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15. On the relationship between Granada and the Portuguese Jesuits, see Idalina Resina Rodrigues, *Fray Luis de Granada y la literatura de espiritualidad en Portugal* (1554–1632) (Madrid: Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca and Fundación Universitaria Española, 1988), pp. 532–543.

16. Nebrija's rhetorical works were also taught by the Jesuits in Salamanca. See Carmen Codoñer and Juan Antonio González Iglesias, eds., *Antonio de Nebrija: Edad Media y Renacimiento* (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 1994), pp. 578–579 and *passim.*

17. *Epistolae P. Hieronymi Nadal Societatis Jesu ab anno* 1546 *ad* 1577, 4 vols. (Madrid, 1898–1905), 5:54 and passim. See John W. O'Malley, "To Travel to Any Part of the World: Jerónimo Nadal and the Jesuit Vocation," *Studies in the Spirituality of the Jesuits* 16, no. 2 (1984).

Benjamin A. Elman, John B. Duncan, and Herman Ooms, editors. *Rethinking Confucianism: Past and Present in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam.* Los Angeles: UCLA Asian Pacific Monograph Series, 2002. vii, 643 pp. Hardcover $44.95, ISBN 1–883191–07–6. Paperback $24.95, ISBN 1–883191–06–8.

Rethinking Confucianism is a collection from the UCLA Asian Pacific Monograph Series consisting of sixteen excellent essays that reexamine the meaning and role of "Confucianism" in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam largely in light of two central presuppositions. The first is that Confucius represents the cultural backwardness and conservative agendas that many progressive thinkers in Asia saw as an obstacle to positive change. The second is that Confucius provides the core values, in all their permutations, of a stable and human-centered community, such as the kind that has recently been credited with enabling the economic growth in so much of Asia in the 1980s and 1990s. *Rethinking Confucianism* challenges both of these presuppositions on a number of grounds, but in general—and despite the fact that this grand text takes generalization to be more of an impediment than an aid to serious study—I will say that the challenge focuses more on the failure to properly frame the discussions around "Confucianism" in a context that is specific enough to do justice to the inquiry.

For instance, specific geographical, cultural, historical, and sociopolitical factors must be taken into account that show how Confucian thought was initially "appropriated" by Japan, Korea, and Vietnam and then later "reappropriated" in the twentieth century by these countries and by China as well. This goes hand in hand with the philosophical reality that Confucianism itself must be defined and, as this tour de force of essays shows, must happen in a specific context for any

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real meaning to be gained from the analysis. As the editors express it, "The contingent and indeterminate nature of Confucianism—even the term itself is problematic—must be addressed before any more generalized social science style 'ideal types' can be applied to the political, sociological, or economic analyses of the uses of Confucianism in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam before and after 1900" (p. 2). They continue, "Rather than monolithic paradigms, the chapters present a picture of a complex arena of shifting fields of intellectual and popular culture in East and Southeast Asia that were informed and inscribed by the Confucian repertoire of world-ordering." To bring this out, and as the Introduction to the work indicates, this lengthy analysis for better understanding past and present views of Confucianism and their relevance for the twentieth century is framed in light of the following categories or concerns: repertoires of world-ordering techniques; premodern appropriations of "China" and "Confucianism"; sociocultural variations in state-societal formations; the "modernization narrative" as a problem; Confucian theory and practice in different historical contexts; literati identity, gender, and medicine in Confucian discourse; reappropriations of Confucianism in the twentieth century; and terminology.

These frames of reference can be cast even more broadly into three main themes. The first is *repertoires* (of world-ordering techniques), which connect the cultural agents in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam, who "creatively monitored, preserved, and reformed the complicated socio-political structures of their times to deal with the ongoing historical process of change" (p. 4). These "Confucian" elites were generally perceived as failures by 1900. The second theme is *appropriations* (of China or Confucianism), which includes the premodern appropriations of "China" and "Confucianism" and the reappropriations of Confucianism in the twentieth century. The third theme, *variations* (in state-societal formations), must also address the "modernization narrative" as a problem, particularly in light of the fact that some Asian countries (such as China and Vietnam) are reinventing their history after a sharp rejection of their past identity. This reinvention evokes a "tentative and cautious" return to Confucianism as a reaction against modernity instead of as a movement into Western postmodernity. Moreover, this theme includes analyses of how Confucian theory and practice are variously defined in different historical contexts, as well as in the different contexts of literati identity, gender, and medicine.

