Conference Report

Workshop on Confucian Humanism

A workshop on Confucian humanism, with particular reference to institutional issues, was held at the House of the Academy from May 18–20, 1989. Tu Wei-ming, Professor of Chinese History and Philosophy at Harvard University and Chairman of the workshop, is the author of the following introductory note on the conference, which was financed by the Henry Luce Foundation. The subsequent summary of the workshop sessions was prepared by rapporteur Alan Wachman, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Government and Tutor in East Asian Studies at Harvard.

An Introductory Note

The purpose of the workshop on Confucian humanism was to explore Confucian ethics as a common intellectual discourse in East Asia from a multidisciplinary and cross-cultural perspective. Scholars in the humanities and social sciences who specialize in the region (mainland China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore), as well as scholars in comparative civilizational studies, participated in nine intensive sessions. Discussion focused on how the Confucian ethic has worked in shaping perceptions of selfhood, dynamics of familial relations, gender construction, social organization, political authority, popular beliefs, and economic culture in East Asia.

As an integral part of the Academy project to understand "The Rise of East Asia," the workshop examined the assumption that Confucian humanism is a shared value system—an underlying grammar of action and a common language of "communicative rationality"—in Japan and the Four Mini-Dragons. Instead of confirming or rejecting the assumption, the participants debated the claim that Confucian ethics, as reflected in government leadership, competitive education, meritocratic elitism, social interaction, a disciplined work force, principles of equality and self-reliance, and self-cultivation, provides a necessary background and a powerful motivating force for the rise of industrial East

Asia—the most dynamic region of sustained economic growth and political development since the Second World War.

While the so-called post-Confucian hypothesis loomed large in the minds of the participants, the workshop did not directly address the issue (as framed by Peter Berger in *In Search of an East Asian Development Model*) of whether "a key variable in explaining the economic performance of these countries is Confucian ethics." Rather, by focusing on the Confucian values and their institutional embodiments, the workshop offered thought-provoking interpretations of the life-orientations of the cultural elite and the general populace in Japan and the Four Mini-Dragons.

A subsequent phase of the Academy Project, directed by Ezra Vogel of Harvard University, will focus on Japan's global impact in economic, scientific, political, military, and cultural terms. Because of its economic dynamism, Japan merits special attention. The intriguing phenomenon of the rise of industrial East Asia has been variously labeled "The Sinic World in Perspective" (Edwin Reischauer, 1974), "Japan as Number One" (Ezra Vogel, 1979), "The Emerging Japanese Superstate" (Herman Kahn, 1979), "The Post-Confucian Challenge" (Roderick MacFarquhar, 1980), "The Japanese Miracle" (Chalmers Johnson, 1982), "The Eastasia Edge" (Hofheinz and Calder, 1982), and "An East Asian Development Model" (Peter Berger, 1988). How to locate Japan culturally remains a fascinating issue. "Japanese exceptionalism" serves as a constant warning to avoid facile generalizations about the Sinic world or the Confucian universe. Our study will examine the rise of East Asia as a complex whole, in terms of both its traditional roots and their modern transformations throughout the region.

The events of the democratic movement in China at Tiananmen were unfolding during the workshop and lent new significance to a key question: To what extent can Confucian humanism creatively transform itself into a communal critical self-awareness of the Chinese intelligentsia without losing sight of its moral demands for public service and politi-

cal participation? Indeed, the far-reaching implications of the role and function of Confucian institutions in industrial East Asia for mainland China and the modern West will be studied in the future as integral parts of this Academy project.

—*Tu Wei-ming*

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The Confucian Problematique: An Overview

In each session, the participants considered the role of Confucian institutions in contemporary East Asia by addressing an ostensibly distinct realm of social interaction. Despite their efforts to identify and articulate the influence of Confucian values on the structure or operation of specific social, political, spiritual, or economic institutions, certain underlying concerns surfaced repeatedly and linked the discussions in each session to common refrains throughout the conference.

The primary concern was whether there is justification in characterizing contemporary East Asia as Confucian. Each participant attempted to assert an acceptable definition of what is Confucian from the perspective of the culture he knows best and the discipline in which he studies. Not only was consensus elusive, but at times the debate turned on the term *Confucian* itself and whether it describes anything other than the texts written by Confucius and his disciples. Some even raised the challenging question of whether Confucianism—a system of ideas founded on Confucian values—is real or merely imagined by scholars to enable them to speak with each other about their perceptions.

