps mundane yet vital practices of horticulture and husbandry—to point toward a characteristic mode of human material, intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic development. Just as our commonsense would dictate, we tend to see these horticultural and husbanding practices as teleologically motivated and determined in bringing to fruition characteristic forms inherent in the objects of cultivation, where human intervention serves as both a source of discipline and control, and as an external facilitation. The assumption is that the plant or animal will flourish if it is protected, unimpeded, and properly nourished.

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4 Of course, our various and complex ecologies challenge such severe distinctions. Maize, cracked corn, cobs, and husks too can be an integral part of good pig feed, and deep-pit swine finishing manure can serve as an ideal top-dress fertilizer for the wheat fields early in the spring growing season. There is much room to argue that corn does become pigs, and pigs do become fields of wheat.

According to Williams, it was only in the eighteenth century that "culture" was first used consistently to denote the entire "way of life" of a people, and only in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that it was identified with specific civilization-distinguishing patterns of practices and values. In this latter case, it was used in the context of theories of progressive "social evolution" as something that sets apart and divides societies, making one "culture" more advanced than another. One contemporary vestige of this sense of contest among evolving populations is the contemporary media's frequent characterization of multicultural tensions in the curricula of our educational institutions as "culture wars."

As in Europe, there was no single term in the languages of the premodern Sinitic cultures—Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese—that had a conceptual reach comparable to that of our modern, extended uses of the word "culture." But the term that emerged to be used throughout this geographical region in the nineteenth century to translate and appropriate this modern Western concept differs markedly in its metaphorical implications from those assumed with the English word "culture." While the languages of the traditionally agrarian Asian societies abound with terms that, like "culture," are rooted in instrumental physical processes of cultivation and nourishing (for example, *yang* 養, *xu/chu* 畜, *pei* 培, *xiu* 修, *yu* 育, *zai* 栽 and so many more), these terms are bypassed as points of metaphorical departure in favor of *wenhua* 文化—a compound expression that combines the characters for the "transforming" (*hua* 化) effected by "the inscribing and embellishing processes undertaken by literary, civil, and artistic traditions" (*wen* 文). Whereas metaphorically rooting "culture" in practices of plant and animal domestication invites us to see cultural norms as having a transcendent disciplinary force with respect to that which is being "cultured," *wen* was understood (with significant political implications) as the disclosing processes of civilization: that is, of *collaborating* with nature's beauty, *elaborating* upon it, *elevating* it, and *achieving* a decidedly aesthetic if not spiritual product, rather than as merely regulating its spontaneous growth.

As is demonstrated by its provenance in texts dating to the Han dynasty (202 BCE–220 CE), the term *wenhua* itself is an ancient one.

Wenhua as a modern Japanese kanji term that translates "culture" is a term derived from classical Chinese that first appears explicitly as early as the court bibliographer Liu Xiang's 劉向 (77–6 BCE) *Shuoyuan* 說苑 (Garden of Stories): "It is only when civilizing efforts do not bring the people up to the appropriate standards that punishments are to be imposed."[5] And, by at least the fifth century, Chinese literary theorists such as Liu Xie 劉勰 (465?–522?) associated human *wen* practices explicitly with the self-arising (*ziran* 自然) and ceaselessly creative dynamics (*shengsheng buxi* 生生不息) of the natural world (*dao* 道), affirming that nature and nurture far from being in opposition, were rather a co-evolving, contrapuntal process understood to be at the heart of realizing a symbiotic and mutually entailing, natural, and societal harmony.

This disparity between European and Asian languages in the cultural metaphors in which "culture" is embedded—teleologically informed versus fundamentally open-ended, aesthetic sensibilities—is certainly related to a persistent, skewed understanding and application of "creativity" in the Abrahamic traditions in which an *ex nihilo* creativity properly belongs to a self-sufficient Creator God.[6] Indeed, such ex nihilo creativity when exercised by the idiosyncratic and audacious human genius—Goethe's Faust, Shelley's Frankenstein, Milton's Satan, Nietzsche's Uebermensch—is dark, dangerous, and deliciously depraved—a promethean offense against God's natural and moral order. Even in our contemporary times of radical innovations, we do not usually associate the word "creativity" with the core human occupations of religion, morality, science, and philosophy that have a strong teleological cast. Instead, this term "creativity" prompts the more marginal aesthetic interests such as the creative arts and the writing of "fiction." While we might be inclined (although probably at a safe distance) to admire the rakish charms of someone deemed "morally creative" or be intrigued by the intensity of devotees in the performance of the colorful rituals of some "new" or exotic

5 文化不改, 然後加誅.

6 As *Psalms* 24 insists: "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, it is He that has made us and not we ourselves."

religion, we find that in Confucian role ethics singular value is invested in the moral imagination needed to inspire real artistry in our moral lives and our human-centered religiousness. Indeed, in the classical Chinese tradition, the Confucian project as it is defined in the cosmology of the core canonical texts such as the *Yijing* 易經 (Book of Changes) or *Zhongyong* 中庸 (Focusing the Familiar) requires of human beings as the heart-and-mind of the cosmos (*tiandizhixin* 天地之心) nothing less than both the imagination and the refinement to stand together with the heavens and the earth as co-creators of the cosmos.

Reflecting further on the genealogy of *wen*, dating back more than a millennium earlier than the passage cited above from the *Garden of Stories*, and in a sharp departure from the contemporary use of "culture wars" as a metaphor for cultural tensions, *wen* has consistently been contrasted explicitly with the coercive, destructive, and dehumanizing use of martial force (*wu* 武) as it arises in the human experience. Far from provoking wars, *wen* is its antithesis. *Wen* denotes the expansively civil and civilizing dimension of the human experience that emerges when the life of a community is guided by an aesthetically- and critically-enriching counterpoint between persistent canonical texts and the interlinear commentaries that are continuously being written on them by each generation as they respond to the pressing issues of their day.

In sum, the conceptual genealogy of the term *wenhua* implies that culture emerges through an intrinsic relationship between persistence and change (*biantong* 變通)—a symbiotic relationship described at great length in the *Book of Changes* between a determinate tradition and the ambient forces of transformation. Cultural conservation and prospective change, far from standing in opposition, are complementary and mutually enhancing.

We now know why Lao with his *intra*-cultural approach to philosophy had to abandon Hegel and formulate his own, more capacious theory of philosophy of culture. Hegel's teleological philosophy of culture is ethnocentric and exclusionary, and in its commitment to a strong teleology, is univocal rather than being pluralistic and accommodating. But this further criss-crossing—that is, Lao's transformation of Hegel and Parsons into a holistic theory that is consistent

with the *tiyong* vocabulary of a persistent Chinese cosmology—leads us to ask the second question: Is Lao Sze-Kwang then a Chinese philosopher? Indeed, it is this same complementary, contrapuntal dynamic that seems to be evident in Lao Sze-Kwang's "double-structured theory" of culture that would resist any strong teleological and exclusionary, ethnocentric assumptions that we find in Hegel. To the extent that this *wenhua* understanding of "culture" is open-ended and is "orientative" in its unrelenting pursuit of personal and world transformation, Lao Sze-Kwang posits a philosophy of culture that is congruent with what he takes to be some of the basic and distinctive assumptions of Chinese culture. But it is his profound discomfort with severe or final distinctions among cultures, his theoretical strategy for sustaining a balance between uniqueness and multiplicity, and his inclusive approach to the discipline of philosophy broadly that might dissuade us from categorizing him as a "Chinese" or any other kind of philosopher. That is, Lao Sze-Kwang is a philosopher—enough said.