These three themes are taken by *Rethinking Confucianism* to be the "keys to unlocking the spatial scope and chronological dimensions of Confucianism in theory and practice across Asia before and after 1900" (p. 3). The theses of the more specific chapters themselves are therefore relevant to at least one theme, if not all three. The distinction that governs the division of the articles into the three "parts" that are named in full below and that are explicitly relevant to the themes of "appropriations" and "variations" only must not be misleading, since

the theme of “repertoire” tends to be relevant to all the articles insofar as their subject of inquiry has come to be tied (rightly or wrongly) to the term “Confucian.” Actually, there is considerable overlap of all three themes in many of the chapters. I will look very briefly at the main aim of each chapter and will conclude with some evaluative comments.

Part 1: Premodern Appropriations: Contesting Who Represented Confucianism

The first chapter is “Reflections on Classifying ‘Confucian’ Lineages: Reinventions of Tradition in Song China,” by Hoyt Cleveland Tillman. Although Tillman holds that a knowledge of the developments in Song China is crucial to understanding later developments in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam, his main thesis is that retrospective views of the Song have too narrowly focused on Zhu Xi. He brings this out by exploring three main points. The first is that retrospective views of the Song have exaggerated Zhu Xi’s role and ideas “at the expense of major alternatives” and thus have “overly simplified the sociopolitical contexts and cultural debates in which he forged his ideas” (p. 34). This account of Song China, then, does not adequately take the views of others—for example, Zhu Xi’s predecessors as well as his cohorts and critics—into due consideration and leaves the picture of Song China incomplete. The second point is that Zhu Xi reconstructed tradition by elevating himself as a direct descendent of the Confucian lineage. He downplayed the importance of other key contributors, such as his friend Zhang Shi, whose work on humaneness (*ren*) he both excised from his reconstruction as well as co-opted (in part) as his own. Third, in exploring the connection between the economic development of East and Southeast Asia in Zhu Xi orthodoxy, the author finds that Zhu Xi’s influence may actually be much less relevant than that of some of his contemporaries.

Throughout all of the essays in this text runs the complaint that distinguishing the great variety of Confucian lineages is typically not done with enough specificity. The second chapter, “Examinations and Orthodoxy in Chosŏn Dynasty Korea,” by John B. Duncan, also demonstrates how this complaint can be empirically substantiated. Duncan tells us that he wants to explore “some problems in the uncritical way in which we have accepted the notion that the state-sponsored Confucian learning of the Chosŏn period can be reduced to a narrow and dogmatic Cheng-Zhu Learning orthodoxy by looking at the kind of Confucian learning that the Chosŏn state sought to promote through the examination system” (p. 67). Mainly, Duncan provides much evidence to show that the Chosŏn, because its examination system, on both qualifying and *munkwa* levels, attached great importance to poetic composition and reflected the new intellectual trends of Western calendrical science and Kojunghak approaches to history, was less narrowly defined than the Cheng-Zhu Learning of the Ming and early Qing. Moreover, Duncan calls into question the usefulness of the term “ortho-

doxy" as an explanatory tool, suggesting that it may be better to suspend it since there may be competing versions of "orthodoxy" at any given time, as well as the already stated problem of the term being a misnomer in light of the remarkable diversity and implications of Confucian learning.