The second set of concerns pertained to the role Confucian institutions play in contemporary East Asia—an inquiry predicated on the assertion that such institutions exist. Participants who accepted the validity of Confucianism as a social force were urged to describe its influence and to differentiate Confucian values from others that affect East Asian social institutions. Ultimately, the failure to identify explicitly the specific Confucian contributions reflected competing notions about the nature of the conceptual beast under consideration.

A third theme, subordinate to the first two, flowed from Max Weber's observations about the deleterious effects of Confucian values on China's economic development as compared with the effects of the Protestant work ethic on the West. The conferees debated whether Confucian values have impeded or accelerated the processes of modernization and development and discussed the potential benefits and hazards of those values to further growth.

The discussants decided against trying to isolate a single Confucian problematique. Some sought to differentiate between that which is Chinese and that which is Confucian and objected to the tendency to view the two as synonymous. Benjamin Schwartz commented that although Confucius wrote in the *Analects* that he was merely a transmitter of knowledge, the view Confucius provided was shaped by his emphasis on certain values selected from a wider corpus. He promoted a specific vision of society by associating certain practices as coherent and ignoring other practices with which they coexisted.

The tradition that grew from the writings of Confucius is directed both toward the behavior and attitudes of humanity in the interactions of daily life and toward the relationship of the human world and the cosmos. It is a sacred code of social behavior with spiritual and political content. It has been shaped and transmitted by the cultural elite and portrayed as a unifying system of values that both reflects their worldview and enables them to maintain their status as the arbiters of propriety.

In an effort to specify the common values that some view as Confucian, several conferees pointed to the economic successes of The Four Mini-Dragons (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan) and questioned whether wealth and power were emphasized by the tradition out of which those states emerged. There was some agreement that the Confucian tradition itself was not primarily oriented toward the development of wealth and power but may have offered a setting conducive to the nurturing of such ambitions. For example, Confucian institutions appear to have fostered social and political attitudes

that encouraged rapid economic development once the seeds of free enterprise were planted by some other means. From this perspective, Weber's sense that Confucianism did not serve as a functional equivalent of the Protestant work ethic is superficially correct. However, Weber apparently overlooked the role played by Confucian values in promoting patterns of familial and social organization that sustain and intensify the influence of capitalism.

Confucian Ethics as a Common Discourse

The participants attempted to characterize the fundamental concepts arising out of a Confucian value system in each of several civilizations in order to identify unifying themes in Confucian ethical thought. The aim was not to rehearse the central ethical tenets of Confucian thought per se but to comment on the role and significance of Confucian ethics in the societies under discussion.

Michael Kalton suggested that in Korea, Confucian ethics are expressed as a concern about social interaction in the human realm, based on a view that a common rationality governs heaven and earth. Western rationality implies the ability to think in a linear fashion and act on those thoughts. Nature is seen as a vast mechanism that operates according to a pattern of interlocking truths that may be revealed by mathematical and scientific analysis. There is a belief that by identifying such truths, humanity may control nature and provide for itself "the good life" on earth.

By contrast, in the Korean Confucian system, nature—defined as heaven—is the manifestation of morality. The human and natural realms are linked by a moral order, and one may ascertain the divine in nature through self-cultivation. This transformative process is an ongoing, lifelong endeavor that aims to heighten one's perception of the moral order and to embody it in one's actions. It is not a goal-oriented effort to know things about the natural realm as in the Western context, but a never-ending quest to be something more than what one has already become. By behaving in a manner increasingly reflective of the cosmic moral order, an indi-

vidual helps to reproduce on earth the morality of heaven. Kalton observed that the Western and Korean Confucian attitudes toward nature give rise to different motives for human action.

In Japan, Confucian ethical discourse is characterized by a historical consciousness in which the past is valorized with constant reference to the future. According to Samuel Yamashita, one result is that history and the past are infused with powerful moral and political import, which are often used as a source of legitimacy by the ruling elite. Confucian thought also portrays social hierarchy as being reflective of the cosmic hierarchy. There is a distinct sense of a center or origin of legitimacy; consequently, space and geography are invested with moral and political value.

