

Research Article

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The Religiousness of “Confucianism”, and the Revival of Confucian Religion in China Today

Abstract: The English term “Confucianism” may refer to three different concepts in the Chinese language: the school of Confucianism, scholastic tradition of Confucianism, and the religious tradition of Confucianism. From a sociological perspective, Confucianism as an official political orthodoxy no longer exists. However, Confucianism as a cultural tradition remains, and it is expressed in various aspects of the Chinese social life, which echoes the diffused characteristics of a typical Chinese religion. In this research, we try to demonstrate that the religiousness of Confucianism fulfills the cultural and ethical needs of the on-going new religious movement in China. Also, it helps modern people in their search for a life of meaning in times of cultural crisis and social *anomie*.

Keywords: Confucianism, Religiousness, Chinese Religion

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The Concepts of “Confucianism”

The English term “Confucianism” may refer to three different concepts in the Chinese language: the school of Confucianism (“Ru Jia” or “儒家”), the scholastic tradition of Confucianism (“Ru Xue” or “儒学”), and the religious tradition of Confucianism (“Ru Jiao”,

“儒教”). Shu-xian Liu divided “Confucianism” (“儒”) into three different levels. The first level is spiritual Confucianism; this refers to intellectual tradition, such as the thoughts of Confucius (孔子) and Mencius (孟子), Neo-Confucianism of Cheng-Zhu School (程朱理学) and Lu-Wang School (陆王心学). The second level is political Confucianism; this refers to the political tradition from the Han Dynasty. Finally, the third level is folk Confucianism, which refers to the religion and the values of three teachings, which are Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism (Liu, 1997:1).

Every time the issue of “Confucianism” is discussed, there is always present confusion about what type of “Confucianism” is being referred to. Is it the political one, is it the academic one, or is it the folk one which is bonded with the mysterious beliefs of Taoism and Buddhism? In recent years, through the ethnographical study of the religious tradition and the core value of Chinese culture, we have found that the revival of “Confucianism” in different levels and forms has become a visible social phenomenon. Therefore, what revived “Confucianism” should be addressed by academia. If we count the history of “Confucianism” from the Spring and Autumn periods (春秋时代) to the Warring States period (战国时代) (“Axial Age” called by Karl Jaspers), when sages such as Confucius and Mencius lived, “Confucianism” would have existed for 2,500 years. Furthermore, if we consider Confucius and Mencius as masters who had absorbed and inherited the traditions of the Chinese culture from the Zhou Dynasty, the history of “Confucianism” can be longer. “Confucianism has been a determining factor in the Chinese culture since its beginning. It laid down the structural principles, and supplied the key operational values for the basic Chinese institutions from family to state” (Yang, 1961:244) (The religious nature of Confucianism, that is whether it is a religion or not, is a controversial subject, a discussion of

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which is beyond the scope of this study²)

In modern times, regardless of their opinions on Confucius or Confucianism, there are scholars who continuously try to argue that the “Confucianism” in Chinese cultural tradition is a religion³. In fact, there are few people in present day China who claim Confucian religion as their religion. Perhaps, many people have had such experience also. Many years ago, anthropologist Yih-yuan Li mentioned such cultural embarrassment of the Chinese caused by the question of religion⁴. In the time of globalization, using a common discourse system to communicate and discuss the issues concerned by all human-beings is helpful for people from different cultural systems to understand each other.

For most Chinese people, the issue of religion and belief is a difficult and confusing subject to discuss. This is because their religious tradition is a combination of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, as well as the widely practiced ancestral worship. Such kind of situation, perhaps, can puzzle the people with the religious and cultural background of Abraham. As for Chinese intellectuals, they inherit the values of traditional doctrine of Confucius and Mencius: conducting cultivation

as a morally accomplished person *junzi* (“君子”)⁵; taking responsibilities in the society as social beings; and developing harmonious relationships with nature in the world as human beings.

In the real world, the various existence phenomenon of Confucianism, namely, the different concepts of Confucianism mentioned above, can be found. First of all, there are few intellectual elites studying ethics, history, classics, the relevant linguistics, semantic expression, and so on, in the academic ivory tower. Some of them dedicated themselves to Confucian religion by explaining and promoting the Confucian classics. For example, Tu Weiming was the most famous advocate for Confucian tradition outside China in the 1970s and 1980s.

With the on-going modernization process, social groups risk weakening the moral consensus and social order upon which the Chinese society’s well-being depends. The re-evaluation of tradition by contemporary Chinese scholars has led to the extraordinary resurgence of religious tradition. A lot of research has discovered that communities and individuals turning to these religious practices do so as a result of their search for a life of meaning as well as their struggle with moral concerns (Fan, Whitehead and Whitehead, 2010:221). Therefore, Confucianism comes back into people’s view. In the early 90s, Xiaotong Fei wrote a short article after visiting Qufu (曲阜), which was the hometown of Confucius. The article went thus: “someone wanted to destroy the Confucius Temple (Kongmiao, 孔庙) during the ‘Cultural Revolution’, but the masses protected it. Why did the masses protect the Confucius Temple? This is because at that time, the Confucius Temple was an icon of great value in the eyes of the Chinese people.” (Fei, 1992). “All countries should have its thinkers. China should have great thinkers in the world, giving its large population”. The traditional essence of Confucianism is the great contributions China has made to the world (Fei, 1992).

In the 1980s, following the rapid economic development of the so-called “Four Mini-Dragons” in the Confucian cultural area, Max Weber’s classical idea was applied and Confucian ethics was promoted as a motivating force to generate a spirit of capitalism. This forcefully refuted the assertion that Confucianism was feudalistic. Rather, Confucianism was believed to be compatible with a modern form of life and instrumental

² In W.C. Smith’s often-quoted remark, “the question ‘Is Confucianism a religion?’ is one that the West has never been able to answer, and China has never been able to ask” (See, e.g., Yong Chen, *Confucianism as Religion: Controversies and Consequences* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 84-85). Tu Weiming wrote: “The problem of whether Neo-Confucianism is a religion should not be confused with the more significant question: what does it mean to be *religious* in the Neo-Confucian community? The solution to the former often depends on the particular interpretive position we choose to take on what constitutes the paradigmatic example of a religion, which may have little to do with our knowledge about Neo-Confucianism as a spiritual tradition (my emphasis) (Tu Weiming, *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1985: 132)). TU Weiming pointed that many scholars working on China or Chinese religion, confronted a question whether Confucianism is a religion or not. I asked them a question, what is religion? If someone did not recognize Confucianism as a religion, you can infer that the definition of religion they adopted is quite conservative. If someone says that Confucianism is a religion, you should be careful with the definition, which must include as many different ideologies religion includes (Tu, *Wenhui*, November 21, 2011).

³ Such as Kang Youwei, Ren Jiyu, Li Shen, etc.

⁴ Anthropologist Li Yih-yuan (李亦园) has suggested that misunderstandings arise when the wrong question is posed. If asked by a Westerner, “To which religion do you belong?”, a Chinese person is likely to respond, “It’s hard to say!”

⁵ Junzi, Gentlemen, superior man, noble person, paradigmatic individual, exemplary person. On the Confucian account, *junzi* serve the role of models (*fa*), ritual propriety (*li*), and appropriate (*yi*) conduct. Confucius had extended the notion of *junzi* from its original reference to nobles to include the virtuous cultivation available to all.

in facilitating East Asian modernization. This thesis is controversial, but the idea of an “elective affinity” between Confucian ethics and the rise of Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Mainland China, and Vietnam is widely accepted (Tu, 2012:79)..

For example, Ambrose King developed his hypothesis on the cultural conditions involved in assimilating capitalism: Confucian values are providing the motivational drive for economic development in East Asian society (King, 1983:75). His argument, based on evidence from Hong Kong, was that the Hong Kong Chinese consciously or subconsciously transformed Confucianism into a kind of rationalistic traditionalism which was very much needed for the development of Capitalism there. Therefore, the assimilation of capitalism in Hong Kong has been facilitated by the cultural “conditions”, “provided by a transformed type of Confucianism, or by what I call rationalistic traditionalism” (King, 1996:264-276). Although the imperial or institutional Confucianism never took root in Hong Kong for historical reasons, Hong Kong was full of social Confucianism or Confucianism in everyday life (a set of Confucian beliefs and values accepted by the man in the street). Because Confucian values form part of the common cultural upbringings shared by the Chinese people in their everyday lives, it has provided intrinsic transcendent values which includes glorifying ancestors by achieving worldly success. In fact, the values of Confucianism are not necessarily an obstacle to the development of modernization in East Asia; it may provide a spiritual disposition for the modern market economy (Chen, 1995). Thus, the impact of social Confucianism in King’s term is more significant than the impact of political and scholarly Confucianism in modern time.

