national tradition is not only impractical but also a serious barrier for the conduct of modernization.

Ladies and Gentlemen: Confucianism is the precious legacy and asset of the oriental cultural tradition. It has been serving as an impetus for the modernization efforts of the East Asian countries. It has also fulfilled the function of maintaining social ethics and order in an age of modernization. At a time when the development of western capitalism has nearly reached its peak, and Communism is still a factor of threat to this World, Confucianism may someday become the guiding strength for the constant pursuits of freedom, democracy, and justice among mankind. I am convinced that with scholars like you putting your profound learning to maximum use, this convention will produce many fruitful conclusions beneficial to the social progress and harmony.

My best wishes are for the success of this convention and the good health for all of you participants.

Confucianism and Modernization: A Reevaluation

Benjamin A. Elman*

I. Introduction

In recent years it has become fashionable to attribute the remarkable economic development of Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Chinese communities in Southeast Asia in part to the shared Confucian values that have helped make for "miracle" growth in the 1970s and 1980s. Frequently, the economic modernization of Japan, both in terms of its long-range development after the Meiji Restoration of 1868 and its short-term development during the post-war "boom" era, has also been discussed in terms of the contributions of Confucian values. Some now contend that countries with Confucian cultural traditions, such as China and Japan, provide a suitable setting for the compatibility of liberal political rights and freedoms with political stability and economic growth.[1]

It was not so long ago, however, when Confucianism was thought to have been an obstacle to economic growth and modernization in China and elsewhere. Historians and political scientists used to stress that throughout Chinese history, from the "Debates on Salt and Iron" during the Former Han dynasty (207 B.C. –A.D. 8) to the "Self-strengthening" debates of the mid-nineteenth century, politics dominated economics in the imperial Confucian state. Bureaucratic control of merchants and Confucian economic policy was thought to have reined in Chinese entrepreneurship and prevented the commercial and industrial development upon which modernization in Europe and

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elsewhere had depended.[2]

After Max Weber's (1864-1920) pioneering *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* was published, the problematique of modernization decisively changed. Weber contended that the development of capitalism in Europe, for example, could not be accounted for in purely economic or technological terms. Rather, it was in large part the product of the ascetic secular morality associated with Protestants in Northern Europe, particularly England and Holland. In a remarkable discussion, Weber located areas of agreement between moral life in a society and its concomitant economic institutions.[3]

Robert Merton later pointed to the interdependence of "socially patterned interests, motivations, and behavior" in European science and religion. He noted that Puritanism, although not the only set of religious convictions that could have ushered in seventeenth-century English science, fulfilled the "functional requirement" of a socially and culturally patterned locus of support for nascent scientific inquiry. Not only capitalism but modern science could also be linked to the Protestant value system.[4]

In his lengthy essays on Confucianism and Taoism published in 1916, Max Weber included China for the first time in the problematique about the relationship between the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism. Donald Lach has correctly noted that "[t]hese essays, which consider the social and economic as well as the religious foundations of Chinese society, constitute one part of a series of comparative studies designed to throw light on the general question as to why rational bourgeois capitalism became a dominant phenomenon *only* in the West."[5]

Weber concluded that China and other Asian countries lacked an "economic ethic" compatible with capitalism and economic growth. Although China possessed the potential for capitalistic development, Confucianism lacked the moral dynamism or tension of ascetic Protestantism because Confucian values emphasized adjustment to the world as given rather than a rational mastery over it. Taoism, according to Weber, was essentially a conservative and negative force that stressed passive acceptance rather than innovation and dynamism.[6]

Such views were in ascendence in western academic circles for much of the twentieth century, as China and Japan struggled to catch up in material terms with the industrially advanced nations of Europe and the United States. As a result, Western historians tended to treat

the history of late imperial China in particular as a period of fading and decay. Usually viewed backward from the Opium War (1839-1842) and Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864), Confucianism, in both practice and theory, seemed to have left China unprepared for modernity. In contrast to a powerful and industrialized Europe, China was weak and backward.

Weber's perspective began to be modified somewhat by scholars who witnessed the dramatic economic rise of Japan in the 1950s and 1960s. Forces were at work in post-war Japanese society that could not be explained simply in terms of economic or technological breakthroughs. The cultural context within which the Japanese "economic miracle" took place began to receive the attention it deserved. Clearly, the Japanese people were responding to long-term social and intellectual forces that enabled their country to continue in the post-war era the process of modernization that had preceded the 1940s debacle.