The Japanese had long viewed themselves, albeit with some discomfort, as being on the periphery of the Confucian system that had its center in China. During the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), while China was ruled by the Manchus, the Japanese usurped the role of center in their own vision of the Confucian cosmic structure and convinced themselves that they were somehow closer to the Chinese tradition than those who ruled China. Scholars gradually substituted references to Japan's past for those to China's in order to substantiate their growing sense of self-importance.

In the modern era, there has been an increasing appropriation of Confucian ethical discourse for non-Confucian issues. The family has been revived as an important model for social organization, which it was in the past; this affects both the political and commercial worlds. Political and ethical education is phrased in Confucian terms, so that most literate Japanese have some familiarity with the terms of Confucian ethics used to guide, educate, and control the population.

Richard Madsen remarked that in China, the unsettled attitude toward Confucian ethics reflects a profound sense of anguish about the past. Madsen views the central dilemma of intellectuals concerned with such issues as the conflict between Confucian ethics on one hand and the discourse about wealth and power on the other. Many worry that the

dynamics of a system that promotes wealth through modern rationality will pervert and then destroy a social order long based on familial hierarchy and corporatism. This conflict is intensified by the ambiguity many Chinese intellectuals feel about the value of their own culture, which was once grand but, by comparison to the West, has apparently caused social repression and economic stagnation.

In 1988 a television series that was broadcast in China stirred up considerable intellectual, popular, and political debate. The theme of the six-part series *He Shang* (*River Elegy*) was that China's civilization (symbolized by the Yellow River) had declined. It advocated that China cast off the burden of its tradition, including the Confucian mentality, and open itself to the West (symbolized by the blue sea beyond).

This self-critical tendency of the Chinese intelligentsia emerged first during the May Fourth Movement in the second decade of this century, when the intelligentsia began to explore foreign ideas and to question the relationship between Chinese culture and China's regrettable fate. Since then, debates about the proper course for China have vacillated between extremes set by those who would renounce tradition in favor of modernity and development and those who would preserve but reform China's tradition to promote social and economic welfare.

Madsen noted that all cultures face similar threats to the family and social order, but it is not easy to speak of such issues in a cross-cultural context. The analysis of ethical issues involves a holistic way of thinking and requires extensive humanistic education, which no longer seems to be valued by most societies. Economic concerns are more easily understood because the language of economics has become an international one that is easily learned.

Cultural Identity

Considering that there was fruitful ambiguity about what *Confucian* means, it is not surprising that one of the most fascinating issues discussed at the conference was what it means to be Confucian. It is difficult to know

how to measure cultural identity or whether there is a threshold at which one must stop to still be identified as Confucian. Thomas Gold suggested that there is no specific set of attributes one must manifest in order to be considered Confucian, nor is being Confucian limited to a particular region, group, or political or social organization. Indeed, different aspects of the tradition are manifested to different degrees in different places. In Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong there has been a strengthening of certain aspects of the tradition that have been denigrated in mainland China itself.

Gilbert Rozman pointed out that even in China, views of Confucianism differ according to the level of society and the social class one considers. What one sees as Confucian in the Imperial institution is not the same as what one sees among the merchant class, the intelligentsia, or the masses. Yet all are linked by reference to a common core of values.

Chang Hao added that until the end of the last century, China had been dominated by a Confucian worldview that emphasized the unity of heaven and humanity and permeated every level of human activity. When the integrity of the Chinese state was threatened by military aggression from abroad, social decay, and the infiltration of foreign ideas, the core values of Confucian order were seriously eroded, and the resulting conceptual dislocation among the intelligentsia persists today. The iconoclastic May Fourth Movement of 1919 arose when some intellectuals began to call for the radical rejection of Chinese traditions that were seen to have facilitated China's vulnerability and comparative backwardness.

This outlook has dominated China's intellectual and political debates since then and given rise to the question of cultural identity. The vehement and persistent cultural iconoclasm seen among intellectuals in China is a unique phenomenon in a world where other communities were also forced to accommodate to the sudden and conflictual introduction of foreign ideas and the intensification of the modernization process.