The Revival of Confucianism can be seen from different social rituals—the range is from the teachings of classical Confucian canons to the teachings of Confucian behaviors on the basis of an ancient manual for students, and from the revival of the traditional way of dressing to the invention of Confucian weddings (Sun, 2012:324). Some new developed social organizations have taken the role of organizers, such as the Yidan School (“一耽学堂”) in Beijing and the Mengmu School (“孟母堂”) in Shanghai. Learning Confucian classics and social behaviors, together with the involvement of public good as a new social movement, is strongly supported by Confucian values. In addition, in the multiple and complicated religious revivals and religious renovations, there has appeared the practice which is not only centered on Confucian religion, but also centered on religious rituals of Buddhism and Taoism, and the content of folk religions. Some typical

cases have reflected that religious Confucianism became an important part of folk belief through the rebuilding of lineage traditions in the living world. In a research of *The Temple of Memories*, Jun Jing reported that the local Kong (the offspring of Confucius) had built the temple for the worship of Confucius and their own local ancestors, and they had called it *Confucian temple* rather than *ancestral shrine* (Jing, 1996). The Confucian temple played a core role in the reconstruction of the religious life, the awareness of kinship, and the structure of power in *Dachuan* (大川) (Jing, 1996). There are similar cases in our study of the clans in Southern Zhejiang. The Kong lineage temple provides another kind of example, where its new incarnation serves as a Confucius temple as well as a kinship association. It thus serves the whole village as well as people of the Kong lineage. From the perspective of today’s social practice, despite the disappearance of political orthodox position of “Confucianism”, the traditions of “Confucianism” still exist in social life with its variability—this is in accordance with the richness and the complexity of the Chinese civilization, and is echoed with the diffuseness of the Chinese religious practice. Therefore, “Confucianism”, in the light of religion, has more vivid performance in China today.

The Theological Foundation of Chinese Beliefs and the Religious Character of “Confucianism”

The religious character of Confucianism has existed from as early as two thousand years ago when Confucianism emerged. But during the feudal era, Confucianism was a determining factor, which laid down structural principles and supplied key operational values for the basic institutions from family to state as cultural and political orthodox. Therefore, its religious character, including belief in spirits and miracles, was incompatible with Confucianism. According to C. K. Yang, in the Chinese religious tradition, the supernatural realm was patterned closely after the image of the human world. The Confucian tradition had long recognized the need for popular ethicopolitical cults, as numerous classical statements attest. The most succinct one is found in Confucian classic *I Ching* (易经[the Book of Change]): “The sages devised guidance by the way of the gods, and the [people in the] empire became obedient 圣人以神道设教，天下服矣” (Yang, 1961:144-145).

The religious factors represent the major aspects of Confucianism in the belief of Heaven and fate, the

theory of *Yin-yang*, and the *Five Elements*. Actually, Confucianism, which was started by Confucius during the late Spring and Autumn periods, was based on religious foundations with beliefs such as belief in “Heaven and fate, and ancestral worship of the slavery period of the *Shang* and *Zhou* Dynasties” (Ren, 1980:61-62). In his classic study of *Religion in Chinese Society*, sociologist C. K. Yang identified the heart of China’s earliest religion—which he calls “the original indigenous religion of China” (Yang, 1961:24)—as “the belief in Heaven and fate, the condoning of divination, the close alliance of the theory of Yin-yang and the Five Elements, the emphasis on sacrifice, and ancestral worship” (Yang, 1961:225). In his research, Zhaoguang Ge noticed that during the *Shang* dynasty, magical powers brought order to the living world, such as, systemizing the concept of ancestral worship and imperial power, as well as the knowledge and techniques of divination and sacrifice rites (Ge, 2007). Diviners interpreted the patterns of cracks produced by heating pieces of animal bone, which were often shoulder blades of cattle or shells of turtles. These readings would then be used to guide royal decision-making. Benjamin Schwartz reminds us that “a good portion of the oracle bone literature is concerned with religious matters” (Schwartz, 1985:18).

From *Shang* Dynasty forward—and possibly even before—the Chinese people have revered their deceased ancestors and devised elaborate rituals to honor them. Such ceremonies became a core element of the religious orientation of the culture (Schwartz, 1985:20), and were firmly integrated into Confucianism by Confucius, Mencius, and subsequent Confucians. As a religious orientation, ancestral worship “highlights the kinship group as a paradigm of social order—that is, as a network of intimately related roles. The fact that the relationships between these roles span the division between the world of the living and the numinous world of the dead may indeed enormously reinforce the sense of the ‘ontic’ reality of role and status, and of the order in which they are embedded” (Schwartz, 1985:23). The rites of ancestral veneration expanded across Chinese history. Chang Kuang-Chih (2002:29) pointed the *continuity* of the Chinese civilization—which was created according to the integrated universe theory. Therefore, the Chinese had preserved well the kinship in the social structure passed down from the clan society; condoning of divination was dominant in the operation of ancient politics. Chinese civilization adopted many religious elements and handed them down continuously—a sustainable harmonious and mysterious relationship between the human species and nature. Confucianism integrated the belief in Heaven and

ancestral worship which came from the *Shang* and *Zhou* Dynasty, and permeated into the political system and the civil moral teaching through ritual and Ceremonial system. However, the religious elements of the Chinese civilization played a significant role in the Chinese social life, even until today.

Confucius’s time was under social collapse and dynasty decline—“rites collapsed and music disappeared”, and wars between princes continued. Confucius, Mencius, and many other thinkers at that time tried to rescue the world from chaos and sufferings by applying their own ideas. At the same time, some of them even put efforts to reduce the influence of supernatural divination—disenchantment of the world. Therefore, many scholars have found the agnostic nature of Confucius and Confucianism through the statement of Confucius *Analects*. For example, “the Master did not talk about the extraordinary forces and disturbing spirits”⁶. Confucius himself had seemed to disengage himself from explicitly religious issues, because his main mission was to promote moral cause as secular means in a chaotic society. At the time of Confucius, and for two centuries afterwards, a rationalistic trend of thoughts resulted in a growing emphasis on the moral and social functions of sacrifice as a vital part of the Confucian system of *Li* (ritualism) for the regulation of social conduct (Yang, 1961:254). In this instance, Confucian doctrine was characterized by a predominance of this worldly and even rationalistic quality in the very beginning. Tu Weiming even thought that holistic Confucian humanism is more relevant to the tendency of the day than secular-humanism developed from the Enlightenment era, from the today’s point of view (Tu, 2004).

However, we may need to take note of the time in which Confucius lived. During that period, gods and spirits were thought to be pervasive; in fact, supernatural concepts had such a strong impact on the human world which lay beyond the imagination of modern people. Hence, the interactions between Heaven and man were widely received as a standard of interpreting man’s moral conduct, and a reference for interpreting the operation of supernatural forces in the sky, the rise and fall of a dynasty, and the art of divination. Hence, supernatural explanations for natural phenomena in the universe as well as intimate events in living world were based on natural forces. Confucianism eventually developed institutional doctrine for social and moral values by operating political and sacrificial rituals. Hence, without religious aspects, Confucianism would probably not have

⁶ The text is from the *Shu Er* (述而) [Transmission] of the *Analects* (论语).

had such success as an institutional Chinese political and social structure in the past two thousand years (Yang, 1961:257).

Kongzi (Confucius), Mengzi (Mencius), and those who followed them took up many of the spiritual themes which were applied in their cultures, and further developed and re-interpreted. In the past centuries, this complex intellectual insight and spiritual conviction coalesced into a culture-wide belief system with many religious characteristics (Fan, Whitehead and Whitehead, 2010:202). In his remarkable book *Religion in Chinese society*, C. K. Yang pointed out that the religious aspects in Confucianism system enabled itself to work with religious influence and supernatural concepts. Yang’s discussion had covered religious influence on different social aspects: the integration of family, the operation of the mandate of Heaven, the ethicopolitical cult, and the traditional moral order; the values at the heart of the Confucian heritage, which survived as traditions, were “not only on the ground of rationalistic appeal but also on the strength of supernatural sanction” (Yang, 1961:255). The beliefs that anchored this value system were culture-wide convictions about the transcendent influence of *Tian* (天), and the moral guidance available through attuning oneself to the mysterious—and also transcendent—*Dao* (道).

To sum up, the religious elements of Confucianism mainly originated from the traditional belief in heaven and ancestral worship before Confucius, and were later enhanced in daily life through political institutions and cultural systems developed by the Confucian scholars. In *Zhongguo Wenhua De Gen Yu Hua* (中国文化的根与花 *The Roots and Flowers of Chinese Culture*), Guanghu He held the view that religious Confucianism did not refer to academic Confucianism or entire Confucianism, but referred to the so-called “the original-indigenous religion” which came down from the Shang Dynasty about 3,000 years ago. This was a system whose core belief was in the Heaven God, including the Heaven God concept, the Heaven and Fate, the sacrifice ritual, and the relevant institutions; Confucian scholars were the key players and this system was based on the Confucian doctrine (He, 2000). “The original-indigenous religion” system of He is the theological foundation and the basic concepts of Chinese religion. Because of theological foundations, the religious system of the belief in Heaven and ancestral worship enabled Confucian scholars to influence the political operation as supervisors of emperors, and to educate ordinary people as teachers/masters in daily life. The universal acceptance of belief in Heaven and ancestral worship provided the imperial powers that were with an important religious basis for the political

integration of a vast country. More importantly, the ethical content of belief in Heaven and ancestral worship created a submissive attitude in the populace. So, the formula of Confucian orthodoxy included moral meaning into imperial power and the moralization of power, giving a stability to the institution of government which could have never been achieved by force alone (Yang, 1961:136-138).