Robert Bellah in his influential book entitled *Tokugawa Religion*, published in 1957, first made the case for the positive role of religion in the modernization of Japan. Focusing on the cultural contributions of Buddhism (its selflessness and asceticism) and Confucianism (its rationalism and bureaucratism), Bellah was able to elucidate the degree to which the modernization of Japan had required the formation of a central value system there that structurally paralleled the role of Protestant values in Holland and England. Accordingly, Buddhism and Confucianism in Japan had contributed to ethical and cultural patterns of behavior that were favorable to the rise of industrial society there. The "economic miracle" of modern Japan had its roots, then, in cultural values and traits that were parallel to the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism in Europe.[7]

Bellah, however much he found the Japanese case comparable to Europe's, concluded that China had lacked the cultural values that undergirded Japanese modernization. Buddhism and Confucianism were both present in China, indeed they had been transmitted from China to Japan, but the key, according to Bellah, was the way Buddhist and Confucian values had been organized in China—not their absence or presence. The primacy of "system maintenance values" in China, which Weber had described, over "goal attainment values" in Japan and Europe meant that Chinese Confucianism and Buddhism were organized very differently from their counterparts in Japan.[8]

If Japanese modernization could be understood in light of Japan's

religious value system, China's "failure" to modernize as quickly or effectively as Japan indicated that Confucianism in China must have remained a hindrance there. Indeed, if Weber's position did not hold for Japan, it still held for China: "The Chinese lacked the central, religiously determined, and rational method of life which came from within and which was characteristic of the classical Puritan."[9]

As we have already noted above, the recent reconsideration of this position results in part from the success of the modernization process in Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Singapore during the 1970s and 1980s. Confucianism has been reevaluated in light of the economic success of Chinese businessmen and entrepreneurs who, cut off from the Chinese mainland, have been able to develop new relationships among themselves and with more democratic political authorities to create new forms of material prosperity. Such economic success has reopened the question of the role Confucianism played in imperial China and the degree to which Confucian values retarded or promoted economic changes and technological innovation necessary for the modernization of China. To put the question in another way: Are the impressive economic statistics of Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, Singapore, and perhaps even the recent economic improvements in China and North Korea in some sense related to the shared Confucian values of the East Asian community of nations? From this perspective, Japan may not have been the exceptional case of remarkable modernization in East Asia but simply the first.

In the pages that follow, we will reexamine the role that traditional values may play in the modernization process by first reconsidering the Weberian position on China and the debate that it has elicited among Western historians. In our succeeding remarks, we will then try to demarcate precise areas in which the role of Confucianism in traditional Chinese society, high culture, and government can be properly compared against the requirements of economic modernization, technological innovation, and occupational professionalization and specialization in industrial society.

II. Confucianism and Imperial China

During the 1950s in the United States, one of the most influential works on modern Chinese history was Mary Wright's *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism*, which focussed on the 1862-1874 T'ung-chih Restoration. Along with John K. Fairbank, Professor Wright raised many of the issues that would remain on the research agenda

of most American historians of modern China during the 1960s and 1970s.[10]

According to Mary Wright, during the T'ung-chih Restoration the Confucian leaders of the Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1911) imperial state had a favorable opportunity to modernize China. During the 1860s, local and provincial armies were successful in quelling the Taiping, Muslim, and Nien-fei Rebellions, and policies of reconstruction for the devastated countryside were carried out. Moreover, the cooperative policy Western powers (with the exception of Russia) adopted during this period gave the T'ung-chih Restoration leaders added breathing space for their efforts to reform and modernize China.

Under able leadership, the Ch'ing dynasty created the Tsung-li yamen to deal with all aspects of foreign affairs. By centralizing the various economic and political affairs China had vis-a-vis Western powers, Restoration leaders transformed the Confucian tribute system, and for the first time Chinese diplomats were able to control Western demands by appealing to international law. The Ch'ing state also began to modernize its production of arms, which resulted in construction of the Kiangnan Arsenal in Nanking and the Foochow Shipyard. Both were efforts to reduce the danger that foreign military power posed to coastal and inland China. Finally, Wright argued that during the Restoration China had a civilian government composed of exceptionally talented leaders who had rallied to the defense of the tottering Ch'ing dynasty and attempted to reverse its political fortunes.[11]

