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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...
which is beyond the scope of this study')

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 religion. 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 religion. 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’’); 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

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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, Wenhuibao, 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 reverenced 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 undersocial 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 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

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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)*; 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

*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.”*

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.

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 School 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

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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 Kong Rong gave away bigger pears (*孔融让梨*), while today’s children are probably more familiar with Ultraman, Transformers, and so on.

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 Confuciuses 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--Welling), 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 unfinished 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 “ethnopolitical cult” (Yang, 1961:144) has provided the necessary support and the cultural legality. For example, the temple of Lin Xiangru\(^\text{10}\), 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 of Confucianism have diffused 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\(^\text{11}\) 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\(^\text{12}\). 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

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\(^{10}\) 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 Zhaoren (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 abstinance 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 Yiguandau 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) 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

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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.

Reference


关于“儒”的宗教性与儒教在当代中国的复兴

范丽珠 陈纳

“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，陆王精神的大学统；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，指三教流行的民间价值信仰。1

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”？近数年，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”究竟是什么意思意义上的“儒”，恐怕是学术界需要正视的问题。如果从孔、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”的传统已经五千多年了；如果将孔孟作为商周以来中华文明传统的集大成者，那么“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”的性质之争论。2（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，不是本文研究的兴趣所在。）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。实际上，在今天的中国号称自己信仰“儒教”者并不少数。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这个问题而出现的文化尴尬。4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。作为一个人的中国读书人，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自我与自然界之自我之间的和谐。在现实世界中，我们发现各种各样的“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。5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’中有意要破坏孔庙，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，不少学者发现儒家的宗教性在今天的中国仍具有生命力。8

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；陈钠，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 例如，康有为、任继愈，《中国哲学史》。
4 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。
5 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。
7 费孝通，《“孔林之思”》，《读书》，1992年第9期。
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来实施教化。《易经》有言，“圣人以神道设教，而天下服矣。”

“儒”之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，杨庆堃确认中国古代宗教——他称之为“中国本土的宗教”——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。”

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。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”。

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,而巫觋

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”,《中国社会科学》,1980年第1期,第61-62页。
11 参见金耀基,《中国社会与文化》,香港:牛津大学出版社1992年。
12 杨庆堃,《中国社会中的宗教——宗教的现代社会功能与历史因素之研究》,范丽珠主编。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1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历史因素之研究》,范丽珠主编。上海:上海人民出版社2007,第231-246页。
15 杨庆堃,《中国社会中的宗教——宗教的现代社会功能与历史因素之研究》,范丽珠主编。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。
文化在古代中国政治中居于核心地位。也即指出了这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，通过礼制与仪式的方式渗透到政治体系与民间教化中，成为中国古代宗教的重要基础，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觋文化传统。因此，我们需要找到大量的证据，反应孔子本人是如何地建立规制礼治的礼制，儒教是代代相传的中华民族的精神生活。

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一种宗教体系。”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。

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，儒学的传统更多地当成历史负担而遭受灭顶之灾，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，儒学本身呈现在儒家观念的创作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了人文主义和

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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/200412/433.html
21 同上
22 何光沪，“中国文化的根本与文化——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《儒学问题争论集》，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。
康晓光对于儒教复兴的关怀也是落在传统文化复兴的现象上, 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教的复兴, 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, 重建儒教的生活规范, 儒教的价值信念。

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。”

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; 源于中华文明奠基于宋朝的儒学的宗教性, 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主要内容。 “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。”

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25 林先生是吉隆坡一间中小型企业的东主, 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, 他妻子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。


27 陈进国, “儒家教化在民间的衰落”

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.
近三十年来民间各种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，家谱编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，在邯郸市永年县的荀子祠就是以“和”“道”文化为号召的。这样的案例不一而足。范丽珠在深入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，同时将儒家的教化等同于佛、道，宗教，相信所有的传统信仰都有助于人们的修行，实现道德上的精神境界。在民间颇有影响力的净宗法师，其对某些经典经文的解释，常常自佛道而入儒，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了儒家的伦理道德，因果报应等既有社会资本。当然，所谓诸多的新兴宗教也说没有任何一种是全然是新创的，必然是整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，新兴宗教往往都是兼容并蓄的宗教信仰，在现代社会“整体儒释道三教以外，又产生了层出不穷的，以“三教合一”为主要诉求的蓬勃发展的民间教派活动”。在新兴宗教发展的过程中，一个非常突出的特点是，在不排除佛教等辅助的前提下，“儒”的宗教性有日益凸显的趋势，这在台湾有很典型。台湾流行的净宗法师，“从林清惠的“疏天文经”与禅修的“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，解经书而明礼教”，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为主要内容的崇祀对象，儒宗神教逐渐成为台湾本地鸾堂的代称。36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，并借助两岸频繁的交流往来，重返大陆，伴随着全球化的进程，打着儒家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，特别是更以儒的教义为重任。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中的存在，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，则更是多姿多彩……例如，孔庙后的祭孔，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，儒教获得了解放性和宗教组织化发展的可能——通过传统道德意识的强化和仪式的学习，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”在过去的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，借助神圣性和灵验性在民众中产生共鸣。在历史
“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。作为一种实用的学说，儒学得到了祭祀仪式和众多与儒学传统功能相关的超自然观念和仪式的支持。”

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。”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。”

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，施丽珠主译《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。