And this leads us to consider the appropriateness of considering Lao Sze-Kwang to be one more in the pantheon of New Confucians that have had such prominence in the philosophical life and the prestige of the Chinese University of Hong Kong philosophy department. As I have said, I want to advance the claim that Lao Sze-Kwang is first and foremost a *sui generis* philosopher with broad global interests, and thus by definition should not be tailored to fit any existing and necessarily exclusionary category, Chinese or Western. To reflect on the career of Lao Sze-Kwang as a world philosopher ("with Chinese characteristics" perhaps), we will first need some historical and philosophical background to set the interpretive context.

There is a history in the Chinese academy of Western philosophy being presented as "philosophy in China" without reference to its own indigenous traditions of philosophy. And going the other way, the commentarial history of Chinese "thought" (*sixiang* 思想) has often been taught especially in "Chinese" and Chinese literature departments without any perceived need to appeal to or engage Western philosophy. Resisting such exclusions, there has been over time a significant cadre of Chinese philosophers who have been shaped in their

thinking and writing about their own tradition through a conscious appropriation of the Western canons—particularly German idealism and Marxist philosophy. The best among these original and hybridist Chinese "comparative" philosophers who have been using Western philosophy as a resource to philosophize about the Chinese tradition itself have come to be referenced under the rubric "New Confucianists," a term coined in the mid-1980's to describe a philosophical "movement" that began in the early twentieth century and that still continues today. While this continuing New Confucian movement in Chinese philosophy has some relevance to the global philosophizing of Lao Sze-Kwang, he is not only not numbered as one among them, but in fact in many ways, is perhaps best understood as a contrast to them.

For the century and a half that led up to the founding of Communist China in 1949, China had been a hapless victim of Western imperialism. Before the ideas of first Charles Darwin and then later Karl Marx arrived in China, these transitional Western thinkers were already spawning revolutionary movements in Europe that challenged at the most primary level those persistent presuppositions grounding the full spectrum of disciplines within the European academy itself. In China, the popularity of evolutionary ethics like the later appropriation of Marxist socialism, was driven in important measure by practical social concerns of which professional academic philosophy was only a minor part. Still, the resonances that reformist thinkers found between these explicitly revolutionary foreign movements and philosophical sensibilities within their own tradition promised a way of renovating Chinese philosophy to respond effectively to the unrelenting Western aggression that was perceived as threatening the integrity if not the very survival of Chinese culture. At the end of the day, what allows contemporary historians of Chinese philosophy to collect a truly disparate range of Chinese thinkers under the single category of "New Confucians" is their shared commitment to rehabilitate and apply their many fortified revisions of traditional Chinese philosophy as a tourniquet to control the hemorrhaging of what was a culture bleeding out as it was assailed from all sides. What is fundamental to the identity of these New Confucians is their own self-

understanding that they are Chinese philosophers operating within the intergenerational transmission of the traditional lineage (*daotong* 道統) of Chinese philosophy itself.

Given the porousness and synchronicity that has been the persistent signature of the Chinese philosophical tradition over the centuries, twentieth-century Chinese philosophy with all the hybridity it entails should not be construed as a disjunction in kind from its earlier narrative. In fact, this aggregating philosophical amalgam can be seen as a continuing fusion of foreign elements that complement, enrich, and ultimately strengthen its own persisting philosophical sensibilities. It is for this reason that the term "Confucianism" (*ruxue* 儒學) that can be traced back more than three millennia to an "aestheticizing" social class in the Shang dynasty history can continue to be invoked as a name for an ostensibly new and yet still familiar current in the always changing yet persistent identity (*biantong* 變通) of Chinese philosophy.

Liang Shuming 梁漱溟 (1893–1988) is often and quite properly identified as the first of the New Confucians. In his earliest writings Liang rehearses a kind of "reverse Hegelian narrative" of the phasal development of philosophy that is then refined and amplified over his long professional career. That is, the first stage in philosophy is its Western phase in which the human will is able to satisfy the basic needs of the human experience by disciplining the environment in which our lives are lived. The second Chinese phase entails a harmonizing of this human will with its natural environment, with all of the joyful wisdom and satisfaction that such a reconciliation brings with it. The third and final phase is Buddhist philosophy that provides an intuitive negation of the self-other dichotomy, and a true spiritual realization through a regimen of self-cultivation.

There seems to be a consensus among scholars that the most prominent and indeed promising lineage among the New Confucians is that of the teacher and founder of New Confucianism, Xiong Shili 熊十力 (1885–1968), and his two prominent disciples, Mou Zongsan 牟宗三 (1909–1995) and Tang Junyi 唐君毅 (1909–1978). The greatest foreign influence on the development of Xiong Shili's own philosophy was the first wave of Western learning—Buddhist philosophy—

with only a passing ripple of the European canons of philosophy. And probably the source of his own most profound insights into the nature of the human experience was the *Book of Changes*, the first among the classics generally considered to be the cosmological ground of both Confucian and Daoist philosophical sensibilities.

One way of focusing Xiong Shili's lasting influence on New Confucianism is to recount briefly his core doctrine of "the inseparability of forming and functioning" (*tiyongbuer* 體用不二) that we have referenced above. His basic point is that "forming" and "functioning" are an explanatory, nonanalytical vocabulary for describing the dramatic and ceaseless unfolding of our experience. Given the wholeness of experience that includes both the human mind and the experience of the world, Xiong Shili took the *Book of Changes* natural cosmology to be a model for human self-cultivation. That is, human creativity and the advancement of cosmic meaning are inseparable aspects of the same reality.

Xiong Shili's two most prominent protégées, Mou Zongsan and Tang Junyi, continued this New Confucian lineage by translating, and in fact, transforming the foreign rivals they admired most into a vocabulary consistent with their own premises. For Mou Zongsan, Kant is the Western philosopher who began to understand the real nature of morality. Indeed, Mou Zongsan is so smitten by Kant that he appeals to his transcendental language to explain what is unique and distinctive about Chinese philosophy. But Mou Zongsan as a Chinese philosopher makes it clear that whatever might be construed as "transcendent" in classical Chinese thought is neither independent of the natural world nor theistic. Far from appealing to a "two-world" cosmology and grounding the dualism that emerged out of Western models of transcendence, classical China's world order, according to Mou, is altogether "this worldly."

It is Tang Junyi's foremost contribution to world philosophy—his synoptic philosophy of culture—that has led some scholars to associate him explicitly with a Hegelian idealism, Lao Sze-Kwang prominent among them. But on closer examination, we see that in the specific range of uncommon assumptions that Tang Junyi argues for as the ground of Chinese cultural uniqueness, he at least in some important

degree tries to distance himself from the homogenizing closure of Enlightenment teleology and universalism.

In rehearsing the development of New Confucianism philosophy in this past century, three other prominent figures belong largely to the more traditional historical and exegetical stream of Confucian philosophy: Feng Youlan 馮友蘭 (1889–1990), Qian Mu 錢穆 (1895–1991), and Xu Fuguan 徐復觀 (1904–1982), with the latter two, along with Mou Zongsan and Tang Junyi, being closely associated with the history and the prestige of the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

When I was a student at National Taiwan University in the early 1970's, I had the good fortune to study with Fang Dongmei 方東美, another contemporary philosopher who is usually included among the ranks of the New Confucians. Certainly, Fang had a comprehensive knowledge of the Chinese philosophical tradition in all of its parts, from the classical period through to modern times. And at different phases in his own intellectual development, he focused on different aspects and different periods within the tradition, coming to a keen interest in Huayan Buddhism in his later years. But Fang was fundamentally holistic and aesthetic in his philosophical orientation, was deeply steeped in the history of Western philosophy, and was skeptical about all reductionistic rationalizations. I think those students who have acquiesced in the New Confucian rubric for Fang do so because they want to assert his stature among his contemporaries, but I have always had serious doubts about the appropriateness of this label, and am not sure that Fang himself, if he had lived long enough, would have accepted it.