"Human Nature: Singular (China) and Plural (Japan)?" by Herman Ooms begins by noting the relative absence of metaphysical speculation in the voluminous writings of the Tokugawa Confucian scholars of Japan. It also mentions how a number of notable scholars (retrospectively grouped together as Ancient Learning scholars) "raised serious questions about the Neo-Confucian discourse on nature, human nature, and original nature (*sei*, *jinsei*, *honzen no sei*) to the extent that these terms referred to a universal or singular human nature" (p. 95). In this chapter Ooms attempts to do what he calls "two perhaps seemingly contradictory things." The first is to largely de-dichotomize the dyads between singular versus plural views of human nature, the Zhu Xi (or "Neo-Confucian") versus Ancient Learning schools, cultural identities of China versus Japan, the epistemic paradigms of sameness versus difference, the seventeenth versus eighteenth centuries in Tokugawa Japan, the contextual explanation of state ideology versus market or material diversity, and the negative evaluation of tradition versus the positive evaluation of modernity. The second thing is to "propose a homology between metaphysical speculation and the 'real' world" (p. 97), to show how social practice turned the social and legal division in status based on a pluralistic view of nature into an ontological divide within human nature itself, where some "polluted" people like the *eta* were not considered human and where discriminatory practices could therefore be justified on these grounds.

Chapter 4, the last chapter of part 1, is "Classical Primordialism and the Historical Agendas of Vietnamese Confucianism," by Alexander Woodside. Woodside begins by reminding us that the study of Vietnam is indispensable to having a proper sense of the "historical possibilities of premodern state Confucianism in Asia" (p. 116). His thesis is that the Le and Nguyen dynasties in Vietnam, while particularly loyal to the Confucianism of the pre-imperial Zhou dynasty, never felt that they had to defend themselves against the metaphysics of Buddhism in order to "restore their confidence in homegrown philosophical thought" (p. 117). Indeed, Woodside characterizes the Vietnamese version of Zhou Confucianism as "a community-specific structure of dialogue, linked to a series of community-specific historical challenges" (p. 118). It is distinctively and imaginatively Vietnamese rather than just a lesser version of some single great "Confucian" tradition that matured elsewhere. Woodside suggests, along the same lines as the other contributors, that there may be no "normal" Confucian tradition, and that the variety of interpretations and usages only reinforced the importance of the Confucian figures (such as the Duke of Zhou, Confucius, and

Mencius) in a story that has come to be called classical Confucianism but that in the case of Vietnam remained of a decidedly non-metaphysical nature.

Part 2: Sociocultural Variations: Medicine, Gender, and Ritual

In chapter 5, "Footbinding as Female Inscription," the first in the second group of essays, Dorothy Ko starts by saying that "Rethinking Confucianism in the twenty-first century requires a reassessment of its relationship to women" (p. 147). The author submits that there are two widespread misconceptions about footbinding: its "coherence as a unitary subject" and its misogyny. These go hand in hand with the fact that the Confucian narrative was written by men (literati), while women had no explicit *textual* means to inscribe their place in the Confucian story. Footbinding took place in a community exclusively of women, who bound each other's feet, often in the inner chambers, and who effectively bound themselves to each other and to their place in civilization (*wen*) through the only medium available to them: their *bodies*. This thesis flies in the face of the traditional view of footbinding as a misogynist (male) Confucian practice that quite literally kept women in a repressed position; in fact, the few writings that might be considered relevant to a Confucian perspective included the condemnation of footbinding as unfilial. Ko offers two main arguments: "first, that Chinese male writings about footbinding before the nineteenth century reveal the mechanisms of the male word-based textuality, on which rested the Confucian power of *wen* (civility, culture); second, that we may interpret the practice of footbinding as a female body based textuality" (p. 149). Footbinding had an inherently aesthetic quality for those who engaged in and were culturally conditioned by the practice: small feet were perceived as beautiful, a kind of ornamentation on the level of beautiful clothing, facial features, or cosmetic artistry. So, as a cultural artifact, footbinding was "Confucian" only to the degree that it permitted women to express the supreme Confucian virtue of *wen*. "The identification of women with the body and man with both the body and the word, however, exposes the basic gendered inequality in the Confucian cultural world" (p. 150).