Peter Bol said that there is a tendency to discuss cultural identity as a reflection of past realities and to equate all of the values associ-

ated with China's traditional social and political orders with Confucianism. Bol asserted that Confucianism is a notion created in the West to define and discuss a phenomenon that existed in the past but is not synonymous with Chinese culture. Benjamin Schwartz added that there are distinct anti-Confucian trends in Chinese thought. Confucian and Chinese are distinct categories.

Education

Ezra Vogel described the examination system for selecting officials for government service, which was based on their mastery of the Confucian canon and their embodiment of Confucian virtue. In China, the examination system fostered a unified national culture because all candidates for office prepared by studying the same Confucian texts. Although the original form and function of the examination system were abolished in China in 1905, virtually all East Asian states now have an analogous examination system for university admission. This phenomenon, which is manifested in mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Japan, may be unique to East Asia.

The Confucian educational tradition and examination system reflect a realm characterized by the hubris of moral authority: those who succeed as part of the system view themselves, and are viewed by others, as a meritocratic elite. Ronald Dore said that a Confucian seeks moral satisfaction from education because that is a fulfillment of a god-given, family-given, cosmic-given potential. The instrumental use of education for fame and profit in the pursuit of happiness and individual satisfaction conflicts with the Confucian view of life. This has infused education in most of East Asia with an emphasis on high standards. In addition, unlike schools in the West, which are expected to refrain from encroaching on the duties of the family and church, schools in East Asia are expected to instill moral values in their students; this lends a moral dimension to the entire educational process.

Tu Wei-ming said that for centuries, the educational system in East Asia has focused on a curriculum established by the neo-Con-

fucian scholar Zhu Xi (1130–1200). Students began by studying *The Great Learning*, which focuses on the holistic links between self, family, community, and state, the inseparability of morality and politics, and the dichotomy of inner and outer, as manifested in self-transformation and political leadership. Then they turned to the *Analects*, which offer common-sense notions about how to be human. Next, students read Mencius, whose vision of self-understanding is an apologia for intellectuals as masters of culture, as well as the basis of moral authority in the state. Finally, they read the *Doctrine of the Mean*, which emphasizes inner resources for self-cultivation.

Tu agreed with Dore that the hubris that results from this tradition is quite powerful. Although few have been exposed during the past seventy years to the formal training of the Four Books, the ethics texts used in contemporary East Asian schools still emphasize the inseparability of morality and politics and maintain that duty consciousness is more important than rights consciousness.

Gender, Family, and Hierarchy

The societies of East Asia are all characterized by explicit social hierarchies, subordination of the individual to the family, and subordination of females to males—repressive qualities that emerge from an otherwise humanistic Confucian tradition. Whereas some Western scholars are troubled by the apparent contradiction, Schwartz offered a different view. He commented that "we are all children of the Enlightenment" in the sense that as Westerners we express discomfort with the notion of hierarchy and authority and tend to think that those characteristics should be overcome by reason. He said there is a certain arrogance in denying the role of hierarchy and authority in Asia, considering that those features have not been eliminated from Western societies. He suggested that status and hierarchy may have value that civilizations influenced by Confucianism have more easily accepted.

Henry Rosovsky urged that hierarchy be viewed as a dynamic concept rather than one that is either present or not. Participants considered whether those low in the social hier-

archy may seek fulfillment in the proper conduct of their lowly role. It was suggested, for example, that female shop attendants in Japan find a means of self-expression in the elaborate but essentially meaningless task of hand-wrapping packages in the distinctive style dictated by the company for which they work. This raised questions about whether individuals are content with their lot in life or whether the social hierarchy in which each person defines one's role is indeed repressive.

Tu said that since the May Fourth Movement, the hierarchical foundation of the family and society, expressed in terms of three bonds (father-son, husband-wife, and ruler-ruled), is the aspect of the Confucian tradition most criticized. However, these relationships are described in the Confucian literature as the basis of mutual social obligations that guide correct, humane, harmonious relations; they are based on age differentiation, division of labor, or status and have been viewed as defining characteristics of any complex society.