With this historical context in mind, it can be simply stated that the contemporary thinker, Lao Sze-Kwang, who did live to witness the emergence of the "New Confucian" classification, on his own reckoning, does not belong to this New Confucian lineage. On the contrary, he both understood himself and is seen broadly by his students and contemporaries as a world philosopher who, self-consciously and critically applying a rigorous methodology, draws upon philosophy in its broadest compass as a resource for his own philosophizing. Following the death of Mou Zongsan in 1995, Lao Sze-Kwang had the stature of being one of China's leading contemporary

philosophers, and as such, would often be introduced with the "New Confucian" rubric that he would then, each time, adamantly reject. Among his reasons for this strong response was his antipathy toward the kind of metaphysics his contemporaries, Mou Zongsan and Tang Junyi, found necessary to incorporate into their very different attempts at systematic philosophy. Indeed, it seems that the spell of German idealism in this respect was so strong that it affected the very language and sentence structure used by both Mou and Tang, turning their later writings into a kind of ponderous Hegelian Chinese. Again, given the explicit mission of the New Confucians to defend the Chinese cultural tradition captured in the "New Confucian Manifesto" (1958) drawn up by Zhang Junmai 張君勱, and signed by both Mou and Tang, Lao Sze-Kwang saw them as promoting a kind of cultural and philosophical nationalism that he could not endorse.

Like many if not most of these contemporaries, Lao Sze-Kwang was a public intellectual of the first order, commenting upon the pressing social and political issues of his time, and wading into the vortex of political controversy whenever he deemed it necessary and productive. And while Lao in his philosophizing is certainly inclined to draw heavily upon Confucianism, Kant, and Hegel as well, he does so as "philosopher Lao Sze-Kwang" rather than as an erstwhile Confucian, Kantian, or Hegelian. We have seen this above in his critical rejection of a Hegelian philosophy of culture, and his creative formulation of his own alternative. Of course, we must also allow that Lao in trying to be a global philosopher in a world where he was not recognized as such by a "mainstream" professional discipline that has defined itself in decidedly Western terms paid the price of being largely ignored. On the other hand, respecting and accepting Lao Sze-Kwang's own resistance to being labelled with partisan categories such as "Chinese philosopher" and "New Confucian" that might call his philosophical objectivity and rigor into question, Cheng Chung-yi quite properly raises an important caveat. We should not allow Lao's antipathy to being categorized in such terms to diminish the appreciation of the singular contribution that Lao has made to Chinese philosophy broadly, and to Confucianism in particular (Cheng 2003, 58ff).

Perhaps the most important lesson that Lao Sze-Kwang taught me personally from his own model of what a philosopher should be, is that I am not a "Western" philosopher. But even more importantly, given the many prejudices and "invisibilities" that still prevail in the professional discipline of philosophy, Lao taught me that I am not someone who pretends to be an erstwhile "philosopher" when such professional colleagues by definition are in fact really much less. Said more clearly, most professional philosophers today naively and uncritically present themselves as "philosophers" when in fact, if they were to acknowledge their own habitual exclusions, would have to call themselves at the very least "Western philosophers," if not better yet, "white, male, Western philosophers."

In our times, the inclusive and deferential position that Lao staked out for himself early on still has profound implications within the professional discipline of philosophy itself. Jay Garfield and Bryan Van Norden published a wonderful, provocative piece in the *New York Times* (May 11, 2016) suggesting that departments of philosophy can certainly continue to ignore non-Western philosophical traditions and philosophical diversity generally—no problem—but in the interests of truth in advertising, Garfield and Van Norden recommend that such departments have the courtesy of renaming themselves as Departments of European and American Philosophy.[7] Excerpting from their op-ed piece entitled "If Philosophy Won't Diversify, Let's Call It What It Really Is," they observe that:

> The vast majority of philosophy departments in the United States offer courses only on philosophy derived from Europe and the English-speaking world. . . . Given the importance of non-European traditions in both the history of world philosophy and in the contemporary world and given the increasing numbers of students in our colleges and universities from non-European backgrounds, this is astonishing. . . . The present situation is hard to justify morally, politically, epistemically or as good educational and research training

7 http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/11/opinion/if-philosophy-wont-diversify-lets-call-it-what-it-really-is.html.

> practice.… We therefore suggest that any department that regularly offers courses only on Western philosophy should rename itself "Department of European and American Philosophy." This simple change would make the domain and mission of these departments clear and would signal their true intellectual commitments to students and colleagues.

John E. Drabinski quickly posted a response to Garfield and Van Norden. He certainly embraced their motivation in this call for a "rectification of names," but wanted to further refine their argument and take it a step or two further. Indeed, he insists that these same programs are better off acknowledging that they are in fact Departments of White European and White American Philosophy. If Drabinski himself is going to offer courses on "Black Existentialism" as a corrective, those who teach just "Existentialism" ought to acknowledge the pernicious invisibility of "white" when philosophy courses are taught to our increasingly diverse student bodies. Indeed, Drabinski argues the contemporary philosophical canon is precisely that—*a* particular canon that reproduces *a* particular history and more worrisome, *a* particular way of thinking and living that perpetuates the violence of ignoring:

> What happens in those canonical texts is more than just pursuits of truth and the like. They are also texts that reproduce base ideological forms—or revolutionize them—that are key to reproducing certain kinds of societies. In the case of white Western societies, this means slaving, conquering, and subjugating societies. This is why Locke, Hume, Kant, Hegel, etc. all had theories of race, nation, genesis of human difference, and justifications for all sorts of slavery, conquest, and domination.[8]

And the avalanche of posts responding to Garfield and Van Norden keep coming in, with feminist philosophy too having its say, and requiring that our contemporary departments acknowledge one more

[8] http://jdrabinski.com/2016/05/11/diversity-neutrality-philosophy/.

marginalization if not exclusion by calling themselves "Departments of Male, White European and White American Philosophy."[9]

In just such a world then and still now, I sought out a career at the University of Hawai'i with its pluralistic and inclusive curriculum being a sustained challenge to the ethnocentric self-understanding of the professional discipline of philosophy, a discipline that in large measure still perpetuates the assumption that philosophy and philosophers too, are properly male, white, and Euro-American. With my philosophical bearings having been set during my Hong Kong sojourn so long ago, what I learned then from philosopher Lao Sze-Kwang, and what I myself have aspired to be, is just a philosopher—enough said. And perhaps like my mentor Lao, given our times and the continuing self-understanding of professional philosophy, I too must pay the price of being largely ignored.

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[9] For links to a variety of responses, see http://pages.vassar.edu/epistemologicallywise/2016/05/16/the-debate-over-the-garfield-van-norden-essay-in-the-stone/.

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Feature Book Review: *The Analects of Dasan*

The Analects of Dasan, Volume I: A Korean Syncretic Reading, by Hongkyung Kim. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016, 272 pages. $85.00. Hardcover. ISBN 9780190624996.