"The Body as Text: Confucianism, Reproduction, and Gender in Tokugawa Japan," by Susan L. Burns, looks at three phases of discourse pertaining, respectively, to reproduction, pregnancy, and childbirth. In the first phase, in the late seventeenth century, "edifying texts" written by Confucian scholars and physicians advised females about a range of topics, including (and some exclusively focusing on) the topic of reproduction. These texts "valorized pregnancy and childbirth as the manifestation of the generative power of Heaven. . . . To safely deliver a healthy child was portrayed as an ethical achievement that was of profound social significance" (p. 179). In brief, these texts used the ideas of "fetal education" and "healthy cultivation" to create a new reproductive genre that held women accountable for the outcomes of their pregnancies. In the second phase,

the Kagawas of the late eighteenth century did not altogether break with the "Confucian" view of pregnancy but incorporated it into their own practice. These physicians distinguished between nature and custom, aligned themselves with nature, and portrayed their lifesaving techniques as freeing women from the (unnatural) customs that formerly made childbirth more difficult and safe delivery sometimes even impossible. A third, "anti-infanticide," phase, also late in the eighteenth century, attacked both infanticide and abortion as unfilial violations against "human beings." In conclusion, Burns demonstrates the remarkable staying power of Confucian concepts that explain reproduction—concepts that continued well into the nineteenth century and that should caution us concerning the facile use of the term "modern" when characterizing the social and cultural changes of late Tokugawa Japan.

JaHyun Kim Haboush shifts the focus to "Gender and the Politics of Language in Chosŏn Korea." This article begins by pointing to a couple of discrepancies: while *yangban* women were losing their inheritance rights, they began to write (in Korean) more prolifically and were also allowed to participate more actively in the public sphere (such as through the institution of the queen dowager regency and the petition system) while boundaries between the public and domestic spheres were being more rigidly constrained on the basis of gender. As the author states, "my inquiry focuses on the way in which the Chŏson state interacted with social institutions and normative concepts, and the way in which symbolic representations were made in the inscriptional space" (p. 222). The institution of the queen dowager regency gave the mother of a deceased king superior status over her son in having the power to choose a new king and to act as regent until he came of age. It also selectively permitted a Korean linguistic space for queen dowagers and for other royal women (as observed in the *Sillok*). At the same time, since Chinese was the official written language of Chŏson, the repression of Korean, the language in which women were writing more and more to express their personal identity, upheld the gender divisions in the public and domestic spheres. Only men, who recorded the histories, knew how to write in Chinese. "Thus, when women enter the public space, they do so degendered, their linguistic self transformed into the male guise of Chinese language" (p. 256).

Next, in "Chinese Ritual and Native Japanese Identity in Tokugawa Confucianism," Kate Wildman Nakai writes that the native environment of Tokugawa Japan kept Confucianism from penetrating into its social and cultural identity as a "cohesive structure." Moreover, a number of key Confucian concepts underwent substantial change when appropriated by Japanese thinkers, chief among these being the concept of ritual (*li*, *rei*). In the relational process of appropriation, however, the author argues that the perception of what was "native" in Japan also changed as a result of Confucian influence. This phenomenon is explored in light of the views of several early and mid-Tokugawa thinkers re-

garding the adoption of Confucian family rituals such as the ceremonial practices of funerals and ancestral sacrifices, and social norms such as those that pertain to the observance of exogamy, agnatic adoption, and generational distinctions. It is also briefly explored in light of how ritual was used as a tool for governance, as propounded by Ogyū Sorai, who "aroused an extensive debate within the Tokugawa intellectual world regarding the relevance of *li* and Confucianism to Japanese society" (p. 259). The final part of this chapter considers one outcome of this debate, which is the "native" Confucian ritual of the late Mito school in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The last essay in part 2 is "The Practice of Confucianism: Ritual and Order in Chŏson Dynasty Korea," by Martina Deuchler. Deuchler begins by pointing out that the applicability of Confucian ritual ranges from self-cultivation to governance and social control. This was true during the Chosŏn period in Korea insofar as "ritualization took a central place on the agenda of the dynastic founders in their quest to Confucianize Korean society" (p. 293). However, she argues, it was not until the sixteenth century that the "community compact" was used to bring the (rural) nonelite more effectively into the "cultural orbit of the hegemonic discourse" of Confucian values and norms. More specifically, this chapter approaches the question of how the community compact as an institution fits into the overall project of Confucianizing Korea—first, by looking at it as an educational instrument by which values and norms could be filtered down from the elite to the nonelite through the mutual obligations they entailed, and, second, by ritually reinforcing these social boundaries. "The rituals as practiced through the Korean versions of the community compact aimed to harmonize intracommunal relationships and at the same time, by ritually underscoring the distinct identities of elite and nonelite, presented the reality of dominance and subordination as 'natural' features resulting from a well-ordered moral system" (p. 294). The author also states that it is this "double aspect" that gives the community compact its unique place in the Confucianization of Korean society. For through it ritual was distinguished by the fact that the Confucian elite, not the state, transmitted values and norms that could essentially be practiced at the local level, instead of simply being a means of grand social control, as in the way community compacts were used in Ming and Qing China.