In its historical development, the Confucian system of moral and religious values became more and more diffused throughout the Chinese society, often being fused with other spiritual systems. Especially after the Han Dynasty, the Confucian value system intermingled with the Taoist and Buddhist ideals which had gained more prominence in the Chinese culture. Because of the influence of Confucianism embedded within the Chinese society, most Chinese people gained experience and practice without knowing (百姓日用而不知).

The Religious Confucianism and New Religious Movements

What is the fate of Confucianism in the age of modernity? For the past 30 years in China, there has been a remarkable resurgence of religious beliefs and practice. The revival of “Confucianism” has received much attention both academically and politically among the new religious movements in China. The fate of “Confucianism” can be revealed from different dimensions.

Confucianism is no longer the Orthodoxy: At the beginning of the 20th century, with the abolition of the imperial examination system and the collapse of Qing Empire, the historical and institutional links between the Confucian classical education and the reward distribution system ended in China. Confucianism lost its political legitimacy as the orthodox ideology. In the subsequent New Culture Movement and other modernization endeavors, beliefs in Heaven and ancestral worship as well as religious aspects of Confucianism were labeled as “superstition”. Especially since the middle of the twentieth century, the tradition of Confucianism was mainly seen as a historical burden to wipe out. Nevertheless, this reached the highest level during the *Cultural Revolution*. Even at the beginning of the reform and opening up, many so-called cultural elites still regarded Confucianism as the root of China’s backwardness. That is to say, in the current political system and mainstream discourse of the Chinese culture, Confucianism is not a determining factor. It merely acts as one of the many different cultural forms.

Tu Weiming, as a leading scholar of New Confucianism since the 1980s, admitted that “The rules of the game

determining the relevance of Confucianism to China's modern transformation were changed so remarkably that most attempts to present a Confucian idea for its own sake were ignored outside a small coterie of ivory-tower academicians. Thus, the goals of modernization and economic development overrode broader humanistic and communitarian concerns" (Tu, 2004).

Confucianism is no longer the core of education: In the traditional period of China, the influence of Confucian thoughts and moral teachings to the Chinese people and Chinese societies mainly came from Confucianism embedded within the educational system. Thus, this main way of selecting officials—staffed the officialdom of the government, by providing moral values—penetrates every fiber of social life. But, the modern educational system and the socialization method hardly have the content of Confucian classics and moral teaching, and very few people educated in schools after 1949 were familiar with traditional Chinese literacy. Ironically, people born in the 1950s and 1960s began to know Confucius and Mencius, and some of their teachings, probably from the propaganda articles of “anti-Lin Biao and anti-Confucius” campaign in the 1970s. An old gentleman we interviewed, who was born in the early years of the Republic of China, had studied for 6 years in the new-style of schooling, and yet was able to recite some of Confucian Classic texts, for example, *Four Books* (四书) and *Five Classics* (五经)⁷; he was not a calligrapher, but he had always written with Chinese writing in brush pen, even at an age of over 80 years. As most other people who have received education after the new Cultural Movement, he embraced science and looked down upon folk culture as superstition. However, Confucianism and even the core values of traditional intellectuals had been socialized into his personality. The main contents studied by the contemporary students are built on various scientific knowledge, multiple humanistic traditions based on secular concept, and other instrumental skills, including a variety of foreign languages, computers, etc. Chinese students spend so much time and so much effort on foreign language study, playing video games, and online chatting. In other words, the modern education has little relationship with Confucianism. People born in the 50s and 60s still socialize with the stories such as *Kong*

Rong Gave away Bigger Pears (孔融让梨)⁸, while today's children are probably more familiar with *Ultraman*, *Transformers*, and so on.

The decline of Confucian tradition: There is no doubt that Confucianism has had a nightmare in the past 100 years, since it lingered mainly as a residue of Chinese cultural tradition. During the 20th century, the ideal value and instrumental value of Confucianism were discouraged and despised by the revolutionaries, and proclaimed as fetters to people's ambition in a changing society. It is therefore difficult to find any individual today who is strongly committed to Confucian values. In contemporary Hong Kong, Taiwan, or the Mainland, Confucianism hardly appears in official state ideology in any form. We have visited the *Ye Shi* Museum (叶适博物馆) in Rui'an, Zhejiang Province several times. *Ye Shi* was the most famous figure of Yongjia School⁹ of Neo-Confucianism in Song Dynasty. It is gratifying that his descendants have built a private museum for him today after one thousand years. Now, the museum is under the management of Mr. Ye, and he admitted frankly that he had only known there was a *Xinshui Gong* (心水公, the title of Ye Shi) among their many ancestors, but had known nothing about *Ye Shi* for years. Until recent years, when somebody came with an initiative for building the museum, he began to know that *Xinshui Gong* was the famous Confucian master Ye Shi in Song Dynasty, and that his ideas on practical learning and applying Confucian doctrine to real world problems were recognized as the theory of the economic success in Wenzhou. The ancestral temple of Clan Ye is not far from the Ye Shi Museum. There are many people who come to worship their ancestors there. Naturally, the existence of the museum has provided more rationality to the activities of ancestral worship of the ancestral temple of Clan Ye.

Cheung and King had interviewed altogether 41 entrepreneurs between 1997 and 2000 from mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaysia. Their research had found that the Confucian entrepreneurs

7 The *Four Books* (四书) are Chinese classic texts illustrating the core value and belief systems in Confucianism; The *Five Classics* (五经) are five pre-Qin Chinese books that form part of the traditional Confucian canon.

8 In the Eastern Han Dynasty, there was a person called *Kong Rong*. He had five older brothers and one younger brother. One day, his father bought some pears. He picked one of the largest pears and deliberately gave it to *Kong Rong*. But *Kong Rong* shook his head and picked up the smallest one. *Kong Rong* said: “I am younger, so I should eat the smaller pear, and brothers should eat the bigger ones.”

9 Yongjia School (永嘉学派) is a neo-Confucianism School composed mostly of philosophers from Wenzhou Prefecture in Zhejiang province. Yongjia School stressed practical learning and application of Confucian doctrine to real world problems. This school had important influence on later thinkers from Zhejiang province, including Wang Shouren and Huang Zongxi, who were the most important philosophers in the Ming and Qing periods.

were thus a rapidly disappearing social type. “Since Confucianism has long lost its institutional support, it lingers on mainly as a residue of the Chinese cultural tradition. It is therefore difficult to find individuals today who are strongly committed to Confucian values, especially in the business world, where instrumental rationality has come to dominate (Cheung and King, 2004)”.

Indeed, although the authors had noticed that they could not be certain, prior to the actual interview whether the individual would fit their definition of a Confucian entrepreneur, a majority of the entrepreneurs they interviewed could be considered as what Peter Berger referred to as “vulgarized Confucians”. Cheung and King’s study adopted the term Peter Berger used for denoting the Confucian tradition that was embedded in the Chinese people’s normative and behavioral orientations instead of the “high” Confucianism of the Mandarin elite in traditional China. As one of their respondents, Mr. L frankly said, “As far as books on Confucianism or Confucius are concerned, I really do not know much. However, as far as the Confucianism or the Confucius as discussed in the newspapers are concerned, then, [we are subject to] Confucian influences, especially for a long time due to our educational background, [and] the family background”. The Confucian values, which are now part of universal ethics, unapparently identified the connection with classical Confucian literature. We observed the same situation from Kang Xiaoguang’s study on the renaissance of traditional Confucianism. The research and questionnaires’ design had showed that Confucianism was treated as the major elements of national culture together with Buddhism and Taoism (Kang, 2012).

Many scholars have pointed out that the modern scholars with Confucian orientation should give up the traditional fantasy—either to serve the emperor as a successful Confucian scholar, or to serve the commons as a scholastic master (出则必为帝者师，处则必为天下万世师) (Wang, 1960:209). Additionally, they should withdraw from the myths of political Confucianism and be cast aside to the general for answering the questions of ordinary people in order to reconstruct the ethics and values of Confucianism in the countryside, communities, campuses, and all other places where human activities takes place (Yan, 2007). As a cultural identity and spiritual symbol, the cultural Confucians today must face the golden rule of Confucianism—what you do not wish for yourself, do not do it to others(己所不欲，勿施于人) (*Analects--Weiling*), and if you wish to be established seek also to establish others(己欲立而立人，己欲达而达人) (*Analects--Yung Yey*). Instead of relying on the upper line, it is better to take the *mass line*—that is, on one hand, it is necessary

to *go to the folks* for observing the Confucian orientation of Chinese people in everyday life; while on the other hand, *going to the folks* also means to transfer vulgarized Confucianism as the basic practice of socialization so that Confucianism can become the mandatory reason and conscience of the people (Chen, 2011). In fact, going to folks is not the artificial or temporary expedient strategy of Confucianism to obtain existence in modern China. The current situation is that the elite version of Confucian movement has achieved little success; but, there are many different versions of revival of Confucianism at the grassroots level.