Philip J. Ivanhoe

Professor Hongkyung Kim has made a tremendous contribution to our understanding not only of Korean Confucianism but of the greater tradition of which it is a part by producing an annotated translation of Dasan Jeong Yakyong's 茶山 丁若鏞 (1762–1836) monumental *Noneo gogeum ju* 論語古今註 (Old and New Commentaries on the *Analects*) (hereafter *Old and New Commentaries*). Translating almost any work written in classical Chinese into English for the first time is very challenging but given the originality and complexity of Dasan's commentary and the scale of his work, Professor Kim's book is an historic accomplishment. I cannot do full justice to all that he has achieved nor will I be able to explore every question his work has inspired. My aim is much more modest: to give readers a sense of the work from the limited but I hope still valuable perspective of someone whose interests are primarily philosophical and often comparative, and that embrace both the history of philosophy and constructive philosophical endeavor. The *Old and New Commentaries* has a distinctive structure that reveals critically important aspects of Dasan's philosophy. I would like to begin by sketching this structure and how Professor

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Kim has chosen to treat certain parts of it and then proceed to describe the implications this structure has for understanding Dasan's philosophical project.

Dasan's work presents the different passages of the *Analects* in their traditional order. After each, he assembles a number of the most insightful and influential commentaries from the past and present (hence the name of his work) to describe and begin to analyze the issues in play. At times, once he has presented a point addressed by a commentary, he will move on to another commentary or point, but often he will add his own Supplemental Comments 補 to elaborate upon the ideas being discussed. While this opening part of Dasan's text is not marked off as a distinct section in the original, it presents his initial treatment of each passage from the *Analects*. In his English translation, Professor Kim separates this first part off and gives it a title of his own design, calling it the "Grounds." This is followed by a separate, second part, which he again assigns a name, calling it the "Arguments." It is important for readers to understand that the general form of both the Grounds and Arguments are quite similar in the original. Specifically, each contains numerous quotations of old and new commentaries followed by Dasan's elaborations and comments. The primary difference between them is that the Grounds contain Dasan's descriptions and amplifications on commentaries while the Arguments contain his criticisms or questions.

When, in the Arguments, he disagrees with an interpretation or idea, Dasan often makes this clear by presenting a Refutation 駁; when the disagreement is with an authoritative member of the orthodox school (e.g. Zhu Xi or Cheng Yi) he expresses his reservations in a milder form, as a Question or Query 質疑. Toward the end of making the case against the views he rejects and for his preferred interpretation, he often musters some additional Corroborating Textual Evidence 引證 drawn from the classics.

The structure of Dasan's work is an important clue to understanding some of his most important assumptions and his ultimate guiding aim. Among his most critical assumptions is that the authentic Confucian classics are, as Professor Kim puts it, without "errors" (p. 16). But much more than that, they are the sole repository of the

highest moral, social, and political truths. There is no way to understand how to live one's life, order one's family, or organize one's state except by studying, understanding, practicing, and internalizing the moral principles, norms, exemplars, practices, and institutions they describe. Just about every Confucian in history shared these same assumptions (and those who didn't, were almost certainly suspected of or denounced as heretics, as were thinkers like Wang Yangming or Li Zhi). This is why so many Confucians, throughout the ages, have felt the need to write commentaries on the classics and, most important for understanding Dasan, this is the reason he felt obliged to produce the *Old and New Commentaries*.

In the course of this work, Dasan reviews the best attempts of past and present authors to uncover the truths contained in the classics: citing commentators when they get things right, refuting those who fail to understand and therefore misrepresent the views of the sages, augmenting commentaries that need a bit more elaboration, and presenting the case for his—the *right*—interpretation. This looks like and often is confused with the approach of Evidential Learning 考證學 and indeed, like such scholars, Dasan regarded it as absolutely imperative to understand what the characters of the classics meant in their time and place. But there is a crucial difference: for Dasan, this was not an end in itself, it was instead the necessary and proper method for discovering philosophical truth. Similarly, Dasan's criticism of the elaborate speculative metaphysics of orthodox neo-Confucianism, his insistence on the need to practice and cultivate virtue, and his systematic, more objective approach to texts can be mistaken as the harbinger of a new approach that some describe as Practical Learning 實學. This too, though, misses the true nature and aim of Dasan's work. Professor Kim seems to share these reservations about ways one might misunderstand Dasan's method, aim, and project (p. 18), but unlike me he sees something truly revolutionary behind the *Old and New Commentaries*. He maintains that Dasan's novel contribution to the Confucian tradition lies in two distinctive features of his approach to the work of writing commentaries: first, his reliance on reason or "reasonability" and second, the "syncretic" aim of his philosophy. Though the two are related—the use of reason

is said to be critical for the achievement of syncretism—for the most part, I will discuss each of these issues separately.

Professor Kim claims Dasan embraced a new and distinctive epistemology in pursuing a synthesis of Confucian ideas that turned upon his reliance on "reason" or "reasonability"; for example, "[his opinion in this case] is primarily indebted to his judgment on reasonability, not to his philological investigation" (p. 107). While the Chinese character for reason 理 is the same as that which served as the fundamental grounds for neo-Confucian claims about the nature of reality (in their sense, it can be translated "pattern-principle"), according to Professor Kim, Dasan's use of the term has more to do with a basic rational capacity and the "principles of nature, science, practical human relationships, and sociopolitical structures" (p. 49). This aspect of Dasan's philosophy is what leads some to describe him as a pioneer of Practical Learning, and Professor Kim thinks there is at least some merit in such a view because he suggests Dasan's philosophy should be called the "Learning of Practical Principle" 實理學.

Given what has been said above, there seems to be some tension between the view of Dasan as a "rationalist" (or at times apparently an empiricist or naturalist) and other claims that Professor Kim makes. For example, at times, he describes Dasan as a proponent of Evidential Learning, "the primary method Dasan adopts to prove the validity of his interpretations is to secure their grounds in the classics" (p. 86). What are we to make of this? I suggest there are virtually no good reasons to describe Dasan as any sort of rationalist or for saying that he should be understood as a pioneer of any conception of Practical Learning. His appeals to reason or common sense, as well as his appeals to uncontroversial features of the natural world, are fully consistent with the approach of Evidential Learning. Dasan is a practitioner and proponent of Evidential Learning, but like Dai Zhen 戴震 (1723–1777) in Qing dynasty, one who employs this method *as the one and only way to reach to and grasp the truths embodied in the classics*. Like all Evidential Learning scholars, Dasan's approach resembles what one finds in a court of law and not a geometry class, the latter being what one would expect, were he a rationalist. Professor Kim is right to suggest there is something new and important about

the way Dasan sometimes argues his case, but what is new is the way he employs common sense to *form hypotheses* for his fundamentally philological method. In other words, Dasan reasons about what seems improbable or likely and guided by such reasoning seeks evidence and confirmation in the classics. This is not to reach conclusions about philosophical issues independently of the classics but rather to set hypotheses about what the classics actually say that one then seeks to confirm with direct or collateral evidence.

Now, this is importantly different from what earlier neo-Confucians tended to do, which is to ground their claims in views about "pattern-principle" 理, which they often asserted on the basis of intuitions or one kind or another. Dasan rejected this kind of appeal because he saw, as Dai Zhen had before him, that such appeals simply tend to confirm and solidify the status of the subjective or class opinions of elite members of society. But neither Dasan nor Dai believed that reason alone could lead one to substantial moral or even empirical truths. Neither of them was seeking to follow wherever reason and evidence might lead; both assumed that reason and evidence would lead to the *right reading of the classics*, which were the repository of all the most important truths.