Part 3: Modern Reappropriations: "Last" versus "New" Confucians

K. W. Taylor's essay, "Vietnamese Confucian Narratives," explains how Confucian values—notably service to the state and to one's own conscience, were used in Vietnam to establish political legitimacy and authority. In the 1990s, however, "Vietnamese efforts to harness Confucian thought to the state have contrarily produced a possibility of using Confucian thought to validate individual selves" (p. 337). Taylor supports his thesis in three steps. First, he explains that only a few

Confucian terms were appropriated into the Vietnamese lexicon from Tang China, taking on distinctively Vietnamese meanings and exposing a selectivity of focus. A series of narrative formulations of exemplary Confucian lives, particularly in light of how they are contingent on specific political contexts, brings this variation out. Second, he discusses both how and why a Vietnamese Buddhist narrative is Confucianized in an eighteenth-century text that ended up detaching the vernacular voice and then normalizing it to reinforce a classical order of authority. But a turning away from classical or national identity is occurring in Vietnam. Although still an open book, the contemporary Confucian narrative, Taylor suggests in the end, includes a performative notion of self with a doctrine of expediency that allows it to rest in the "highest form" of Confucian wisdom, which is to know when to break the rules. Here we see a shift in Confucian priority away from the state and toward the self (as it moves through time). Taylor says, "We cannot know what the current Vietnamese Confucian narrative is, but perhaps we can at least theorize that the main character in this narrative is not the nation but an experience of self" (p. 369).

Kurozumi Makoto then moves us to the topic of "Tokugawa Confucianism and Its Meiji Japan Reconstruction," to the major ideological shift that occurred around the time of the Meiji Restoration. His objective is to outline how the position and function of Confucianism during the formative years of the Meiji government changed, especially with regard to teachings and social institutions. Although much is said about Confucianism in Tokugawa Japan, Makoto points out that most scholars have ignored the topic of modern Confucianism, holding that modernity and Confucianism are incompatible. He says, "Confucianism has played a complex and important role in Japan's modernization, a role that cannot be overlooked" (p. 370). Even more critically, Makoto argues that this negative view of modern Confucianism has been "projected backward" in time, distorting our view of Tokugawa Confucianism. This misunderstanding of the past has to be corrected before the topic of modern Japanese Confucianism can be meaningfully discussed. Particularly, Makoto refutes the idea that Tokugawa shoguns simply adopted Song Confucianism from China for the purpose of social control. They also found great merit in Confucius' teachings and went on to disseminate his repertoire of knowledge among the merchants and commoners. In Meiji times this learning was taught mainly in the academies, Tokyo University taking the lead in the spread of Chinese learning. Kyoto University came to rival Tokyo in the area of Chinese studies during the late Meiji period, particularly under the Kumamoto scholarly lineage that has existed from the early nineteenth century. The academic dissemination of Confucianism during the Meiji and its inevitable impact on social institutions simply cannot be ignored without warping our view of modern Japan.

In “Mapping a Vietnamese Confucian Past and Its Transition to Modernity,” Shawn McHale begins by stating that scholars of Vietnam face a double paradox. Namely, Confucianism is said to have profoundly shaped Vietnam’s past, while the “Vietnamese manifested a shallow, faulty, and incomplete grasp of its teachings” (p. 397). More recently, the Vietnamese have been celebrating a unique cultural heritage while taking their premodern beliefs and institutions to be Confucian. McHale argues that these are more than just paradoxes or apparent contradictions; rather, it is just false that Confucius has been as formative for the Vietnamese as traditional scholarship has made it appear. His thesis is that the influence of Confucius in Vietnam has been “exaggerated and misconceived,” and “this chapter pulls apart a common narrative of Vietnamese history as a tale of a transmission from Confucianism to modernity” (p. 398).