Because of these favorable factors, Wright concluded that the attempt to modernize China in the nineteenth century did not fail because of external factors associated with Western imperialism, internal revolt, or lack of leadership. The Restoration failed because modernization and the Confucian social structure were mutually exclusive: "... the Restoration failed because the requirements of modernization ran counter to the requirements of Confucian stability."[12]

Mary Wright went on to claim that industrial development had no place in the Confucian social and political order. None of the Restoration leaders attempted to found a modern economy because they all thought in terms of a moral economy based on China's traditional self-sufficient agrarian society. Like all Confucian scholar-officials before them, Restoration leaders maintained a disdain for merchants and trade. They offered no programs for nonagricultural

areas of the Chinese economy. In addition, they prevented the early development of trains, telegraph, and mining (except for salt) for fear that the traditional Confucian social structure would be threatened.

Too much was dependent, according to Wright, upon having outstanding leaders, the Confucian prerequisite for good government. Because Confucians believed in moral generalists as leaders and deprecated specialization, they were unable to conceive and execute successful modernization policies, in contrast to Japanese leaders during the Meiji Restoration. Ch'ing dynasty Confucians, according to Wright, could permit limited modernization under the slogan of "self-strengthening" so long as such policies reaffirmed the Confucian state. T'ung-chih Restoration leaders in China, Wright contended, "failed because the requirements of a modern state proved to run counter to the requirements of the Confucian order."[13]

Wright's thesis agreed in historical terms with the long-standing Weberian premise that Confucian China had lacked the cultural and ethical tension necessary to produce capitalism and the concomitant industrial revolution as in Europe. A little more analysis and definition are in order, however. Were circumstances in the 1860s really so favorable for the modernization of China? Is ten years—following a period of fifteen years of almost fatal rebellion—a long enough period to serve as a "test case" for the incompatibility of Confucianism with modernization? If Western imperialism was not an element in the 1860s, can we really by projection (Wright's implication) assume that it was not in any way responsible for influencing subsequent development?

Upon reflection, Wright's thesis appears a bit too totalistic, that is, that Confucianism as a whole had to be preserved or as whole destroyed in order for China to modernize. Wright's use of Confucianism becomes questionable unless we can separate out what elements were essential for the traditional state and society and thus unfavorable for modernization, and what elements could be applied successfully to the cultural requirements for a modern industrial society. If in Japan, elements of Confucianism could contribute to Japanese modernization, why not China?

In fact, there may have been no a priori reason why Confucianism and modernization were incompatible. Efforts at industrialization were begun in the nineteenth century, which indicates that Confucian leaders could see the importance of modernization. The reasons why modernization did not succeed are more complicated and diverse than

Mary Wright indicated. She and others have underestimated the negative factors that were brought to bear by Western and Japanese imperialism along the China coast on the Ch'ing state and its local economies in the late nineteenth century.

Nonetheless, the predominant perspective that emerged in the 1960s continued to presume that Confucianism was incompatible with modernization in China. By placing the positive aspects of the western impact and imperialism in China at the center of efforts to determine why Confucian China failed to modernize as successfully as Japan in the nineteenth century, Fairbank and his students provided historians with a powerful and useful conceptual tool to probe the response of the imperial state to outside pressures. Stress on the positive impact of the West, however, made Confucianism appear less dynamic and more stagnant than may actually have been the case.

Joseph Levenson and Philip Kuhn stated the Fairbankian perspective in its clearest terms. In his influential *Modern China and Its Confucian Past*, Levenson entertained the "thought experiment" that Chinese history may have been "a history of burgeoning modern values." He rejected this hypothesis because of two key elements in the Confucian legacy. First, the "abortiveness of empiricism in early Ch'ing thought" indicated to Levenson that Ch'ing Confucians were not "aiming at science and falling short, but living out the values of their culture." They were concerned with issues that were "neither scientific themselves nor necessarily conducive to the birth of science."[15]

Secondly, Levenson concluded that the "amateur ideal" in Confucian society was incompatible with modernization. In fact, modernization reflected in modern Chinese history the "corrosion of the amateur ideal." Specialization and professionalization, according to Levenson, undermined the social position of Confucian scholar-officials to the degree that their political position in the Confucian bureaucracy depended on an ideal of "moral generalism" and a rejection of the role of a specialist in political or economic matters.[16]

Philip Kuhn perceptively has noted that a perplexing problem for historians of modern China is "how to distinguish between the decline of the Ch'ing regime and the decline of traditional Chinese society as a whole." If China was not on the eve of decisive changes before the nineteenth century, then, according to Kuhn, "one must assume that it was the Western intrusion that transformed a dynastic decline of a largely traditional type into a social and intellectual revolution in

which nearly the whole of the old culture was swept away." Kuhn did however entertain the formulation (which he ultimately rejected) "that the West was impinging, not upon a dynasty in decline, but upon a civilization in decline: a civilization that would soon have had to generate fresh forms of social and political organizations from with itself."[17] In Kuhn's account, there was at least the suggestion that the modernization process might not have been in all respects a product of the Western impact.