Social hierarchy is also reinforced by the continuity of relations with one's parents long into one's adulthood. Tu said that even today, Asian adults have close, dependent ties to their parents. This is intended as an expression of compassion and respect for those who gave life to, nurtured, and taught one to behave in a civilized fashion, but often it infantilizes an otherwise grown person by subordinating one to parental demands. In Chinese, the written character for *adult* has a graphic component that implies that adulthood is not only an achieved state but also a developmental process. This outgrowth of Confucian tradition also generates a widespread veneration of, and deference to, age.

Another byproduct of the Confucian family process of socialization is that one is taught the virtues of self-sacrifice for long-range gratification and discouraged from seeking immediate gains. Endurance, self-control, and the ability to put off for the future are fostered within the family, as is the sense that one must subordinate one's own preferences for the benefit of the family. Lessons one learns about one's role and responsibility in

the family have ramifications for the broader social and political contexts.

Females are especially constrained by the hierarchy that emerges from Confucian traditions. Kim Kwang-ok questioned whether there is much respect for females' subordinate role in Korean society. He said a woman is identified first as a mother and has no independent status or private identity apart from that role. Kalton pointed out that the Korean language itself encourages hierarchical thinking. It is impossible to address another person with more than a few words before having to determine the status of one's relationship with that person, because the language is built on a code of hierarchy about mutual relationships.

Two other features of East Asian life that appear to stem from the Confucian emphasis on hierarchy are the division of household space on hierarchical or gender-related grounds and the practice of rote learning. Both seem to pervade life at all economic levels in East Asian societies. Both offer the individual a sense of fitting into a grander, preestablished value system, either spatially or temporally. Rote learning, after all, is a concession to past experience and a confirmation of one's significance by the privilege of internalizing the collected wisdom of one's elders and teachers.

Political Culture and Economic Ethics

Tu said that Confucian humanism is associated with an agricultural economy within an authority-based polity. Outside the agricultural society, Confucian values are less prominent and are emphasized as a form of family ethics. This phenomenon raises questions about whether Confucian values are wedded to agricultural economies or whether they may be adapted to industrial economies too. This issue is linked to the question of whether Confucian ethics are compatible with democratization.

Carter Eckert discussed the view of profit in a Western capitalist system on the one hand and in Korea on the other. Although avarice is not valued anywhere, capitalist societies place no moral onus on an individual's pursuit of profit, because through the mechanism

of the marketplace, one's own greed stimulates the economy and serves a larger purpose. In Korea, capitalism was imported by the Confucian literati. They resolved the apparent conflict between Confucian attitudes of disapproval regarding the pursuit of individual gain and the profit motive inherent in capitalism by claiming that the central purpose of profit was to improve the general quality of life and ensure the nation's independence. Productivity and development were encouraged by the activities of hero-merchants, who were expected to subordinate their own interests to the nation's.

The participants discussed the economic behavior of other East Asian states. They recognized that one commonality in East Asia is the central and active role of the government, which directs the state's economic activity. Differences in the particular role played by the state, however, made it difficult to characterize that role as a reflection of a particular Confucian mentality.

Popular Thought and Religion

James Watson said that anthropologists are skeptical about defining behavior observed in peasant culture as Confucian. He said that the extensive clan organizations characteristic of Chinese peasant life are frequently misconstrued as social-welfare systems that reflect the supposedly Confucian emphasis on familial cohesion. He believes that they are instead "hard-nosed business corporations" ruthlessly run by "steely-eyed managers" whose primary concern is to restrict benefits to the legitimate descendants of a particular ancestor.

The cult of ancestor worship associated with such practices is commonly seen as an expression of respect for elders, a universalized display of filial piety. Although powerful lineage groups do build elaborate halls to honor their ancestors, these are entirely financed by the ancestors' estates. Once the estate of a deceased relative ceases to provide profit for the living, his descendants forget about him and shift their attention to a more profitable forebear.

Watson said that intellectual historians have been duped by the self-serving rhetoric of Chinese scholar-bureaucrats, who perpet-

uate the myth that such popular practices reflect Confucian ideals. Chinese may attribute their behavior to Confucian tradition even if they are not truly motivated by Confucian concerns, because this enables them to foster the illusion of cultural unity. Watson asserted that one's identity as Chinese emerges from correct, ritual behavior—orthopraxy. One participates in certain communal rites (e.g., marriage, funerals) and even agrees about the meaning of such rituals without necessarily believing the explanation. The key to being Chinese is acceptance of external, ritual form, not adherence to an internal, conceptual orthodoxy.