First through the use of historical examples and then through the argument that French and Vietnamese writers downplayed the importance of other forces in Vietnamese history, an accentuated picture of Confucianism emerges, one that is used “as a foil” for nationalism and modernity. For most writers, Confucianism was just a “hollow shell” covering a widespread lack of knowledge of the Confucian classics (although frequently written about, only a few Confucian terms were well understood). Such scholarship simply took the subject matter of having a Confucian past for granted. Examples were given of the politically conservative Tran Trong Kim and radical Dao Duy Anh, both of whom assumed that Vietnam had a Confucian past in order to put forth their own very different arguments of what kind of political future Vietnam should strive for. In short, Vietnam’s “Confucian past” is a colonial invention used in essentialist and constructionist arguments to promote very different political ideologies. In reality, it is only a “free-floating phenomenon, only tenuously connected to any Vietnamese referent, but useful in the emerging critiques of a variety of ills ranging from social breakdown to the threat of the West” (p. 430).

In “Uses of Confucianism in Modern Korea,” John B. Duncan argues that there are two main academic perspectives on Confucianism today in South Korea. The first is one that takes pride in its Confucian tradition, conceiving of it as essential to establishing and maintaining a healthy society. This “conservative” view can be contrasted with the second, more “progressive” one, which takes Confucianism to be a reactionary class ideology and a hindrance to positive social change. Moreover, Duncan explains that both these perspectives are rooted in a “master narrative” of Korean history as being carved out in a context of foreign aggression and nationalist resistance, called the “history of suffering.” Again, we see in this essay, as in so many of the others, a caution that rethinking Confucius requires understanding him as an invention used for specific, context-dependent purposes that are not essential to the philosophy itself. “Thus we have two com-

peting narratives of Korean history and Korean cultural identity, each using Confucianism for specific polemical purposes: one seeks to valorize elite Confucian traditions and to use them to maintain a certain sociopolitical and cultural status quo; the other strives to debunk elite claims about Confucianism as part of a drive toward a revolutionary sociopolitical and cultural reconstruction of Korea" (p. 435). Duncan goes on to point out that the competing nature of these narratives raises serious questions about the master narrative itself that they are rooted in, insofar as it is exclusively written in the binary terms of foreign aggression and national resistance. Issues such as gender equality and social equality lie outside the scope of such a nationalistically defined polemic. In any case, and even for these wider issues, Confucianism is of central importance for Korea as it reconstructs its cultural identity.

The objective of the next chapter, "The Closing of the Confucian Perspective in China," by Theodore Huters, is to outline a few of the ways in which Confucian discourse was influenced by intellectual developments in China between 1895 and 1919, and how this differed significantly from what had existed before then. In the years after the war with Japan, Confucian thought was markedly changed by the onslaught of events and ideas that took place in China. China's relation, and reaction, to the West and to the many political crises that riddled China in the new century were inevitable aspects of this transformation. As Huters says, "In the end, it must be concluded that the Confucianism we talk of at the start of the twenty-first century is a different entity than anything that could have existed before this time" (p. 464). Confucianism at the beginning of the twentieth century was of a conservative strain that developed as a defensive reaction to a radical critique of the West and other foreign influences. After the war, there was an iconoclastic movement that dichotomized the new West against the ancient East; Confucianism was thereby seen as something to be removed or reformed by more progressive or modern ideas. In response, a (modern) movement of "last Confucians" who sought to restore the prestige of Confucianism came about. This reactionary movement signaled a return of confidence in China's own cultural resources, along with a critique of foreign influence and values. In effect, a new dichotomy was carved out where the West was seen as spiritually bankrupt despite its material superiority. Of course, this occurred under the pressures of nationalism, and the author rightly questions whether a different future for Confucianism could have be possible in a less polarized environment. Such a future was made next to impossible given the iconoclastic drive to make Confucianism obsolete.