An unintended consequence of this research agenda, however, has been to underestimate the potential of alternative approaches to help historians bring to the level of observation the complex internal and external aspects of China's long history and how these long-term developments came to bear on China's response to foreign incursions after the Opium War and the ensuing modernization process. As long as the primary research sources western historians of China had access to were limited for the most part to materials dealing with the western impact, the Fairbankian view of the positive role of the West and imperialism in modern Chinese history remained unchallenged. Fairbank stressed internal factors to explain China's failure to handle the crisis of modernity in the nineteenth century:[18]

> Thus far the political collapse of the Chinese empire has been studied almost entirely from the alien view of the Western invaders, whose imperialist rivalry is recorded in numerous volumes. Nothing is more plain, however, than that the key to the story lies within. The startling contrasts between the responses of Japan and of China to the West since 1842 make it clear that imperialism was no juggernaut running roughshod over native peoples, but rather a stimulant capable of invigorating the strong or debilitating the weak, depending upon the internal condition of the recipient.

In recent years, however, a rich vein of materials dealing with sixteenth-, seventeenth-, and eighteenth-century internal aspects of late imperial Chinese history has been mined. So much so that historians in China, Japan, and elsewhere have begun to look at the period covering roughly 1500-1900 as an integral unit whose study will unlock many of the long-term reasons for why China went from the most advanced nation on earth in 1500 to an underdeveloped and backward country in 1900. It was precisely during these centuries that Western Europe left China irrevocably behind.

As a result of Japanese and Chinese socio-economic studies of

Ming-Ch'ing China, and western studies of the Ch'ing state apparatus based on archival material available in Taiwan and China, the limitations of the "western impact" approach have been noted by many of Fairbank's students. Some now call for a "China-centered" research agenda that will do justice to new findings and place the western impact into a larger perspective.[19]

Until fairly recently, historians of modern China have thought mainly in terms of the Wright-Fairbank research agenda, which assumed that the most significant influence on events in modern China was China's confrontation with Western technology and democratic political values. As Benjamin Schwartz has explained, however, to regard the West as a unified and monolithic entity in its impact on China is as inaccurate as to expect that China's response—or lack of innovative response—was monolithic as well. Both the terms "Western impact" and "Chinese response" accordingly should be seen as shorthand for a very complex interaction of political, ideological, and institutional factors, and China's so-called "failure" to modernize successfully in the nineteenth century should be seen in this light. If Confucianism contributed to China's failure to modernize within the limited time-frame of the nineteenth century, then it is necessary to point out in precise ways how Confucianism became caught up in the collapse of the imperial state and retarded the modernization of China.

The 1980s reevaluation of the positive role of Confucian values in the long-term economic modernization and industrialization of East Asian nations suggests that Confucianism may not have been simply a retarding factor in Chinese history. In the next portion of our presentation, we will reconsider the Wright-Fairbank thesis for the nineteenth century in light of the contemporary claim that Confucian values in Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Singapore actually were indispensable in the twentieth-century modernization process.

III. Imperial Confucianism Reconsidered

As Nathan Sivin has noted, "It is hard to think of any idea responsible for more fuzziness in writing about China than the notion that Confucianism is one thing." Frequently, little effort is made to distinguish between Confucianism as a political philosophy of scholars, as the orthodox ideology of the imperial state, or as the popular values of traditional Chinese society. Although there were certainly overlapping dimensions of these different "Confucianisms,"

it is clear that each had its own agenda of priorities. The scholar, emperor, and commoner reflected distinct aspects of what we normally consider the "Confucian legacy."[21]

It seems to me that there is an important misunderstanding at the heart of our usual evaluation of the role Confucianism played in Chinese modernization. When we speak of the Confucian state, we normally link Confucian social values with the Confucian state orthodoxy entrenched in public life and the imperial examination system, which drew in particular from the Sung dynasty Neo-Confucian tradition. Although related, these two aspects of Confucianism are analytically distinct.

