

Confucian Thought and the Modern Chinese Quest for Moral Autonomy*

Thomas A. Metzger**

This article attempts to add to the continuing discussion about the relation between the Confucian tradition and modernity. This discussion has already gone through several five stages: Wo-jen's (d.1871) rejection of Western ways; Chang Chih-tung's (1837-1909) idea of combining Western and traditional ways; May Fourth iconoclasm, which increasingly dominated intellectual life until the 1960s or so; the rise of modern Confucian humanism, illustrated by the influence of Yü Ying-shih; and the continuing contemporary rejection or basic criticism of traditional values, illustrated by the writings of Yang Kuo-shu or even the recent television series *Ho-shang*. In the West too, criticism of Confucian values has continued, as illustrated by Benjamin I. Schwartz's view of Confucius as putting more emphasis on ritual, status, authority, and hierarchy than on the moral autonomy of the individual.

This article argues that some of this controversy can be clarified by distinguishing between normative questions (*should* Confucian values persist?) and historical or factual questions (*have* they persisted?). Turning first to the factual aspects, many scholars today reject exceptionalism. China was no exception in world history: As in other cases, modernization in China has been a mix of continuities and discontinuities with the past. Much of the Little Tradition has persisted; modern intellectual movements have explicitly evoked traditional values; so has the political philosophy of the Three Principles of the People; and many traditional modes of thinking have influenced even iconoclasm. Recent work by S.N. Eisenstadt and Robert N. Bellah suggests that as any "axial civilization" such as China modernizes, traditional orientations created thousands of years ago persist to a large extent even as controversy surrounds them.

Turning to the normative questions, scholars largely agree that modernization has been furthered by the traditional, persisting emphasis on socially harmonious, efficient, constructively competitive, and economically useful work. Second, they largely agree on

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** Professor, University of California, San Diego.

儒家思想與現代中國人對道德自主性的探索

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摘 要

儒家思想與現代性之間的關聯，無疑地已成為中國思想史研究的重要課題之一，但由於參與此一關聯之探討的部分論者並未有效地釐清「規範問題」與「事實問題」的分野，以致在一定的程度上使問題的焦點無法清楚地呈現。本文的主要目的即是對有關此一關聯的爭論做總體的歷史考察，並檢省儒家倫理對權威與個人自主性的具體見解能否配合當前中國現代化過程裏，關於個人實現的理想。最後並分析儒家的「樂觀主義的現世觀」與民主化的關係。