Religious Confucianism and new religious movement: Confronting the widespread *anomie* phenomenon in modern society, Daniel Bell stated that: “I will risk an unfashionable answer—the return in Western society of some conception of religion” (Bell, 1976:29). The real problem of modernity is the problem of belief—to use an unfashionable term, a spiritual crisis—because the new anchorages have proved illusory and the old ones have become submerged (Bell, 1976:28). As China is facing a similar moral predicament in modern times, efforts for moral reconstruction need the regression of Confucianism as the cultural capitals. Confucianism had long lost its institutional support, mainly serving as a traditional residue for decades. Therefore, it is the time for religious Confucianism to gain the opportunities with respect to faith and mysticism. The religious character of Confucianism, which originated from preliminary period of Chinese civilization, has become an essential content of the innovations and developments of the newly-developing religions movements caused by contemporary issues. This “unique Confucian spiritual orientation has been embraced by most, if not all, major religious traditions. Like the Confucians, the secular is regarded as sacred, or, more dramatically, the separation between the defiled earth and sublime Heaven is rejected” (Tu, 2012:85).

In the past 30 years, a variety of non-institutional religious rituals have been revived and developed, which, to some extents, has reflected the wide penetration of the religious Confucianism. Ancestral worship, supported by the idea of filial piety of Confucianism, is practiced nationwide in the modern society. The recompilation of family genealogy is popular in many areas all over China, and it involves people from both rural and urban areas. Many clan organizations have published their own newsletters or other periodicals, both in the electronic format and in hard copies. So far, the revival of ancestral veneration has drawn the attention of many scholars (Chan, Madsen and Unger, 1992; Jing, 1996; Wang and Feuchtwang, 1997; Yang

and Liu, 2000, etc). It is noteworthy that Qingming Festival was restored as a public holiday in 2008, which was reserved for ancestral worship. In the process of the revival of popular religions in China, the so called “ethicpolitical cult” (Yang, 1961:144) has provided the necessary support and the cultural legality. For example, the temple of Lin Xiangru¹⁰, which is located in Qiangcun, Handan, Hebei Province, includes an exhibition of the historical Lin Xiangru with an emphasis on the cultural tradition of harmony and patriotism, providing a civic education for all the visitors (Fan and Chen, forward coming). There are many similar examples. From Fan’s study on Shenzhen, a city which lies on the border between mainland China and Hong Kong, she discovered that the dynamics of modernization interacted with the search for spiritual meaning. Middle-class residents in Shenzhen draw selectively on perennial elements of China’s indigenous cultural tradition to support a personal quest. But in this new religious milieu, traditional elements were readily adapted to suit new life circumstances (Fan, Whitehead and Whithead, 2010:228). Master Jingkong, who is quite popular, has explained the Buddhist classics with a combination of Taoism and Confucianism. Since the ideas of Confucianism have diffused into people’s life, people have embraced Confucianism as significant social capitals in their life and as necessary issues for their spiritual well-being and religious movement.

The religious Confucianism is widely embedded into people’s life in the world today. At the same time, all kinds of institutional religions are diffused and marginalized in secularized modern societies, which give chances to the appearance and development of new religions. The newly developed religions and religious phenomena are incorporated with Confucian ethics, ritualistic concepts, and social care. Moreover, all the so-called new religions and religious phenomena are not entirely new—it is, in fact, a blend of modern issues with traditional religious elements. The integration of three religions—Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism—was inherent in folk society, and new religions mostly fused with diverse religious traditions. In modern society, “besides the three traditional religions (Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism), the growing folk sectarian movement conducted their belief in syncretism of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism” (Ding, 2004:362). The outstanding feature of new

religions in their developing process is that the religious orientation of Confucianism has gotten more obvious with their supplementation with Buddhism and Taoism. The new religious movement in Taiwan has demonstrated this trend. For example, *Xiaism*¹¹ (夏教) in Taiwan is quite popular, which has been identified as a belief with Confucian morality and ancestral worship, Taoist meditation techniques, and the pursuit of enlightenment (taken from Buddhism), and has been named as *Sanyijiao—Three Teachings in One*¹². From the founder of Sanyijiao—Lin Zhaoen’s writings—to the Heaven to the confession of Xiaism practitioners, we could observe the development of the religiousness of Confucianism. The practice and accomplishment of Confucian moral life are dependent on external god’s will, religious authority of moral reciprocity, and initiation into the ‘Heart Method’ of personal spiritual self-cultivation (Cheng, 1988:245).

In Taiwan, the new phenomenon of religion has given the traditional religious concepts and symbols new chances of expression in the rapid social development of the country. The development of “Divine Teachings of the Confucian Religion” or Ruzong shenjiao (儒宗神教, “Ru” means Confucian or Confucianism) in Taiwan is a good example. In the highly diversified religious marketplace of Taiwan, the development of the liturgy and doctrine of phoenix hall (鸾堂) has furnished an enlightening example of the appropriation of the elements, which has been perceived as Confucian within popular religion, for the purpose of inventing a tradition for a new religious movement and carving out a distinctive niche. By examining this use of the label “Ru” for self-appellation, we will be able to get a first glimpse of popular forms of Confucianism in Taiwanese culture (Clart, 2003). So-called phoenix halls are spread over the Island of Taiwan with spirit-writing cults identifying themselves explicitly as Confucian. Gradually, “Divine Teachings of the Confucian Religion” or Ruzong shenjiao (儒宗神教) has become the general name of phoenix halls (Wang, 1997:51).

Yiguandao (一贯道), a folk sectarian religion which means Consistent Way, was highly denounced both in mainland China and Taiwan. After the end of Martial Law in Taiwan in 1987, Yiguandao developed dramatically, and

¹⁰ Lin Xiangru (蔺相如) served as a government official in the early kingdom of Zhao dynasty. Even today, the citizens of Handan City recall the skill and courage displayed by this man during his long life which he devoted to promoting the welfare of the village and its inhabitants.

¹¹ Xiaism (夏教) is another name of Sanyijiao (三一教).

¹² Sanyijiao (三一教), Three-in-One (Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism) was founded by Lin Zhaoen (林兆恩, 1517–98) in Putian, Fujian. After his death, Lin has been apotheosized as the ‘Lord of the Three-in-One’. His disciples developed his cult and his religious movement in a series of splinter groups. It has its independent ritual tradition, similar to those of Taoism and Buddhism. Its ritual specialists perform communal offerings (*jiao*) and funeral services (*gong-de*), along with individual rites.

even returned to the mainland. Yiguandao represents a moralistic society, with its objective to save all humanity from the last calamity. All its followers are encouraged to follow the moral practices, especially Confucian ethics and virtues with a combination of Buddhism and Taoism. In the Yiguandao represents a moralistic society, with objective to help save all human from the last calamity. The members are encouraged to follow moral practices such as: The “five ethics” and “eight virtues” (from Confucianism) Vegetarianism, and abstinence from alcohol and tobacco (as in Chinese Buddhism) as: In the globalized world today, Yiguandao has spread from the Taiwanese Island to some countries in Southeast Asia. Getting rid of the suspicious mystery and carrying the Confucian torch, Yiguandao has emphasized its inheritance and development of traditional culture. Its understanding of the principle of the heaven has led to its learning of the various cosmologies in traditional Chinese culture, and its inheriting of the comprehensive wisdom of the management of the Chinese. The heart of the thoughts of Yiguandao has been tied to religious cosmologies. Although Yiguandao included different elements from many religions, certainly, it has claimed that it was “Rujiao” (religious Confucianism).

In the ideology of mainstream China, the situation of Confucianism is still quite obscure. The “Confucian revival” of the first decade of the new century was a highly fragmented and scattered phenomenon. The reason behind this fragmentation was because the reference to Confucianism was translated into a patchwork of different, non-coordinated initiatives (educative, “religious”, cultural, patrimonial, commercial, political, etc.), and was carried out by people stemming from all classes of society. Although the authorities usually use the icon of Confucianism or Confucius under its cultural banner, it is virtually difficult to avoid touching the religious part of Confucianism (Billioud, 2010). For example, the Chinese government commemorated Confucius with a high-profile ceremony, which was broadcasted by the China Central Television (CCTV) and reported by hundreds of domestic and foreign media synchronously. Furthermore, the Qingming Festival, which is mainly for ancestral worship, has been declared as a statutory holiday. The folk activities of Confucianism (“Rujiao”) are even more widely spread—for example, the numerous descendants of Confucius over China have sacrificed their famous ancestor, built their ancestral temples, and recompiled the genealogies of their own clan. Schools for reading Confucian classics have been established around the country, and people such as Fei Pang (with his *Yidan School*), Qing Jiang (with his *Yangming Jingshe*, 阳明精舍), and Caigui Wang

(with his speech of letting children read classics) have supported them. The motto of Fengyi Wong (1864-1937), who was living in period of the Republic of China and had been honored as the *Confucian Huineng* (儒学慧能)¹³, has become re-prevalent. The list goes on. All these have shown that religious expression is an essential part of Confucianism. Another cause for concern is that religious Confucianism has gotten the chance to have systematical development in the form of religious institutions—the religious practices and the innovations. Religious Confucianism today is trying to make contributions to renew social and moral identity, to solve the social and psychological problems caused by drastic changes via traditional moral consciousness, ritualistic performance, and the mysterious faiths; it has adjusted its organizational form—which used to come under pressures of from highly institutional local Christian groups. However, they provide more public service, paying attention to individual sufferings, and having collective activities to promote mutual care so that the development and influence of the organizations in local community can be achieved. Meanwhile, by incorporating it with the discourse of the mainstream ideology, it has gotten more space to develop. As an illustration, Confucian Congregation (*Rujiao Daotan* 儒教道坛) in Northern Fujian has grown rapidly in the last ten years by promoting Confucian classic reading, practicing simplified Confucian-style rite, and healing folks’ sickness (Chen and Fan, forth coming).