When Confucianism is treated strictly as a moral value system, a collection of theories about the nature of man and his social responsibilities, then its relationship to the long-term problems of modernization on the popular level are one thing. When, however, we look at Confucianism as the ideological bulwark for the Confucian imperial state, then we cannot help but note that its relationship to the short-term political, social, and economic problems of modernization in the nineteenth century becomes more complicated.

Imperial Confucianism and Modernization

In the late imperial state, Confucian orthodoxy centered around the emperor and the bureaucracy. In view of the frequent political manipulation of the Confucian tradition by formalistic politicians in the imperial bureaucracy, who compromised Confucian ideals with the tactics and goals of political opportunism and the preservation of imperial power and prestige, it is likely that the imperial aspects of Confucianism may indeed have placed severe limitations on the political aspects of Chinese modernization in the nineteenth century.

As we shall see below, the ideological aspects of imperial Confucianism were likely to retard the modernization process in the late empire. A Confucian official was loyal to his emperor as long as the imperial institution embodied the moral and cultural values that were associated with the Confucian state. Defending the Confucian state also meant defending the Confucian social system, whereby officials and gentry transmitted the imperial aura and Confucian ideals to local society. Accordingly, western aggression in the nineteenth century was perceived as a threat to what were regarded as universal Confucian values of civilized life. Hence, the intellectual complacency of the throne and gentry was a weakness in China's recognition of the

potential importance of modernization. Western merchants and missionaries, for example, were regarded as barbarians and for that reason were viewed as members of an inferior culture. The cultural assumptions that accompanied this sort of Confucian ethnocentrism certainly dulled the possibility of Chinese curiosity about the West–in contrast to Japan–and retarded the Confucian response to the nineteenth-century threats posed by the West.

China's traditional picture of barbarians was derived from China's earlier relations with semi-nomadic peoples from north and central Asia and was applied to the Westerners with very little questioning. With this kind of perception of the West, the Confucian official could not develop a realistic picture of what was happening or what was required until very late in the nineteenth century. Confucians were predisposed by their imperial ideology to misunderstand how modernization of China would help counter the threats which the West posed. In the imperial frame of reference, economic development, in and of itself, was not the major concern.

When economic development had occurred in the past during the periods of spectacular economic growth of the Former Han, Sung (960-1279), and Ming (1366-1644) dynasties, the state moved in very quickly to control and redirect the economic threats such developments posed to Confucian state and society. The Confucian literati's traditional disdain for commerce was also a factor in the limitations placed on merchants. Albert Feuerwerker has noted that traditional Confucian institutions helped facilitate "pre-modern" economic growth in China, but the economic and social values which the state championed failed to develop and implement the critical legal abstractions and institutions for property rights that facilitated Europe's "modern" economic growth. Protection of individual private property, reduction of financial risk in trade and commerce, and the facilitation of capital mobility were not on the Confucian agenda.[22]

Lacking a systematic concept of investment, the Confucian state in the nineteenth century tended to make a shambles of its efforts to catch up with the West. In the process, China increasingly fell behind Japan. In addition, the traditional amateur omnicompetence of the Confucian scholar-official, whose position was based on success in the Confucian examination system, precluded intimate knowledge of the specialized and technical bodies of knowledge upon which industrialization was premised. By depending on a Confucian education to solve problems demanding technical

expertise, Confucians frequently developed faulty ideas about what needed reforming in the imperial state and society in order to modernize.

As Mary Wright has noted, Confucian political leaders, for the most part, were convinced that success in any field, whether military, political, or economic, depended primarily on getting the right men for the job, men versed in the ideas and values of imperial Confucianism. Professional capacity without Confucian moral values was dangerous to the Confucian social system. As an imperial ideology, Confucianism thus stressed the usefulness of moral generalists who fit Confucian classical standards of employment.

Virtue, not technical knowledge, was the Confucian basis for dealing with political, social, and economic policy. In these terms, a Confucian brought moral prestige to his official position, while the actual technical responsibilities of his appointment were secondary. Modernization in nineteenth-century China to a large degree depended on particular Confucian leaders who were themselves interested in reform. The self-strengthening program never became an imperial Confucian policy. If a particular official was not interested in the problems of modernization, modernization suffered, not the official.