We see a clear and powerful example of this in Dasan's discussion of the right interpretation (i.e. the correct understanding) of *Analects* 3.16 (pp. 195–200), which describes and discusses the ethical implications of archery contests among the ancients. As Professor Kim makes clear through his translation and analysis, Dasan rejected interpretations that entail that archery contests did not concern hitting the mark. Why? Common sense tells us this, "according to common sense, archery consists of the act of hitting the target by shooting arrows" (p. 199). Of course, common sense is a combination of our rational abilities and our knowledge and experience: from all that we know about archery contests we expect them to be about hitting the target. *Reason alone*, though, will not yield this conclusion: traditional archery contests *could have been about* who shoots the farthest, whose arrows penetrate deepest into the target, who shows the most sportsmanship, who sings the best song while shooting, or any number of things. But common sense leads us to not even con-

sider such possibilities and to look instead for an interpretation that involves accuracy in aim and success in hitting the mark. This hypothesis then leads us to look for evidence that confirms the supposition and once we find it, we are confident we have the right interpretation of the classic. This is precisely what Dasan does. He *does not* simply *reason his way* to his interpretation; reason is a guide used to orient and control the search for philological evidence about how to read the classics. It leads us to focus upon the font of all true wisdom: the classics.

Accordingly, while I agree that there are novel and interesting aspects to Dasan's philosophy (some of them described above, others drawn from earlier strata of the tradition, from his study of Catholic philosophy, or born out his own creative genius) I do not see any clear evidence that he thought he was pursuing a new methodology grounded in reason or reasonability. And this is part of why I also do not believe Dasan thought of his work as or sought to craft a new, syncretic Confucian philosophy—as Professor Kim claims he did by saying, "[what Dasan] truly wished to achieve though his commentary on the *Analects* was a synthesis of all transmitted Confucian ideas (methodology) and thereby the creation of a new Confucian philosophy (goal)" (p. 14). After all, the *Old and New Commentaries* is a commentary and there is nothing methodologically new in that, nor in writing commentaries that assemble, review, criticize, augment, and extend existing commentaries. This is precisely what Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200) does in his *Sishujizhu* 四書集注 (Collected Commentaries on the Four Books), as do many other commentators. I would say none does it better than Zhu Xi and only one comes close: Dasan. There is no clear attempt to synthesize different views—in the sense of engaging in some sort of dialectic across commentaries; Dasan follows the commentators who support what he sees as the truth and refutes those who diverge from what he sees as the one true Way. He did not have as his goal the creation of a new Confucian philosophy any more than Zhu Xi did. To have such an aim would require one to recognize that the sages and the classics they wrote were wrong or at least importantly incomplete, but, as noted earlier, Professor Kim makes clear that this was not Dasan's view which was

that "the Confucian classics contained no errors" (p. 16). Moreover, in the absence of a speculative historical theory about the evolution of the Way, a belief that each commentator in the course of history only grasped—or *could only* grasp—small parts of the Way, or some other enabling background assumption, it is not clear why anyone would set out to produce a synthesis of all the commentaries of the past. Someone who had such an aim, to produce a new, syncretic expression of Confucianism, would not feel the need to engage in the meticulous, demanding, and largely *critical* project that produced the *Old and New Commentaries*.

I now turn to a review of some selections from the translation before concluding with some comments about Professor Kim's explanations of Dasan's commentary on each passage of the *Analects*. The selections present a representative sample of the kinds of linguistic and philosophical issues one finds throughout the translation.

Page 38 presents a translation of *Analects* 1.2, which begins, "Those who are filial to their parents and compliant with their elders hardly defy their superiors." The Chinese text is, 其爲人也孝弟, 而好犯上者, 鮮矣. The last part seems a bit off the mark. The way it stands, his translation says that filial and compliant people only defy their superiors *a little bit,* while the Chinese text is better understood as suggesting that they defy their superiors rarely. Perhaps Professor Kim meant to say not "hardly" but "hardly ever" for 鮮矣. He translates the same two characters naturally and correctly in the case of *Analects* 1.3 (p. 44) by rendering it "It is rare. . . ."

Page 96 contains some lines of Dasan's commentary on *Analects* 2.5. The original Chinese is, 孟僖子將卒屬說與何忌於夫子, 使學禮焉. Professor Kim offers the following translation, "When Mengxizi was about to die, he asked Confucius for the caregiving of Yue and Heji so that they could learn about ritual propriety from him." The primary problem here is minor but characteristic of infelicities in translation and word choice that appear quite regularly throughout the volume. In this case, somewhat awkward expression makes understanding more challenging than it should be. A more natural rendering would be, "When Mengxizi was about to die he entrusted Yue and Heji to Kongzi's care, so they could study ritual under him."

Page 98 contains some lines from Dasan's commentary on *Analects* 4.18. The original Chinese is, 子曰 事父母幾諫. 見志不從, 又敬不違, 勞而不怨. Professor Kim offers the following translation of the first part, "The Master said 'When serving your parents, remonstrate with them, but gently. This is to show that you intend not to follow their orders.'" He goes on to note that the passage is, "... usually translated '... When serving your parents, remonstrate with them, but gently. When they show their intention not to follow your advice.'" There is an obvious problem in the concluding line of the "usual" translation that leads to other interesting issues. In Professor Kim's translation, the second line, 見志不從, is presented as a full sentence and the translation of the usual or traditional interpretation is supposed to parallel it, though with a different sense. However, the English provided, "When they show their intention not to follow your advice" is not a sentence. A translation of the complete traditional interpretation shows how the problem arose, "In serving your parents, remonstrate with them, but gently. If they show their intention is to not follow your advice, remain reverent but do not turn from your purpose. If they punish you, do not murmur." As is clear, on this reading, the four characters of the second line are taken as a phrase.

But there is more to note in regard to this passage. The original Chinese of Dasan's complete commentary is, 幾諫者, 不敢直諫, 但以微意諷之使喻也. 見讀作現, 露也, 示也. 微示己志之不從親命, 且須恭敬不違親命, 以俟其自悟也. 如是則勞矣, 雖勞不怨. I would translate as, "*Ji jian* means to not dare to remonstrate directly but only to subtly chide them in order to get them to understand. *Jian* should be read as *xian* and means to reveal or show. You should subtly show your intention is to not comply with your parents' directions, but you must be respectful and reverent and not act contrary to their directions, waiting for them to come around on their own. This will require hard work, but though you must work hard do not murmur." In light of these comments, Dasan's interpretation does indeed differ from the traditional reading but not as greatly or quite in the way the Professor Kim's translation suggests. A full rendering of it would be, "In serving your parents, remonstrate with them, but gently. [Subtly] show that your intention is to not comply with their directions; be respectful and reverent but

do not act contrary to their directions. Though you must make effort, do not murmur."

Page 99 contains some lines of Dasan's commentary on *Analects* 2.7. The original Chinese is, 子游問孝. 子曰: "今之孝者, 是謂能養. 至於犬馬, 皆能有養. 不敬, 何以別乎?" Professor Kim's translation is, "Zi You asked about filial piety. The Master said, 'Nowadays, filial piety refers to being able to attend one's parents. However, even dogs and horses attend people. Without reverence, what is there to distinguish them?'" I can understand the motivation but am not persuaded that "attend" is the best choice for the word 養, which Dasan explains by saying it is "standing by and taking care of/providing for them (i.e. one's parents)" 左右奉養. A more serious problem is how readers are to understand the last line and especially "what is there to distinguish them?" The most immediate reference of "them" is dogs and horses, but clearly that is not intended.