It is obvious that both the continuation of tradition and the innovation of religion are responses to the world around us; it seems that religious Confucianism has supported the cultural and ethical appeals of the newly developed religions, and has resonated with people by sacred power and magical efficacy. In history, “Confucianism set up no god as the premise of its teachings, and its basic principles were developed mainly from pragmatic considerations. Even the infusion of Buddhism ideas into Neo-Confucianism did not alter its basic this-worldly orientation. Confucianism did address itself to the ultimate meaning of life and death, but only in terms of moral responsibility to man, not to any supernatural power” (Yang, 1961: 26). Confronted by the new questions of meaning and purpose today, religious Confucianism in local society is incorporated with newly developed religions by taking Confucianism as its tradition, and the divine power to receive efficacy

¹³ Huineng (慧能AD 638–AD 713) was a Chinese Chán monastic who was one of the most important figures in the entire Buddhism tradition. Huineng has been traditionally viewed as the Sixth and Last Patriarch of Chán Buddhism.

for accomplishing its teachings.

In his book on the desecularization of the world, Peter Berger had pointed out that the assumption that we live in a secularized world is false. Even in his early work, he had contributed to the theory of this literature. His general prediction was that “the world of the next century will not be less religious than the world of today” (Berger, 1999:12). Indeed, human beings have never given up their pursuits of the ultimate questions—human destiny, suffering, and death. There are still a number of crucial questions facing human cultures today. Therefore, the religious traditions that thrive in contemporary cultures retain many elements that have their source in humanity’s earliest religious expression: “Nothing is ever lost...aspects of tribal and archaic religion survives among us” (Bellah, 1970). Religious Confucianism is a part of the thriving traditions.

Therefore, we emphasize the existence and modern value of the religious character of Confucianism and explain its real effect on religious innovation and the development, which, to a certain extent, can help us interpret the fate of Confucianism in our current circumstance. Religious Confucianism is diffused in the living world, and it plays a significant role within the new religious movements. Hence, we can claim that Confucianism is still alive today, and that it nurtures religious organizations which have adopted Confucian moral principles.

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关于“儒”的宗教性与儒教在当代中国的复兴

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“儒”有几“性”

英文的“Confucianism”，在中文至少有三个不同的概念来对应：儒家，儒学，儒教。刘述先也曾区分“儒”的三种不同层面：精神的儒家，指孔孟，程朱，陆王精神的大传统；政治化的儒家，指汉代以来作为朝廷意理的传统；民间的儒家，指三教流行在民间的价值信仰。²

每当讨论“儒”的问题，我们难免会有些犹豫，所论者到底指的是政治的“儒”，还是学术的“儒”，还是化民成俗，与佛道神秘信仰结合的“儒”？近些年，在我们致力于宗教传统的民族志研究以及深化对中国文化核心价值的认识时，发现不同层面和不同形式的“儒”的复兴已经成为一个无法回避社会现象。那么，我们所关注并正在复兴的“儒”究竟是什么意义上的“儒”，恐怕是学术界需要正视的问题。如果从孔子，孟子等圣人生活的春秋与战国之交的时代（雅斯贝尔斯所谓“轴心时代”）算起，“儒”的传统已经二千五百年了；如果将孔孟作为商周以降中华文明传统的集大成者，那么与“儒”相关的历史要更为久远。“儒”自汉朝开始作为文化正统，王朝统治的伦理基础，社会精英思想与价值的主要来源，以及教化民众的核心内容，从而形成了多重性格，也导致了有关“儒”的性属之争论。（有关儒学与儒教的具体定义或定位问题，学界有不同的声音，不是本研究的兴趣所在。）³

近代以来，无论对孔子或儒学的看法如何，不断有学者试图将中国文化传统中的“Confucianism”论证为宗教。⁴实际上，在今天的中国号称自己信奉“儒教”者并不在多数。恐怕不少人都有过这样的经历——被问及你信仰什么宗教的时候不知如何作答。人类学家李亦园多年前就曾经提到过中国人面对这样问题而出现的文化

尴尬。⁵不过，在日益全球化的时代，使用彼此共通的话语体系沟通人类关注的话题，有助于来自不同文化体系的人相互理解。就大多数中国人而言，其宗教信仰难以很清晰地表达的原因，在于其中混合着儒释道的信仰传统，还有普遍的祖先崇拜。这种状况，恐怕会令那些来自亚伯拉罕宗教文化背景的人有些摸不着头脑。作为一个中国的读书人，我们承继着不少来自孔孟学说的价值传统，关于君子该如何有操守，心与性的修炼等；作为一个在社会上安身立命者，我们努力地尽到自己的责任；作为一个生活世界的人，我们用各种方式达成生命之我与自然界之我之间的和谐。

在现实世界中，我们发现各种各样“儒”之存在的现象，即上述的几种不同层面的“儒”。首先，有少数知识精英在学术象牙塔中研究儒的精神，历史，典籍，甚至相关的语言，语意表达等等。其中有些学者在致力于通过对儒家经典的解说与推介试图实现“儒教”的影响力，如杜维明从上世纪七八十年代以来的大量努力。

伴随着现代化的进程，社会上出现了越发严重的道德缺失、信任危机和社会失序的情况，促使人们思考，当代中国人应该如何重新审视自己的文化传统，应该如何从传统价值中获得精神营养，于是儒学重新走进人们的视野。很多学者发现，中国传统文化的恢复与发展，社区生活以及个人透过宗教活动来寻求意义的同时也获得了道德支持。⁶早在九十年代初，费孝通先生在访问曲阜以后写下的一篇小文中指出：“‘文化大革命’中有人要破坏孔庙，群众不让，被保护了下来。为什么老百姓要保护它？说明它代表着一个东西，代表着中国人最宝贵的东西。”“各国都应当有自己的思想家，中国人口这么多，应当在世界的思想之林有所表现”，而儒的传统之精髓就是中国对世界重要的贡献。⁷

同时，儒家思想观念的现实存在与现代化相生相长的现象，特别是其伦理实践的宗教性，早在八十年代东亚经济开始起飞的时代就受到广泛关注，不少学者发现儒家伦理所蕴含的着某种超越精神，与韦伯所揭示的新教伦理有异曲同工之处。儒学被认为与现代生活形式

¹ 范丽珠，复旦大学社会学教授，博士生导师，复旦-UC当代中国中心执行副主任；陈纳，复旦大学社会发展研究中心研究员。

² 刘述先编：《儒家思想与现代世界》，台北：中央研究院中国文哲研究所，1997年，导言，第1页。

³ 长期提倡儒学价值的学者杜维明最近提到：很多人在做中国研究或者宗教研究时，很想知道儒学是否是宗教？对此，我一般会反问他们什么是宗教？当有人说儒教决不是宗教时，那么可以推测出，他对于宗教的定义是根据传统性宗教来定义的。而如果说儒教是一种宗教时，你就要很小心，因为他可能考虑把各种不同意识形态作为宗教。“通过对话让人类‘软着陆’——杜维明与罗伯特·贝拉关于‘轴心文明’的对话”，《文汇报》，2011年11月21日。

⁴ 例如，康有为，任继愈，李申等。

⁵ 李亦园发现：外国人通常总喜欢问我们，你们中国原来信的是什么教的啊？而我们“总觉得难以正面回答”，“其实答不出我们自己信什么教是有其症结所在的，这一症结在于问题问的不对，西方人一向以自己的立场，以信仰超自然一定要成为一‘教’，所以会问别人信什么‘教’；假如他们都能体会别人的信仰不一定要成为一个‘教’，而把问题问成‘你们的信仰是怎样的’，那么问题就容易回答了。”见李亦园：《宗教与神话论集》，台北：立绪文化事业有限公司1998年，第168-169页。

⁶ Lizhu Fan, James Whitehead and Evelyn Whitehead, *Sociology of Religion: Religion and China*, Beijing: Current Press 2010, p. 221.