Ideological factors alone did not predetermine how the Confucian imperial state would react to the problems of modernization. Political institutions, long in place in the Confucian bureaucracy, also affected how the West would be perceived and dealt with.

Confucian Institutions and Modernization

In any discussion about what effect Confucian institutions had in China's nineteenth-century "failure" to modernize successfully, it is important not to assume that the Confucian state was a passive agent in its interaction with the West. Ch'ing dynasty responses to Western demands for political and economic recognition were active even if not very innovative. Such responses were made in terms of precedents set by earlier relations between the Confucian state and its surrounding semi-nomadic peoples. The Confucian state could respond to the West only according to its own historical institutions for foreign affairs. Thus, when the state did respond to the West, it did so based on earlier precedents that proved inadequate for the nineteenth century.

The "slowness" of China's efforts to modernize can be partially explained by the institutional framework for foreign affairs in the

Confucian state. The theoretical basis for the tributary system, whereby Confucian China was morally and culturally superior to its neighbors, grew out of the Confucian belief that China was the center of civilization. Tribute from foreigners presented to the Confucian emperor represented confirmation of this enthnocentric system of foreign affairs.

Tribute as the medium of foreign contact determined the precise manner the Ch'ing dynasty would approach the problem of the West (although relations with Russia were an interesting exception). In fact, the "treaty system" that developed after the Opium War can be seen as the nineteenth-century Confucian device for placing European nations within the tributary system. Tribute represented the Confucian attempt to deal with an industrialized West according to a system of international relations that had its roots in centuries of Chinese contact with pastoral nomads and satellite empires in Asia. Because imperial institutions, based as they were on a Confucian raison d'etre, governed how the state would respond to the West, its response was predisposed to be noninnovative, relying on precedents that were inappropriate to the new historical situation China was faced with.

The Confucian state, for example, could not acknowledge the Western demand for full and equal diplomatic representation in Peking because it challenged a Confucian system of unequal foreign relations. Rather than yield on what seemed to Europeans as an elementary point of foreign relations between equal partners, the emperor and his Confucian advisors opposed such demands because of the challenge to the ideological Confucian mindset in which China was the "central kingdom." This decision led to war with the European powers, further debilitating China's efforts to modernize.

As Benjamin Schwartz has explained, the Confucian conception of universal kingship had a firmer religiocosmological foundation than in other cultures. Within Confucian theory, universal kingship was supported by a moral system that was itself part of the fabric of the cosmos. The Confucian mindset was maintained by contingent external factors (China's relations with nomadic peoples) and its inner cosmological foundations (the Confucian definition of kingship and the imperial mandate of heaven). Seen from within the institutional framework of the Confucian imperial state, one of its most remarkable breakdowns was the demise of its system of foreign relations, which in the twentieth century resulted in the triumph of the western multi-

state system over the Confucian Sinocentrism. A major institutional impediment to modernization was by 1911 removed.[23]

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Using an ideological and institutional frameowrk to gain perspective on the Confucian imperial state, it is clear that there were clear impediments to the modernization process in nineteenth-century China. Nonetheless there is no a priori reason that modernization and the imperial state were in all instances incompatible. Had the Confucian imperial order successfully undergone changes, as in Japan, that would have included decisive political, social, intellectual, and educational changes necessary for industrialization and modernization, then it is conceivable that under proper circumstances the Confucian state would not have collapsed in 1911. The fact remains, however, that it formally did and was succeeded by a republic.

Consequently, when we speak of Confucianism after 1911 and its role in Chinese modernization during the twentieth century, we are no longer referring to Confucianism as it was practiced within an imperial state based on an autocratic emperor and a bureaucracy filled with thousands of scholar-gentry whose ladder to success had been an educational system premised on the Confucian Classics in particular and Confucian values in general. What survived the Confucian state were Confucian values in the new bureaucratic structures of modern China and Chinese society at large. Stripped of the ideological and institutional obstacles that imperial Confucianism placed in the path of modernization, Confucianism as a value system had a better chance to adapt successfully to the challenges of modernity in the twentieth century.

In the final section of this presentation, we will look at the problem of Confucianism and modernization from the perspective of the long-term modernization of China. We will focus on the cultural contributions of Confucianism as a system of moral values, which, despite the collapse of the Confucian imperial state and its institutions, survived the 1911 Revolution. We will see that Confucian values survive in the modern world within new political frameworks just as Christianity and its moral values survived the transition from Christian kingdoms to secular states in the modernization of Europe.