Like others in this impressive work, James B. Palais questions the degree to which Confucian thought played a role in the economic growth in Korea in the decades following the mid-1960s. In "Confucianism and Economic Development in South Korea," he does not rule out the possibility that many of the Confucian

virtues may have influenced that development, but to give Confucianism the large credit that it has received fails to take into account other important factors that may have been critical. Moreover, Palais argues that Confucianism may even have inhibited Korea's shift from an agrarian to a commercial and industrial economy. "In short, the priority for ethical standards over selfish commercial profit, agriculture over industry, and the educated man over those who worked with their hands appears to indicate that Confucian doctrine and attitudes hindered economic development" (p. 493). This is in light of the fact that Korea was primarily a Buddhist culture for hundreds of years "before Neo-Confucians launched their all-out attack on Buddhism in the fourteenth century" (p. 517). Indeed, it took over three centuries for Buddhism to be replaced by Confucianism, and even then Buddhism remained and has seen a revival in the twentieth century. This is not to deny the influence of Confucianism in Korea but only to cast doubt on its role in economic development since this is one area that Confucianism has had to abandon in its struggle to keep the Western imports of Christianity, secularism, utilitarianism, democracy, and individualism in check. It may be more reasonable to think that the success of the state-led program to industrialize Korea resulted from its being freed from the Confucian restrictions on commercial activity. In addition, other vital factors may have been Korea's exposure to the state-led capitalism of Japan during the colonial period, the nationalistic drive to demonstrate the Korean ability to counter the demeaning Japanese propaganda of native inferiority, and the desire to escape the poverty of subsistence farming, just to name a few.

"Rethinking 'Confucianism' and 'Neo-Confucianism' in Modern Chinese History," by Benjamin A. Elman, is the final essay of the volume. Since I could not hope to state Elman's conclusion any better, I will simply quote him directly: "One of the important lessons of this volume of essays on rethinking Confucianism is that unless we become more precise about the historical uses of Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism, we will remain captives of political and ideological agendas . . . that are free to grow into conceptual monsters, out of control, in the realms of journalism, religion and politics" (p. 554). Furthermore, Elman makes the point that Confucius is not dead, even in countries where the "last Confucians" have allegedly put their own narrative to rest. The lesson for us in the twenty-first century—unless we wish to believe, falsely, that the Confucian classics have finally been shut for good and will cease to have any continued influence—is that we need a "fuller genealogical and intellectual account of the 'New Confucians'" of Asia. I would add that such an account would have to include anyone who takes inspiration and guidance from the teachings of Confucius, including those undertaking a serious study of the classics in the "West." The trick is to do area studies in a way that sufficiently takes context into account, but not at the expense of understanding how the principles themselves may limit the

range of their legitimate applicability. Such a study would also have to include a sufficient appreciation of how long-lived are the principles that have been so variously contextualized (or "appropriated," to use the language of this volume). We must remember that the Confucian principles that have (more or less) influenced the histories of China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam have existed since premodern times. Confucianism has also been influenced by historical processes and events and has affected and been affected by other movements such as Taoism and Buddhism.

Conclusion

As a philosopher who focuses on comparative ethics, and each semester teaches the *Analects* of Confucius to young American students, a central challenge is appraising the range of ways in which (moral) principle can legitimately be put into (contextual) practice. *Rethinking Confucianism* showed me just how central this difficulty is to gaining a historical understanding of Confucianism as well. An important aspect of "Confucianism" is brought out by the difference in focus between academic disciplines. Historical analyses are largely backward looking, the goal being to see, as in this case, the extent to which a particular society conformed to Confucian principles, or to what this text calls "repertoires of world-ordering techniques." From a philosophical standpoint, however, understanding Confucianism is more about being clear about what the principles themselves mean. This is forward looking, in the sense that it takes the normative dimension of Confucianism most seriously, the focus being on how things *ought* to be instead of how they are or have been in the past.