⁷ 费孝通，“孔林片思”，《读书》，1992年第9期。

相契合并助力于东亚的现代化，该观点有些自相矛盾，但是在儒家伦理和日本、韩国、台湾、香港、新加坡、中国大陆以及越南等国家地区的发展之间，“选择性亲和”的观点被广泛地接受。⁸如金耀基曾经提到“资本主义在香港的发展，……是被文化‘条件’所推动的，而这种文化条件则是由一种转化了的儒家观念和思想所提供，我把这种转化的儒学称为‘工具性的理性传统主义’。……这是一种广为市民在日常生活中的所依循的儒家信念和价值观念。”⁹由于民众社会实践中普遍存在的化民成俗的儒家价值，由于强调世俗功业、崇德报功等具有的内在超越价值，使得儒学不仅没有成为现代化发展的障碍，反而在儒家文化圈经济发展的过程中发挥了精神动力之作用。¹⁰因而，正如金耀基所说的“社会儒学”，人们越来越关注在政治和学术“儒”以外的，民众日常生活中的“儒”之教化的影响力。

在自发的“儒学（教）复兴”的社会潮流中，民间读经活动悄然兴起。如北京的一耽学堂，上海的孟母堂等等。读经配合学习礼仪，社会公益活动的参与，儒学（教）无疑给予了社会运动最现成的精神支持。在各种纷繁复杂的宗教复兴，宗教创新现象中，也出现了以儒教为号召，融汇三教信仰仪式以及民间宗教信仰内容的实践。有些典型的案例反映出，在民间借助宗族传统的逐渐复兴儒教成为民众信仰的重要部分。景军在其《神堂记忆》研究中，讨论了当地孔氏建起了供奉孔子与当地祖先的庙宇，称为“孔庙”，而不是“祖祠”，在大川的宗教生活，亲属意识以及权力结构的重构中扮演了核心角色。¹¹在我们对浙江南部宗族文化研究中，也有类似的例子，苍南县龙港镇的孔氏家族建起了家族祭祀场所孔氏宗祠，同时也建起了开放给社会祭拜孔子的“孔庙”。

从当今社会实践的角度来看，尽管“儒”的政治正统性的地位不复存在，但是无法否认的是“儒”的传统仍然以其多面性存在于社会生活，这与中华文明本身的丰富与复杂性相符合，同样也与中国宗教实践的弥漫性特征相呼应。相比较起来，具有宗教面向的“儒”在当今中国有着更为生动的表现。

中华信仰的神学基础与“儒”的宗教性

儒的宗教性特征从二千多年前儒的出现伊始就已然存在。只不过在被定为一尊的封建时代，儒的政治正统和学术正统的面向过去强大，往往使得弥漫于在生活层面的宗教性隐而不彰。正如杨庆堃所揭示的那样，在中国的宗教传统中，超自然领域的建构与现实生活世界非常相似，而儒家传统则透过政治伦理信仰的途径，以民众接受的超自然方式实施教化。《易经》有言，“圣人以神道设教，而天下服矣。”¹²

“儒”的宗教性面向可谓是与生俱来的。春秋晚期孔子创立的儒家学说本来就是在“殷周奴隶制时期的天命神学和祖宗崇拜的宗教思想”基础上不断发展形成的，¹³杨庆堃确认中国古代宗教——他称之为“中国本土的宗教”¹⁴——的核心是“对天和命运的信仰，对占卜的广泛接纳，结合阴阳五行理论，强调对祖先的祭祀与崇拜。”¹⁵葛兆光在研究中注意到，殷商时代人们心目中神秘力量的秩序化，祖先崇拜与王权结合产生的观念秩序化，祭祀与占卜仪式中所表现的知识系统秩序化。¹⁶当人们检索辨识现存的甲骨文字时，就立刻会发现甲骨文字反映出那个时代祖先崇拜的现象几乎无处不在，并且与自然神以及“帝”或“上帝”等神祇毫不排斥地融合一体。

商周朝时期祖先崇拜表现出的有关社会秩序的观念，体现了整个“精英文化圈中”将社会政治秩序与宇宙秩序融为一体的宗教观，并将这种文化基因深植于中华文明的脉络中。这种秩序的价值在于“作为一种宇宙的隐喻，它表示了高高在上的神的权威之下，以家庭性的和谐而凝聚起来的实体与能量的世界”。¹⁷而这种宗教观毫无疑问潜移默化地影响到了儒学的价值，理念以及仪式内容。张光直指出中华文明“连续性”的特色，“它是在一个整体性的宇宙形成论的框架里面创造出来的”，社会组织结构中的血缘关系从氏族社会延续下来，而巫覡

⁸ Tu Weiming, “Confucian Spirituality in Contemporary China”, in *Confucianism and Spiritual Traditions in Modern China and Beyond*, edited by Fenggang Yang and Joseph Tamney, Leiden: Brill 2012, p. 79.

⁹ 参见金耀基，《中国社会与文化》，香港：牛津大学出版社1992年。

¹⁰ 参见陈来，“儒家伦理与现代化”，《中国人的观念与行为》，主编乔健、潘乃谷，天津人民出版社1995年；宋光宇，《宗教与社会》，台北：东大1995。

¹¹ Jun Jing, *The Temple of Memories*, CA: University of Stanford 1996.

¹² 杨庆堃，《中国社会中的宗教——宗教的现代社会功能与其历史因素之研究》，范丽珠主译。上海：上海人民出版社2007，第142页。

¹³ 参见任继愈，“论儒教的形成”，《中国社会科学》，1980年第一期，第61-62页。

¹⁴ 杨庆堃，《中国社会中的宗教——宗教的现代社会功能与其历史因素之研究》，范丽珠主译。上海：上海人民出版社2007，第23-24页。

¹⁵ 杨庆堃，《中国社会中的宗教——宗教的现代社会功能与其历史因素之研究》，范丽珠主译。上海：上海人民出版社2007，第225页。

¹⁶ 参见葛兆光，《中国思想史》第一卷，《七世纪前中国的知识，思想与信仰世界》，上海：复旦大学出版社2007年，第20，23，26页。

¹⁷ Benjamin Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China*, Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1985, p. 22, 24.

文化在古代中国政治中居于核心地位。¹⁸也就是指出了一脉相传的中华文明“连续性”地将其宗教特质传递下来:人与自然的和谐而神秘的关系得到维持,源于商周时期的敬天和法祖融入了儒家思想,透过礼制与仪式的方式渗透到政治体系与民间教化中,发展成为中国宗教的重要基础,在中国人社会生活中始终占有极为重要的位置,直到今天。

不可否认,在整个社会面临着礼崩乐坏,战乱不断之际,孔子及其时代的思想家在阐述其治国匡世的思想过程中做了很多的努力,以理性化地清理带有原始色彩的神秘主义的巫覡文化传统。因此,我们能够找到大量的证据,反应孔子本人是如何地在继承周礼的同时,淡漠各种鬼神之事,将完善社会伦理和个人道德修养作为其使命,从而使学术与思想的儒家从一开始就具有了人文主义,世俗主义的性质。杜维明认为,在今天“儒家具有包容性的人文主义看来比启蒙时代以人类为中心的世俗人文主义更加切合当前的时代精神”。¹⁹然而,我们或许需要正视二千多年前孔子生活的时代,人类与自然关系之密切是今天的人们难以想象的,民众的生产与生活,王朝的政治活动(王朝更迭,出兵打仗,礼制祭祀)都离不开超自然的力量。于是,“儒”作为一个整体实际上包含着多方面的内容,配合其伦理价值的往往离不开各种各样的政治仪式,与祭祀仪式;故而从深层上讲,宗教性则是其中的一个重要面向。

孔子、孟子连同那些儒家后继者们,吸收了很多在早期中国文化中有价值的精神内容,并且予以发展、重新诠释。在后来历朝历代中,儒学的思想观念和精神价值的复合体被融合进入了具有多元宗教特性的文化信仰体系中。²⁰“如果我们将儒家人文主义传统作为与商代巫文化既相联系又相分离的辩证过程,那么这种发生于原始政治文化的特殊形态的人文主义就既是伦理的,又是宗教的。”²¹杨庆堃在论述中国社会的宗教时,认为儒家思想从创始便留下足够的余地,使之能够与超自然的观念发展出一种运作关系。他论证了家庭整合中的宗教、君权神授的天命运作、神道设教的政治伦理以及文人中普遍存在的神秘主义信仰与仪式等,无疑从历史社会学的角度充分肯定了“儒”的宗教性。在此基础上,杨庆堃没有纠缠于纯学理的论证,而是用大量丰富的历史资料支撑其论点。

综上所述,我们认为表现“儒”的宗教性的内容主要源于孔子之前的敬天法祖的传统,而后代的儒生们又通过政治制度和文化制度的发展,将敬天法祖的传统进一步强化于日常生活之中。在《中国文化的根与花》一

文中,何光沪认为“所谓儒教,非指儒学或儒家之整体,而是指殷商以来绵延三千年的中国原生宗教,即以天帝信仰为核心,包括‘上帝’观念,‘天命’体验,祭祀活动和相应制度,以儒生为社会中坚,以儒学中相关内容为理论表现的那么一种宗教体系。”²²何氏所谓的“中国原生宗教”恰恰就是中华信仰的神学基础和基本核心。正是因为这个神学基础的存在,所以儒家在获得一尊地位后能够借助敬天法祖的信仰,一方面成为政治权力的帝王师,同时也是老百姓日常生活实践的教化者。通过信仰层面(也可以说“神学层面”)的共识,浸润在民间信仰环境中的普通大众同时接受了天命观念和皇权至高无上的神圣性。正因为有这种共识,官方政治宗教仪式才拥有了广泛的社会文化基础,对“天”的崇拜,对皇权合法性的认同才有可能深入于普通民众的日常生活和信仰实践。²³

恰恰是因为儒学本身的宗教性面向有着丰富的仪式性内容,同时在历史发展的脉络中其伦理性追求与佛教、道教以及民间宗教等的崇拜,祭祀以及鬼神系统的相互渗透,形成了“百姓日用而不知”的格局,更是中华文化血脉得以传承的重要基础。