IV. *Confucian Values and Chinese Culture*

In a controversial book that evaluated the continuities between

traditional and modern Chinese political culture, Richard Soloman attempted to revise and improve on the somewhat outdated Weberian discussion of Confucian values and their incompatibility with capitalism. According to Soloman, despite important changes in the twentieth century, traditional attitudes towards the use of political and social authority continue to endure. Authority in China still revolves around what Soloman refers to as a Confucian "social dependency orientation" whereby openness in political communication remains blocked by anxieties in dealing with authority and fear of provoking conflicts with one's peers. Emotional tension, conflicting interests, and interpersonal hostility continue to be anathema in Chinese political culture.[24]

Modern Chinese, according to Soloman, place collective interests ahead of individual ones, and their attitudes for the most part exclude a notion of legitimate protest against those in positions of authority. Despite the collapse of the Confucian state and the transformation of Chinese society in the twentieth century, Confucian values still pervade Chinese political culture. Soloman's findings confirm in more modern terms the earlier Weberian claim that Confucianism was a rational ethic that reduced social tensions with the world to an absolute minimum thereby providing "no leverage for influencing conduct through inner forces freed of tradition and convention."[25]

Thomas Metzger in his influential work entitled *Escape from Predicament*, has reexamined many of the issues that Soloman discussed. In the process he has further revised the Weberian position on China and Confucianism. Like Bellah before him, who saw the positive role Confucianism and Buddhism played in Japanese modernization, Metzger argues that Confucianism fulfilled a similar long-term positive role in China:[26]

> We are thus brought back to the importance of Max Weber's cross-cultural analysis of the Confucian ethos. His perspective was partly different from ours. He was asking why in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the indigenous development of the West led to capitalism and the indigenous development of China did not. He concluded that China's failure was due largely to the effects of the Confucian ethos, and his conclusion still carries weight today, even though his early analysis of this ethos was erroneous. We however live in a world where the development of the major societies is based on a mixture of indigenous factors and cosmopolitan influences. We consequently are led to ask: why in this kind of world are some societies

> more effective than others in coping with their problems and rising to the challenges of modernization? While Weber had to explain China's failure, we have to explain its success, but paradoxically our answer, like Weber's, emphasizes the role of the indigenous ethos.

In the processes of economic and political rationalization that undergird modern industrial society, Protestant values and motivations, then, were not the only framework within which these rationalizing processes could be legitimated and traditional restrictions overcome. Confucianism in China, as well as Japan, contributed to the long-term transformation of societies there such that in financial matters Confucian values reinforced trust, diligence, and economy, while at the same time valuing productivity and minimizing consumption. In the process, Confucian values—divorced from their imperial pretensions—contributed to the growth of a disciplined and practical attitude toward work, which was important for both entrepreneurs and workers in an economy entering the process of modernization.

Metzger's efforts to locate and describe Weberian "intellectual tensions" within Neo-Confucian discourse in China, which in the nineteenth century led Confucians to see in western ideas and western technology the "escape from predicament" they had been purportedly seeking in order to resolve their perennial statecraft dilemmas, are suggestive and useful in delineating precise areas that Confucianism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries contributed to the modernization of China.[27] This position of course does not presume that all aspects of Confucianism—its imperial ideology and institutions—were conducive to China's efforts to enter the modern world on a par with the more industrialized societies of Europe and America. Imperial Confucianism, once replaced by republicanism however, was no longer a major obstacle. What survived the demise of imperial and ideological Confucianism in the twentieth century was the Confucian value system, which itself transformed and modified continues to remain a significant factor in Chinese political culture and political economy.

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Spectacular economic growth in the Pacific Basin, according to some, is forcing a rapid shift in the world's economic center of gravity from the Atlantic to the Pacific Rim. Remarkable increases in pro-

ductivity, international trade, and overall economic achievement in Asia have forced historians to reconsider the long-term roots of the new "Pacific dynamism" and to clarify its impact on the global marketplace. Historians are returning to the problems of the Ming-Ch'ing state and its startlingly vibrant traditional economic system in order to better evaluate the long-term links between pre-modern and modern economic development. In the process, it is becoming clear that Confucian social and economic values, once they were freed from the political fetters of the Confucian state and imperial ideology, have had remarkable resiliency and influence in the twentieth century. So much so, that we can no longer automatically assume that Confucianism and modernization were in all aspects irreconcilable.