As Professor Kim notes in his discussion, *Analects* 2.7 generated two major lines of commentary. On the first, advanced by Bao Xian and Xing Bing, it goes something like, "Zi You asked about filial piety. The Master said, 'Nowadays, filial piety refers to those who are able to take care of their parents. However, even dogs and horses are able to take care of [people]. If there is no reverence, how do we distinguish between [these two cases]?'" The text of the commentary that supports this reading is, 何曰: "犬以守禦, 馬以代勞, 皆養人者." 邢云: "犬馬皆能養人, 但畜獸無知, 不能生敬," which I translate as, "Bao [Xian] says, 'Dogs are used to guard; horses are used for their labor; both of these take care of human beings.' Xing [Bing] says, 'Dogs and horses both are able to take care of human beings, but they are just domestic animals without any intelligence and are not able to generate feelings of reverence.'" The point is that even dogs and horses are able to take care of people. So taking care alone is not sufficient to be deemed filial. If we do not revere our parents as well as take care of them, *we act no better than* dogs or horses. The second line of interpretation, advanced by He Yan and others, understands the passage as saying, "Zi You asked about filial piety. The Master said, 'Nowadays, filial piety refers to those who are able to take care of their parents. However, even dogs and horses are able to be taken care of. If there is no

reverence, how do we distinguish between the two cases?'" The commentary supporting this reading, which we shall return to below, is 何曰: "人之所養, 乃至於犬馬, 不敬則無以別," which I translate as, "He Yan says, 'Among the things that human beings take care of are dogs and horses. If there is no feeling of reverence [in taking care of parents] there is nothing to distinguish it [from the case of dogs and horses].'" The point, on this reading, turns on the fact that we take care of not only our parents but domestic animals as well. If we don't show reverence to the former, then we *treat them like* dogs or horses. Dasan follows the first line of interpretation; he is saying if we don't revere our parents as well as take care of them then we are no different from dogs and horses. Of course, distinguishing between humans and non-human animals was an important theme for Dasan and a significant part of the eighteenth century Horak Debate. As Dasan puts it in regard to this passage, "If one takes care of (one's parents) without feeling reverence, one has no way to distinguish oneself from dogs or horses." 養而不敬, 無以自別於犬馬也.

A similar problem emerges later in the same section (p. 100) with the translation of the He Yan commentary cited above. Professor Kim offers as his translation, "People can nourish even dogs and horses. Without reverence, there is no way to distinguish this from that." The problem is that the references of "this" and "that" are unclear. Something more along the lines of the translation provided above is in order. It is true that at times we need to provide more than what is in the text, but we should mark what we provide and offer what readers need to make sense of the Chinese.

Finally, in the same section we find a translation of part of Dasan's commentary (the characters in square brackets are translated in footnotes in Professor Kim's work), 犬馬能事人, 故曰能. [能者, 奇之也]. 若人養犬馬, 何能之有? [事之常]. 幾見有人而不能餵畜者乎? Professor Kim translates this as, "Since dogs and horses manage [能] to serve people, it is said that they 'can.' [The character *neng* ("can") is here used because it leaves a strong impression.] If people nourish dogs and horses, how can it be said that they 'can?' [There is nothing special.] How many times do we see people who cannot breed domestic animals?" As it stands, the translation is difficult to comprehend (among other

things, if people are *able to* do something then of course they *can*). The following alternative eliminates what is obscure, "Dogs and horses are able to provide for human beings, and so it says they 'are able.' (To be 'able' implies [possessing] something special.) In the case of human beings providing for dogs and horses, what 'ability' is needed? (This is something quite ordinary.) How often have you seen a human being who is not able to feed domestic animals?"

On page 105, Dasan cites a line from the *Book of Changes* in the course of his commentary. Professor Kim translates this line as, "That which it keeps a beauty but should endure is for manifesting [發] it in due time." The Chinese is, 含章可貞, 以時發也. As it stands, the translation is difficult to understand or to see quite how it is derived from the original text. A more straightforward rendering would be, "He keeps his excellence under restraint, but firmly maintains it; at the proper time he will manifest it."

Page 166 concerns *Analects* 3.7, the last line of which Professor Kim translates as, "Even in competition, they are decent." The Chinese is, 其爭也, 君子. I see no good reason from the text or ideas presented for translating the characters 君子 as "they are decent." This term often is translated as "noble person" and this is how Professor Kim treats it a little later (p. 167) when he presents part of Dasan's supplement as, "This is the competition of noble people." The Chinese in this case is, 君子之爭也.

Pages 200-201 concern *Analects* 3.17, the last lines of which Professor Kim translates as, "Ci! Do you care for the sheep? I care for the ritual." The Chinese is, 賜也! 爾愛其羊, 我愛其禮. I see no basis or good motive for translating the characters 爾愛其羊 as an interrogative. There is nothing that supports this in the text and it undermines the strong contrast Kongzi is drawing between the opposing declarations of what Zi Gong and he value. On the following page, Professor Kim translates the first line of Bao Xian's commentary as "If the sheep still exist, the ritual will remain recognizable. If the sheep are removed, however, the ritual will eventually perish." The Chinese for this is, 羊存, 猶以識其禮, 羊亡, 禮遂廢. The translation gets rather obscure here, partly because it seems to imply that the sacrifice involves more than one sheep and because of choosing to translate 存 as "exist" rather than

"kept" or "retained" (see below). I suggest we translate it as, "If the sheep is retained, [people] will continue to acknowledge the ritual; if the sheep is dispensed with, the ritual will subsequently be abandoned."

Page 214 presents Dasan's interpretation and comments on *Analects* 3.22, which begins, on Professor Kim's apt translation, with the famous line "Guan Zhong's capacity was small indeed!" The Chinese is, 管仲之器小哉! Dasan provides an explanatory supplement for this line, which Professor Kim presents as, "*qixiao*" (capacity is small) means that his receptiveness is limited." The Chinese for the supplement is, 器小, 謂其所容受不大也. There are two minor issues here. First, it is not at all clear what is intended by "receptiveness." It makes it sound as if Guan Zhong is lacking in open mindedness or sensitivity, which in my view would be mistaken. The problem arises primarily because Professor Kim offers a parenthetical translation of *qixiao*, which is the explanandum and should be left simply Romanized. To translate it not only begs the question of what it means but also deprives the translator of the right translation for the gloss that Dasan offers, which is precisely how Professor Kim translates the line from the *Analects*. The supplement would be better rendered, "*qixiao*" means that his capacity was not great.

The selective review of translations above is offered as representative of what can be found throughout much of Professor Kim's translation. The kinds of issues explored in this selection reflect the general challenges associated with understanding and rendering classical Chinese philosophical texts into a modern language and would likely be found in any translation of a text as complex, subtle, and extensive as the *Old and New Commentaries*. To some extent, these matters may also reflect the exceptional challenge of translating from such a difficult classical language into a modern language that is not one's native tongue. When considered in the light of these multiple challenges, the problems are not extensive or severe and the achievements are many and impressive.