宗教性的“儒”与新兴宗教运动

“儒”的现代命运如何?在过去的三十多年间,中国经历了广泛的宗教复兴,在各种各样宗教复兴的社会运动中,“儒”的复兴也日益受到关注。由于历史变迁,需要对“儒”的命运从的不同层面来观察。

作为正统的儒学不复存在 一百年多年前,科举制度废除,继而辛亥革命推翻了清帝国,儒学失去政治制度的支撑而趋于式微;在这个重大的社会转折中,宗法制和宗族制都受到了现代化浪潮和革命洪流的冲击,天命作为权力合法性的基础被科学、民主等现代性话语所取代。特别是二十世纪中叶以来,儒学的传统更多地被当成历史负累而遭受灭顶之灾,这样的情况在文化革命期间达到了登峰造极的程度;甚至在改革开放初期的文化反思中,还有不少所谓精英将儒家传统作为中国落后的根源来批判。在中国社会的政治体系和主流话语中,儒学从根本上失去其往日的正统核心地位,其影响力充其量只是多元价值中的一元。

一直在为儒学价值奔走呼号的杜维明也承认,“决定儒学与中国现代化转向之相关性的游戏规则已经明显改变了,就儒学本身呈明儒家观念的努力只是在学术象牙塔之内的少数学者中保持着,在象牙塔之外则基本上被忽略了。现代化和发展经济的目标压倒人文主义和

18 张光直,《美术,神话与祭祀》,辽宁教育出版社,2002年版,第1页,第29页。

19 杜维明,“个人,社群与道:古代群体批判的自我意识的出现”。http://isbrt.ruc.edu.cn/pol04/Article/chinese/c_general/200412/1433.html

20 Lizhu Fan, James Whitehead and Evelyn Whitehead, *Sociology of Religion: Religion and China*, Beijing: Current Press 2010, p. 202.

21 同上

22 何光沪,“中国文化的根与花——谈儒学的‘返本’与‘开新’”,“宗教观念的本质与上帝观”,任继愈主编《儒教问题争论集》,北京:宗教文化出版社2000。

23 参见杨庆堃,《中国社会中的宗教——宗教的现代社会功能与其历史因素之研究》,范丽珠主译。上海:上海人民出版社2007,第135页,第136页。

民胞物与的更大关怀。”²⁴

儒学不再是教育的核心内容 传统时代，儒家思想与道德价值对于中国人和社会的影响力，主要来自于儒学与教育，与官员选拔方式的结合，来自于弥漫在社会生活方方面面的儒家文化价值。但是，今天的教育与教化方式，还有多少与儒家经典与思想价值相关呢？可以说是微乎其微。我们这代人最早了解孔孟，恐怕是与70年代的批林批孔运动有关。我们曾经访谈过一位民国初年出生的老先生，只在新式学堂学习了六年，他能够背诵四书五经中大部分内容；他不是书法家，但是一直用毛笔写字，到了80岁高龄时还坚持用毛笔写信。他崇尚科学，轻视各种民俗与迷信，但是他所接受的教育已经将儒家思想乃至传统文人之道，内化成他人格的一部分。当代的学生们学习的主要内容是建立在上世俗化理念之上的各种科学知识和多元的人文传统，以及其他工具性的技能（包括各种外国语言，电子计算机等）。中国的学生要花很多的时间和精力学习外语，还不算他们花在打游戏机，上网聊天的时间。也就是说，今天儒家经典的内容已经与当代教育关系不大，无需更多的证明。五六十年代出生的人，还受过“孔融让梨”这样故事的教化，而今天的孩子恐怕更熟悉“奥特曼”，“变形金刚”等东西。

儒家传统在民间的衰落 由于儒学在过去一百多年间命运跌宕多舛，其理想价值与工具性价值都不复存在，这就使得普通人缺少了对儒学的了解和追求的动机。我们曾多次参观过浙江温州瑞安的叶适博物馆。叶适是宋朝的永嘉学派的代表人物，令人欣慰的是其后人在一千年后的今天还能为他建起一个私人博物馆。现在博物馆的负责人是叶氏后人，他坦白地说，他一直不知道叶适是谁，只知道在叶家很多祖宗中有个“心水公”，到了近年有人找到他建博物馆才知道原来这个“心水公”曾经是宋朝的大儒叶适，在中国历史上声名显赫。叶适博物馆的不远处就是叶氏宗祠，祠堂中则有光顾的人较多，很是热闹；当然叶适博物馆的存在也使得叶氏宗祠的祭祖活动增添了合理性。

张德胜和金耀基十多年前对两岸三地的“儒商”的研究中，发现“他们人数稀少，不是因为与时代脱节，而是他们所怀抱的价值，没有像传统时代那样得到制度上的支持。如上所言，自本世纪以来，就其影响力而言，儒家思想已失去了昔日的光辉。在今日，基本上是以文化传统的余绪绵延下来。”事实上，尽管作者认为受访儒商虽然人数很少，但其重要性不应因此而受到忽视，并强调儒商不光是概念及历史现象，而是现实社会里面活生生的人。我们从其中访谈内容反映的情况来看，这些所谓的如上只能勉强地具有儒家的“意识”或“取向”而已，其中所体现的价值基本上是普世性的道德关怀，而非明显的儒家价

值。²⁵康晓光对于儒教复兴的关注也是落在传统文化复兴现象上，那些参与到各种传统文化运动中者，究竟有多少是致力于儒学的复兴，是个不太容易弄清楚的事情。

不少学者提出，现代民间儒者必须放弃那种“出则必为帝者师，处则必为天下万世师”的怪想，走出所谓政治儒学的迷思，放下身段，走向民间，呼应民间的诉求，顺乎人心之需要，在乡间，在村野，在社区，在校园，在一切有人活动的地方，重建儒学的生活规范，儒学的价值信念。²⁶文化儒教徒要成为一种文化身分和精神标志，今后必须面对的问题仍然是“己欲立而立人，己欲达而达人”的问题，与其孜孜于“上行路线”以成就“度天子”之黄粱一梦，倒不如一贯的走“群众路线”，即一方面“到民间去”，去感受生活化或常民化的儒教，以常民为师，将社会和历史所积淀下来的价值观念和礼仪规范“内在化”为自己的日常生活；另一方面还是“到民间去”，努力让简约的儒教重新成为日常的教化，成为每天习以为常的“天理人心”。²⁷事实上，现代社会的中国民间不是“儒学”纾尊降贵在当今时代求得存在的权宜之计，而某些学者所推动的精英式儒教运动似乎成效甚微。

宗教性的“儒”与新兴宗教运动 对于现代社会普遍存在的“失范”现象，贝尔提出一个冒险性的答案：西方社会将重新向着某种宗教观念回归，现代社会的种种文化困境和问题源自于现代主义存在的信仰危机，“现代主义的真正问题是信仰问题。”²⁸同样遭遇道德困境的中国，道德重建所仰赖的文化资本，显然也需要儒学的回归。如上所述，在政治儒学、意识形态儒学失去正统地位之时，恰恰是宗教性的儒学获得了在信仰与神秘主义实践方面的机会；源于中华文明奠基时期儒学的宗教性，通过其在日常生活世界的弥漫与渗透、与佛教道教等密切融合，获得了相当普遍的影响力，于是成为新兴宗教运动因应时代问题进行创新发展的重要内容。“儒家独特的精神取向（spiritual orientation）被主要的宗教传统所吸纳。正如儒家知识分子那样，世俗的也是神圣的；更为突出的是，不接受世俗与神圣的分离。”²⁹

²⁵ 林先生是吉隆坡一间中小企业的东主，在访谈中，他提到早些时候大女儿怀孕，身体感到不适，他的妻子就服侍她，叫她躺在床上，不要动，多休息，煮东西给她吃。后来，他自己家中的菲律宾女佣也怀了孕，也感到身体不适，他的妻子同样服侍该女佣，叫她不要动，多休息，还弄东西给她吃。他的大女儿看在眼里，不以为然，说妈妈不该如此，但他的妻子说了一句话：“幼吾幼以及人之幼”。在这里，林先生说的虽然是妻子的事，但他显然是赞同她的行动的。

²⁶ 颜炳罡，“民间儒学何以可能”，http://www.chinakongzi.org/rjwh/ddmj/yanbinggang/200706/t20070605_2207540.htm

²⁷ 陈进国，“中华教：当代儒教的三种实践形态”，http://iwr.cass.cn/rjyjs/lw/201101/t20110117_5940.html

²⁸ Daniel Bell，赵一凡等译，《资本主义文化矛盾》，北京：三联出版社，1989年，第40页。

²⁹ Tu Weiming, “Confucian Spirituality in Contemporary China”, in *Confucianism and Spiritual Traditions in Modern China and Beyond*, edited by Fenggang Yang and Joseph Tamney, Leiden: Brill 2012, p. 79.