NOTES

1. See for example Roderick MacFarquhar, "The End of the Long March," *New York Review of Books* 32, 20 (December 19, 1985): 42-43. See also the essays in Ezra F. Vogel, ed., *Modern Japanese Organization* (Berkeley, 1985), and Andrew Nathan, *Chinese Democracy* (N.Y., 1985), p. 232. For discussion of the problem of modernization, see S.N. Eisenstadt, *Tradition, Change, and Modernity* (N.Y., 1973), pp. 3-115.
2. This perspective remains predominant among scholars in Peking, Shanghai, and elsewhere. For Marxist historians, the "sprouts of capitalism" during the Ming and Ch'ing were prevented from flowering by the autocratic policies and preemtory financial exactions of the Confucian state.
3. Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsatze zur Religionssoziologie*, 3 vols (Tubingen, 1920-21). Vol. 1, Part 1. Translated by Talcott Parsons as *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London, 1930).
4. Robert Merton, *The Sociology of Science: Theoretical and Empirical Considerations* (Chicago, 1973), pp. 228-53, 275-83. This is a summary of his earlier research. For discussion, see H.F. Kearney, "Puritanism, Capitalism, and the Scientific Revolution," *Past and Present* 28 (July 1964): 81-101.
5. See Max Weber, *The Religion of China*, translated by Hans Gerth (N.Y., 1954), and Donald Lach, "China in Western Thought and Culture," *Dictionary of the History of Ideas* (N.Y., 1973), Vol. 1, p. 368.
6. Weber, *The Religion of China, passim*, particularly pp. 226-49.
7. Robert Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion. The Values of Pre-Industrial Japan* (Boston, 1970), *passim*.
8. Ibid., pp. 1-10, 178-97.
9. Weber, *The Religion of China*, p. 243.
10. Mary Wright, *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism* (Stanford, 1957), *passim*, and John K. Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the Chinese Coast*

(Stanford, 1969).

11. Wright, *The Last Stand,* chapters 3-10.
12. Ibid., p. 9.
13. Ibid., p. 312.
14. Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy,* pp. 3-22.
15. Levenson, *Modern China and Its Confucian Past* (Garden City, N.Y., 1964), p. xxix, 8-18.
16. Ibid., pp. 19-64.
17. Kuhn, *Rebellion and Its Enemies in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 1-10.
18. Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy,* p. 5.
19. Paul Cohen, *Discovering History in China: American Historical Writing on the Recent Chinese Past* (N.Y., 1984), *passim.*
20. Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power. Yen Fu and the West* (N.Y., 1969), pp. 237-47.
21. Sivin, "Foreward," to Elman, *From Philosophy To Philology: Social and Intellectual Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, 1984), p. xxix.
22. Feuerwerker, "The State and the Economy in Late Imperial China," *Theory and Society* 13 (1984): 297-326. Feuerwerker adds that "it does not appear that traditional prejudices against commerce sometimes attributed to the Chinese state in fact hindered commercial development very much from the Sung onward." See page 317.
23. Schwartz, "The Chinese Perception of World Order, Past and Present," in John K. Fairbank, ed., *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations* (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 278-288.
24. Soloman, *Mao's Revolution and the Chinese Political Culture* (Berkeley, 1971), *passim.* Soloman observed: The social and political orientations of the Chinese we had interviewed very strongly reflected the values of the Confucian tradition—even where the individual had not been formally schooled in classical Confucian literature." See pp. xiv-xv.
25. Weber, *The Religion of China,* pp. 227, 236. Cf. Soloman, pp. 113, 210.
26. Metzger, *Escape From Predicament. Neo-Confucianism and China's Evolving Political Culture* (N.Y., 1977), pp. 191-235.
27. Ibid. Cf. Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion,* pp. 175-76. Metzger's approach is ultimately unconvincing, however, because it is patently unhistorical, based on a cognitive leap from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Neo-Confucian concerns to late-nineteenth-century Chinese efforts to justify reform and modernization, with very little concern for the decisive impact of the intervening eighteenth century. Metzger's efforts, nonetheless, mark a significant step in the right direction.
28. See, for example, Staffan B. Linder, *The Pacific Century. Economic and Political Consequences of Asian-Pacific Dynamism* (Stanford, 1986), and

James W. Morelay, ed., *The Pacific Basin. New Challenges for the United States* (Academy of Political Science, 1986), which discuss the economic vitality of the Pacific Basin and its implications for the contemporary and future world economy.