For philosophy, understanding Confucianism is for this reason a thoroughly (and perhaps exclusively) speculative and interpretive endeavor. For example, after a careful reading of the *Analects* and from a conceptual frame of reference far removed from the original, one approaches the question of what the Confucian principles of *li* (ritual) or *ren* (the spirit of humanity) mean philosophically by interpreting the constraints they would put on human conduct *in general*. History looks to see whether or not such Confucian principles—which tell us how we ought to live—have indeed been realized (that is, in particular cases). *Rethinking Confucianism* shows how the speculative aspects of Confucianism have become central issues for historians in light of the considerable range of reasonable interpretations of what Confucian practice could mean. The simple fact is that "Confucianism" is an underdetermined concept for both historians and philosophers, even in the Asian countries where it presumably has had such great influence.

Clearly, *Rethinking Confucianism* makes a valuable contribution by showing how the meaning of "Confucianism" before and after the twentieth century must be approached with rigor and precision if any useful understanding is to emerge for the purposes of history and the social sciences. I submit that being clear about

what Confucianism means has become the unique problem that it is by virtue of the interface between its normative and historical aspects. And I would also add that understanding the premodern Confucian principles themselves, as they are translated and then interpreted for *any* contemporary comparative purpose, requires such caution. Indeed, I have seen excellent American scholars of Chinese philosophy uphold Confucian principles in a way that would make the "last" or "new" Confucians proud. Confucius offers us not only a vision for them that is broad enough to be relevant to American life today but also important guidance out of our downward spiral into the isolating tendencies of materialism, consumerism, and self-absorption. Yes, for these "idealists" Confucian thought is culture-at-its-best in Asia, where the interdependence of *ideas* about "Heaven," harmony, community, and genuine human flourishing first went hand in hand. *Rethinking Confucianism* also shows us how problematic it is to think that the best practice must follow from these ideas—and, again, what they really mean in the first place is open to interpretation. We may just end up with another appropriation of Confucianism that is a misappropriation on philosophical grounds. But in this same regard, we would also be called upon to question the legitimacy of many of the ways that "repertoires for world-ordering techniques" have traditionally been used to appropriate Confucianism in so many social contexts. This is why looking at how Confucianism has been appropriated at different times, and in countries like China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam, adds so much to rethinking the larger (historical and normative) reality of Confucianism and giving it the attention it deserves.

Understanding Confucianism starts with the distinction between the working principles of the classics on the one hand and appraising the contexts in which they have been, and will be realized, on the other. But this distinction requires further clarification by virtue of another that is key to unlocking problems that arise from the interface of the normative and historical aspects of Confucianism, and that is between a principle's *purpose* and its *practice*. To explain further: a principle's normative purpose can be defined without the historical specificity of identifying the contexts in which it has been expressed. Defining the purpose or aim of an ethical principle leaves it in the abstract, however, and is not enough to tell us what that principle means in a fuller sense of the term. Consider the Confucian principle of *li* or ritual, for example, which can be defined (even universally) to the degree that we can identify its normative aim: to bring people together harmoniously, in a way that is mutually recognized and responded to, and in accordance with the social roles and relations they rightly occupy. By definition, *li* must also accord with genuine human flourishing, and as such it cannot in principle be at odds with the *ren* of humanity that it serves. But does this tell us the whole story of what *li* means, in a way that would allow us to identify whether or not its centrally ethical aim has been met? To repeat the definition is simply to

reassert an abstraction, a value that is vacuous or underdetermined until put into practice. In this sense, we do not know what *li* "means" in the fuller, practical sense of the term until we can look to an action, an event, or a historical moment, and can say with accuracy whether it is an instance of *li* or not. In other words, we really know what *li* means when we can identify it in a practical context.

Rethinking Confucianism demonstrates just how this normative problem has come to bear on the meaning of "Confucianism" in a more complete historical and global arena. Confucius himself made clear, in inseparably linking *li* with *ren*, or ritual with the noble human spirit that it serves, that one can be accorded the honor of embodying virtue only after "what is difficult has been duly done" (*Analects* 6:20). No wonder Confucianism has to be rethought, especially when it is taken beyond its normative, speculative aspects of envisioning what kind of person or society we ought to strive for to the more concrete, factual aspects of its practice. Understanding and then following Confucian principles has always been difficult from the very start, and I submit that they will always elude us because of their philosophical and religious character.

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