Let me close with a few observations about another distinctive feature of this volume: Professor Kim's commentaries on Dasan's text. After translating each of the original *Analects* passages and Dasan's commentary, Professor Kim provides his own explanations

of Dasan's explanations. These are always substantial and sometimes longer than the text they elucidate. They provide a wealth of additional sources and historical context and occasionally endeavour to explain why Dasan criticized or defended particular views because of his engagement with and commitment to important political and social issues of his time. Two things strike me as worthy of note and potentially of benefit to general readers in regard to Professor Kim's commentary. First, contemporary English readers should recognize that the book they are reading reproduces, to a remarkable extent, the book that is the object of study. I mean by this not only that it consists of an extensive, running commentary on a book that is an extensive, running commentary (on a collection of extensive running commentaries) but also, the modern commentary by Professor Kim, like Dasan's commentary, is primarily aimed at getting at the correct meaning of the text it takes as its explanandum. Second, the explanations offered by the modern running commentary contain almost no developed philosophical arguments, in the sense of attempts to justify the ethical or political claims made. This will disappoint readers who come to the text thinking it will offer a set of propositions and arguments of the type familiar to contemporary philosophers. Such an expectation is misguided in this case; it misconstrues the original format, structure, and aim of both the traditional (Dasan's) and modern work (Professor Kim's). Neither sets out to produce a constructive philosophical work based on claims about things like the good, the right, or the beautiful that it then defends by making clear its premises and mustering supporting argument and evidence nor do they seek to explain, analyze, and draw upon the commentarial tradition to contribute to or challenge contemporary philosophical views. Instead, both authors have sought to present a sustained and systematic interpretation of earlier works whose philosophical merit was not in question: their aim was clear and thorough explication. Once readers embrace this stance and perspective, they will see and appreciate the true nature and value of both this work of Dasan's and this work on Dasan.

The Code of Management for the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Confucian Philosophy and Culture*

I. General Regulations

1. (Objective)
   This regulation is established according to article IV-10-4 of the Regulations for the Institute of Confucian Philosophy and Culture (hereafter, ICPC). It comprises the regulatory guidelines for publishing the *Journal of Confucian Philosophy and Culture* (hereafter, *JCPC*).
2. (Mission)
   1) To supervise publication of *JCPC* and the related affairs of acceptance, review, editing, and so on.
   2) To set up rules and regulations for publishing *JCPC*.

II. Organization of Editorial Board

3. (Constitution)
   The editorial board is comprised of editorial advisors, editorial councils, the chief manager (the director), the editor-in-chief, the head of the editing team, and other editing team members.
4. (Appointment of Editorial Advisors and Members)
   The director of ICPC appoints editorial advisors and members among noted scholars of highest achievement, both in Korea and abroad.
5. (Terms)
   The basic term for editorial board members is two years, extendable when necessary. The editor-in-chief is tenured by principle, in order for the journal to maintain its congruity.
6. (Chief Manager)
   The director of ICPC is also the chief manger and supervises the editorial board.
7. (Editor-in-chief)
   The editor-in-chief is appointed by the director of ICPC and is responsible for all editorial issues.
8. (Head of Editing Team, Editing Team)
   The head of the editing team and the editing team's other members are appointed by the director of ICPC. The head of the editing team is responsible for general issues concerning editing, and the assistant head is responsible for assisting with related editorial matters.

III. Publication of *JCPC*

9. (Numbers and Dates of Publication)
   JCPC is published twice in one year: on February 28 and August 31.
10. (Circulation)
    The size of circulation for *JCPC* is determined by the editorial board.
11. (Size)
    The standard size for *JCPC* is 176mm × 248mm.
12. (Editorial System)
    1) Academic articles written in either Chinese or English.
    2) Academic articles include: title, abstract, keywords, contents, bibliography, an abstract written in Chinese or English, keywords written in Chinese or English.
    3) The English title and name of the author must be specified.
    4) The affiliation of the author must be specified.
    5) Regulations, bulletins, and materials other than academic articles may be included according to the decision of the editorial board.

IV. Submission of Articles and Management

13. (Subject and Character of the Submitted Article)
    The subject of article includes:
    1) Confucian thought and culture in Korea and abroad.
    2) Analysis of books, translations, or research articles on related subjects published in Korea or abroad. It may include dissertations.
    3) Critical reviews on academic trends, mainly in the arts and humanities, related to Confucianism and East Asian studies.

    No certain qualification for submission is required.
14. (Number of Words)
    1) A length of each article is limited to 25,000 characters for Chinese and 12,000 words for English, including the abstract, footnotes, bibliography, etc.
    2) The number of words permitted for materials other than academic articles and reviews are to be determined by the editorial board.
15. (Submission Guidelines)
    1) A general call for papers is always extended, but only articles submitted at least three months prior to the publication date are usually subjected to the review process for a specific issue.
    2) Submissions should be forwarded to jcpc@skku.edu as an email attachment.

3) Abstracts in Chinese and English must include five or more keywords.
4) If written jointly, the first (main) author and the second (joint) author, as well as their respective name, affiliation, area of research, part(s) of writing, must be noted.
5) E-mail address(es) and phone number(s) must be provided for all authors.

16. (Control of Submitted Articles)
    1) Submitted articles are, as they arrive, subject to a controlled process.
    2) Submitted articles are not returned, and copyright for published articles belongs to ICPC.

V. Reviewing Submitted Articles

17. (Obligation to Review)
    All submitted articles must pass the reviewing process.
18. (Regulations for Reviewing Board)
    1) In principle, the editorial board will select three outside reviewers for each submitted article and commission them to evaluate the article. If two of the reviewers agree, the article can be published.
    2) In specific situations, the editorial board can precede the reviewing process by selecting two outside reviewers. If only one of the reviewers recommends publication, the editorial board can decide whether to publish or reject the article based on the journal's academic standards. In such cases, the editor-in-chief is supposed to make a written report to the chief manager (the director).
    3) If submitted articles do not meet the basic requirements of the journal (e.g., in terms of length, subject, etc.), the editorial board can decide not to proceed with the reviewing process and return the submission to the author(s). The editorial board can also ask the author(s) to resubmit after revision.
    4) In principle, the board of reviewers must maintain a just and fair attitude, and should not review articles written by scholars with whom they are personally affiliated.
    5) For the sake of fairness, the review process will remain anonymous.
19. (Standard of Review)
    1) Articles will be reviewed for basic format (20%), originality (20%), clarity of subject (20%), logic (20%), and congruity (20%).
    2) The result will divide the articles into two groups: publishable and not publishable.

3) Articles evaluated as not publishable cannot be re-submitted with the same title.

20. (Feedback time)
Reviewers must submit their feedback on each article to the editorial board within two weeks from it was assigned to them.

21. (Reporting Back the Result)
The editorial board must report back to the author(s) as soon as the results of the reviewing process have been received.

VI. Revision of Regulations

22. (Principle)
This code of management is subject to change when 2/3 of the editorial board agrees, provided that more than half of the editorial board's members are present at the time of voting.

* Other Regulations

23. (Others)
1) Other issues not written in this code will be treated following customary practices.
2) The above regulations take effect from December 20, 2006.
3) The editorial board will determine and deal with all other details concerning the above regulations.

Publication Ethics and Malpractice Statement

The editors of *JCPC* are committed to insuring the integrity of its published content and toward that end all authors, reviewers, and members of the editorial and advisory boards associated with the journal are expected to fully adhere to our publication ethics and malpractice policies as described below.