²⁴ 杜维明，“个人，社群与道：古代群体批判的自我意识的出现”，http://isbrt.ruc.edu.cn/pol04/Article/chinese/c_general/200412/1433.html

近三十年来民间各种各样非制度性的宗教仪式活动恢复与发展,在很大程度上反映了宗教性的儒之普遍存在。沿袭原始儒教“慎终追远”传统的祖先崇拜,在现代社会仍然以各种方式为民众所实践,最典型的就是祠堂重修,家谱续修等宗族活动的活跃,以及恢复清明节这个祭祖的日子为公共节日。在各地民间宗教恢复的过程中,传统“政治-伦理”信仰³⁰内容往往有助于某些寺庙,社区仪式的文化合法性建立。例如,在邯郸羌村修建的藺相如庙就是以“和谐”文化为号召的。³¹这样的案例不一而足。范丽珠在深圳进行民间信仰田野研究时也发现,多数人并不会特意地去区别佛教,道教神灵与修行仪式,同时将儒家的教化也等同于佛教,道教,相信所有的传统信仰都有助于人们的修行,实现道德向上的精神境界。³²在民间颇有影响力的净空法师,其对某些经典的解释,常常出佛道而入儒,三教合一。儒家的思想观念作为弥漫的宗教性成为民众获得生命意义的社会资本,体现于各种各样的宗教复兴运动中。

儒学的宗教性部分广泛地嵌入于民众生活之中,同时各种制度性宗教在现代社会中也出现了弥漫化,边缘化的现象,这就给新兴宗教的出现和发展以机会。新兴宗教在中国社会的酝酿与发展大量地融合并借鉴着儒家的伦理道德,仪式理念以及社会关怀等既有的社会资本。当然,所谓诸多的新兴宗教也可以说没有任何一种是全新是创新的,必然是综合了许多传统宗教的内涵。本来,三教一家就是民间固有的宗教形态,新兴宗教往往都是混合多元宗教信仰,在现代社会“整体儒释道三教以外,又发生了层出不穷的,以‘三教合一’为主要诉求的蓬勃发展的民间教派活动”。³³在新兴宗教发展的过程中,一个非常突出的特点是,在不排除佛道教相辅助的前提下,“儒”的宗教性有日益凸显的趋势,这在台湾有很多的例子。台湾流行的夏教,“从林兆恩的‘疏天文稿’与夏教徒的‘忏悔启章’可以看出儒家思想的宗教性发展,仰赖外传的神明意志来扶持儒家道德生命的实践与完成,并以善恶果报的宗教权威作消极性的行为限制,再以超凡入圣的解脱意念积极地拓展内在的德性涵养。”³⁴

在台湾新兴的宗教现象使得传统宗教观念与象征符号在社会急速发展之际而获得了新的表达机会。比如,儒宗神教的流行在这个过程中表现得特别引人注目,其宗教态度大致以“讲道德而明礼让,解经书而终人伦,

雍和上下而别尊卑,谈说因果而敬鬼神”的社会教化宣讲为主。³⁵鸾堂崇祀的主神众多而复杂,后来逐渐发展出以三恩主或五恩主³⁶为主要崇祀对象的鸾堂,儒宗神教逐渐成为台湾本地鸾堂的代称。³⁷尽管大量地继承了传统宗教的神圣资源和伦理价值,作为新兴宗教的儒宗神教的神圣性格则非常强烈。

原本在大陆和台湾都本饱受诟病的民间教派团体——一贯道,自上世纪八十年代台湾实行解严以来,得到了非常大的发展,并借助两岸频繁的互动往来,重返大陆;伴随着全球化的进程,打起儒教旗号的一贯道从台湾流传到东南亚后,已经传播到几十个国家。在摆脱令人起疑的神秘色彩的同时,一贯道强调对传统文化的继承与发扬,特别是更以儒的传承为重任。对天道的理解,借鉴了中国文化传统里丰富且多姿的宇宙意识,继承了中国人心灵旁通统贯的管理智慧。一贯道的核心思想就是扣紧在具有宗教性的宇宙意识上,尽管其中杂糅多种宗教因素,却明确地以“儒教”而自居。

在中国主流的意识形态中,“儒”的面目比较模糊,但这并不影响儒的传统在现实生活的存在,并成为社会运动与宗教运动的重要资源。尽管官方往往打着文化的旗帜来使用儒或孔子的符号,其实很难避免触及到儒的宗教性部分。例如,官方主导并参与的祭孔活动,由中央电视台现场直播,并组织国内外数百家媒体同步报道;将以上坟祭祖为重要内容的清明节定为成为官方的法定节日。而民间儒学(教)的活动,则更是多种多样——例如,孔氏后人的祭孔,宗祠的重建,族谱重修;各地出现的读经学堂,如逢飞及其一耽学堂,蒋庆及其阳明精舍,王财贵宣扬儿童读经的演讲;被赞为“儒学慧能”的民国时期王凤仪对人生领悟箴言的重新流行等等。凡此种种,其中宗教性的表现成为不可分割的一部分。而同样值得我们关注是在宗教实践与创新过程中,儒教获得了系统性和宗教组织化发展的可能——通过传统道德意识的强调和仪式的学习,以及神秘信仰回应急剧社会变迁中民众遇到的问题与困境(社会的,心理的);在周边基督教团体压力下,调整民间宗教惯常松散的形式——结合对个人疾苦的关注,集体性活动参与而进入社会的需求领域,从而促成组织本身的发展与影响力的增加;同时,在顺应主流意识形态话语的情况下,得到更广泛的发展空间。在这一方面,福建北部出现的“儒教道坛”在过去十几年间迅速的发展就是一个好的例子。³⁸

显而易见,无论是传统的延续还是因应现实需要的创新,“儒”的宗教性支撑了新兴宗教的文化与伦理诉求,并借助神圣性和灵验性在民众中产生共鸣。在历史

30 杨庆堃,《中国社会中的宗教——宗教的现代社会功能与其历史因素之研究》,范丽珠主译。上海:上海人民出版社2007,第143页。

31 范丽珠,陈纳,“中国民间信仰及其现代价值的研究”,《宗教蓝皮书·中国宗教报告2012年》,北京:社会科学出版社2012年。

32 参见范丽珠,《当代中国人宗教信仰的变迁:深圳民间宗教信仰的田野研究》,台北:韦伯文化2005年。

33 丁仁杰,《社会分化与宗教制度变迁——当代台湾新兴宗教现象的社会学考察》,台北:联经2004年,第362页。

34 郑志明,《台湾民间宗教结社》,嘉义:南华管理学院1998年,第245页。

35 郑志明,《台湾民间宗教结社》,嘉义:南华管理学院1998年,第318页。

36 三恩主是关圣帝君,孚佑帝君(吕洞宾)和司命真君;五恩主则外加王天君和岳武穆王。

37 王志宇,1997,《台湾的恩主公信仰——儒宗神教与飞鸾教化》,台北:文津出版社,第51页。

38 范丽珠,陈纳,“一个新宗教的诞生——福建北部儒教道坛的田野研究”,未刊稿。

上,“儒学树立起无神的传统作为其教化的前提,其基本的准则主要是由实用主义的考虑发展而来。即使现代新儒学融入了佛教思想,也未动摇儒学基本的现世取向。儒家学说将注意力集中于生与死的终极意义,但只是在人的道德责任方面,而不关心任何超自然因素。作为思想体系,儒学的宗教特性存在于对天和命运观念等含糊不清的态度中,通过传授知识或用道德的说教来解答人类面临的难以记数的问题。作为一种实用的学说,儒学得到了祭祀仪式和众多与儒学传统的功能相关的超自然观念和仪式的支持。”³⁹这就使得在历史上不断努力摆脱原始宗教影响、致力于理性化的儒学,在当今社会借助于新兴宗教、通过触及神圣领域的形式,来满足在意义失落时代人们的精神需求。

伯格(Peter Berger)在对当今世界宗教发展状况的观察中发现,在不断世俗化的同时也出现了广泛的宗教复兴现象,于是用“去世俗化”(de-secularization)来描绘当下的情形。伯格预示了“我们这个世界下个世纪也不会比现在更缺少宗教性。”⁴⁰或者我们也可以说,由于人类自身从未放弃对生命意义与终极问题的追求,对于世俗化浪潮中生活的现代人来说,神秘主义也是其中的一部分。显然,活跃于当代文化中的宗教传统仍所保留着源于早期人类宗教性表达的很多因素,“没有失去任何东西,……部落时期和古代宗教的面向仍活在我们中间。”⁴¹

因此,我们强调儒学宗教性的存在及其现代意义,解释儒学宗教性对于新兴宗教创新与发展的现实性,在一定程度上是帮助我们认识当代儒学的命运——弥漫于民众生活世界、透过新兴宗教运动,儒学在今日仍然是鲜活的。同时,我们也看到了无论是有着新面貌的一贯道还是在福建北部出现的儒教道坛,其组织性结构都超出了传统民间宗教的松散状态,具有了新型社会组织的样貌;在伦理效应与宗教真确性相互作用过程中,不断地生发出对社会的影响力。

³⁹ 杨庆堃著,范丽珠主译《中国社会中的宗教——宗教的现代社会功能与其历史因素之研究》,上海:上海人民出版社2007年,第40页。

⁴⁰ Berger, Peter, *The Desecularization of the world: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, edited by Peter Berger. MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing 1999.

⁴¹ Bellah, Robert “Epilogue”, *Meaning and Modernity*, edited by, Richard P Madsen, William M Sullivan, Ann Swidler and Steven M. Tipton, CA: University of California Press 2002, p. 273.