I. Authors

All authors must adhere to the following regulations; they must insure:

1. That their submissions are original research not previously published or under consideration for publication elsewhere and that they have taken all necessary precautions to avoid breach of copyright.
2. That they provide appropriate citation of all previously published works.
3. That they provide two versions of their manuscript in a format that complies with the journal's stated requirements, one disclosing academic rank and affiliation, one anonymous and intended for blind review.
4. That they disclose to the editors any conflicts of interest that may influence or appear to influence the integrity of the work submitted. For example, all sources of financial support for the research leading to the submission must be disclosed.
5. That all persons who have made significant written contributions to the submitted work be acknowledged as co-authors and the approximate contributions of all co-authors be clearly stated.
6. That they immediately inform the editors of any significant errors or problems with the submitted work that they might discover prior to or after publication so that the editors can either correct or retract the paper or acknowledge published mistakes that come to their attention.

II. Reviewers

All reviewers must adhere to the following regulations; they must:

1. Evaluate submissions purely on the basis of their intellectual merit and conformity with the stated aims and requirements of the *JCPC*.
2. Immediately inform the editors of *JCPC* in the case of any potential conflict of interest. For example, if the reviewer recognizes the author by the work and has any close professional or personal relationship with the author that might influence her or his judgement.

3. Maintain strict confidentiality in regard to the manuscripts they review. Reviewers may choose to share their identities with authors in cases in which the manuscript is accepted but they are not to share the manuscripts or any parts thereof without first securing the explicit permission of the author.
4. If they choose not to review a given submission, state briefly their reasons for declining.
5. Assume that their reviews will be communicated to the authors and so should take care to make clear any comments they intend only for the editors.

III. Editors

The editors are responsible for insuring that the review process is fair, swift, and as transparent as possible. In particular, they are tasked with implementing and maintaining the standards and process of peer review described in the following section. They are also responsible for investigating and deciding any apparent cases of misconduct that they perceive or that are brought to their attention as described in the concluding two sections of this statement of publication ethics and malpractice.

IV. Peer Review Process

The editors of *JCPC* read all submissions and make an initial judgment about whether to submit a received paper to the process of peer review. The editors may reject a paper without peer review if its topic or content fall outside the journal's stated mandate, is of poor quality, or does not comply with the journal's stated format. A decision not to send a paper for peer review will not be influenced by an editor's views about the authors or their home institution; the Editor-in-Chief will communicate the reasons for not advancing a given submission to the author.

If a submission is deemed appropriate in topic, content, quality, and format it will be sent out to two reviewers with the requisite expertise needed to evaluate the work for publication. Reviewers are asked to complete their reviews within two months of receipt and to provide clear reasons for judging the submission to be in one of the following four categories:

- Publish (as is)
- Publish after minor revisions (to be noted in the evaluation)
- Revise and resubmit
- Reject

JCPC applies double-blind peer review, the identity of both the author and reviewer is kept hidden. Authors can identify potential conflicts of interest and provide the names of up to two "opposed reviewers" at the time of submission. Authors are required to explain the reasons why identified opposed reviewers should not be asked to evaluate their work. While the editors of *JCPC* will give serious consideration to such identified opposed reviewers, they retain the right to invite whomever they deem appropriate and cannot guarantee that "opposed reviewers" will not be invited.

The editors will make the final decision concerning each submission and their reasons will be clearly communicated both to authors and their reviewers.

To help broaden and strengthen its cadre of potential reviewers, *JCPC* assumes that authors whose papers have been accepted by the journal agree to serve as reviewers for other manuscripts submitted to the journal.

V. Plagiarism

Plagiarism in any form is unacceptable; any suspicion of plagiarism will be vigorously investigated by the editors. If confirmed, plagiarism is sufficient grounds for immediate rejection of a submission and the offending authors will be banned from making further submissions to the journal.

Recycling of one's own previously published work should be avoided as much as possible and if deemed excessive by reviewers or editors can be grounds for rejecting a given submission. When the duplication of previous work is necessary for advancing a new argument or line of inquiry, the cited work must be properly cited and the extent of overlap with the previously published essay(s) must be clearly indicated in the submission itself.

VI. Procedures concerning Reports of Misconduct

The editors are committed to maintaining the highest ethical standards in managing the business of the journal and we encourage anyone who suspects misconduct to contact us immediately. Every report of suspected misconduct will be investigated collectively by the editorial team: i.e., the Editor-in-Chief, Associate Editor, and Managing Editor.

Under normal circumstances, the Editor-in-Chief is responsible for leading all investigations brought to the attention of the editorial team. Should the Editor-in-Chief be accused or implicated in a charge of misconduct, the Associate Editor will take responsibility for the investigation.

As part of the investigation the Editor-in-Chief or Associate Editor will contact both parties involved in any conflict; they will explain and ask them to respond to the accusation and will study and if need be further investigate their responses. No decision will be reached and no action will be taken without sufficient evidence of misconduct.

If the case involves another journal, its Editor-in-Chief will be contacted and both editorial teams will investigate and work to arrive at a shared decision.

The editors of *JCPC* fully endorse the International Standards for Editors and the International Standards for Authors published by COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics), http://publicationethics.org/international-standards-editors-and-authors.

Journal of Korean Religions

The **Journal of Korean Religions** (***JKR***), the only English-language academic journal dedicated to the study of Korean religions, was launched in the autumn of 2010. It aims to stimulate interest in and discuss the study of Korean religions in various academic disciplines within the humanities and social sciences. A peer-reviewed journal, ***JKR*** is published twice a year, in April and October, by the Institute for the Study of Religion at Sogang University in Korea.

We are included in the Thomson Reuters *Arts & Humanities Index* and our digital version is available on *Project MUSE*.

Call for Articles

JKR invites contributions from senior and junior scholars researching all aspects of Korean religions from a wide range of perspectives, including religious studies, philosophy, theology, literature, folklore, art, anthropology, history, sociology, political science, and cultural studies. Articles submitted for consideration should be under 10,000 words in length including endnotes (bibliographies and appendices are additional) and should not have appeared or be under review or publication elsewhere. ***JKR*** also welcomes book reviews (up to 1,000 words) and review articles (up to 3,000 words).

All contributions or inquiries should be sent to the Managing Editor

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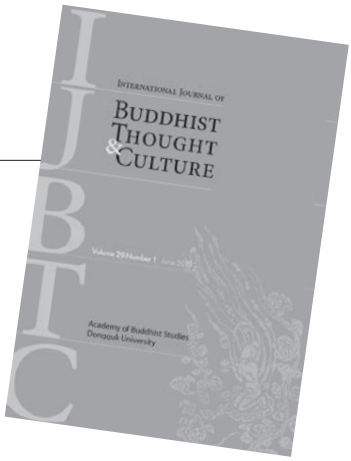

The *International Journal of Buddhist Thought & Culture* (*IJBTC*, ISSN 1598–7914) is published twice a year in June and December by the Academy of Buddhist Studies, Dongguk University.

IJBTC has been publishing to promote the Buddhist studies by encouraging comprehensive research of Buddhist thought and culture. It aims to stimulate interest in and discuss the departments of Buddhist studies, and other related programs of universities and research institutes from around the world.

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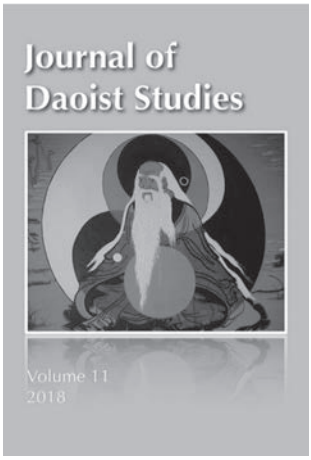
Journal of Daoist Studies



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