Schwartz objected to Watson's equation. Considering that the original rituals of the past have been completely forgotten, that there is great uncertainty about the nature and significance of the surviving rituals, and that large subgroups in China are not concerned with orthopraxy, the performance of rituals is an unreliable definition of what it means to be Chinese.

Comparative Perspectives

Tu views Confucianism as more than a code of social ethics; it is a religion with a considerable spiritual dimension, but it is unlike other religions. Some religions, such as Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, have assumed a variety of cultural forms. Others, such as Shinto, are culturally specific and cannot be transplanted beyond their indigenous civilizations. Confucianism is neither.

Confucianism is not a religion limited to a particular culture, race, or nationality. It is a dynamic force that flows, has different currents, and has the capacity to interact with other traditions in a pluralistic context. However, there is no Confucian community that one may join, analogous to a church, shrine, or synagogue. One cannot simply convert to Confucianism and identify oneself as Confucian; one must become Confucian through self-transformation. The driving question is how to find the inner resources for transformation.

Confucius accepted the world as redeemable. He viewed the political realm in moral terms and accepted the power-based hierar-

chical relations that emerge from the political realm as a resource for transformation. An individual must develop as a moral being within the human relationships that bind one to society, not in an abstract, transcendent state. This optimistic view is predicated on the tragic paradox that although everyone is perfectible through self-effort, one can never realize one's potential for self-transformation to a fully moral being, no matter how hard one tries. Not even Confucius is viewed as the highest example of human perfection. Christ and Sakyamuni are the paradigms of virtue in Christianity and Buddhism, but it is possible to envision one more Confucian, more sagely, than Confucius; he failed to realize his own goals.

Confucianism may be regarded as a language of moral community flowing from a universal moral value. The vital energy inherent in human relationships offers a way to transform society and to establish a particular political structure. For that reason, a dominant theme in Confucian political ideology is ethics, not power. In a Confucian state, political order has primacy, and the central government is the locus of power. Throughout East Asia, the state is seen as a mechanism for exerting social control and establishing and maintaining moral order. The state is expected to serve as an exemplar, and even though those who staff it may not be committed to Confucian values, they are entrusted with an obligation and a right to establish moral order. This is often done by moral persuasion as well as by coercive force.

The Confucian state is expected to play a range of roles in citizens' lives. It is expected to educate the populace, to guide social interaction, and to prepare and recruit future state officials. The state's monopoly on access to education enables it to promote a comprehensive vision of society and to prohibit other social groups from developing an independent consciousness different from that promulgated by the state. As a result, Chinese society is infused with Confucian rhetoric, which even permeates the language used by other Chinese religions.

Since the nineteenth century the Confucian world, which contributed so much to the

development of China, collapsed as the Chinese were drawn into a highly integrated universe. The rhetoric of wealth and power supplanted the language of morality. Some say that neither the spiritual threat of Buddhism nor the military threat of the Mongols damaged the Confucian world as badly as the West has in the past century.

In the 1960s some social scientists believed that modernization was a universal process and modernity a universal ambition. After the disintegration of the Confucian world and the "beginning" of development, they rejected the traditions of East Asia as irrelevant to the transformation underway. These assumptions turned out to be problematic and have impelled a reexamination of East Asia in terms of the various manifestations of contemporary Confucianism.

Stephen Graubard recalled Shmuel Eisenstadt's criticism of efforts to assess modernization exclusively in quantitative terms and suggested that the preconditions that characterized each society help to explain why modernity takes different forms in different places. Graubard endorsed the importance of exploring ideas that have survived from the Confucian world of the past, however attenuated in form, to influence contemporary East Asia. He suggested that the Weberian approach to the study of Asia be put aside in favor of studying the potential of Confucian ideas, particularly those concerning the role of the state, to influence the world beyond Asia.

Rosovsky defended the Weberian question, saying that it is worth understanding why some states develop more rapidly or more fully than others and what commonalities, if any, are present among East Asian states. Schwartz objected to Weber's attention to economic and technical growth as the prime gauge of development and suggested that greater attention be paid to the influential role of the family.

George De Vos noted Durkheim's view that the main feature of modernization is a change toward secularization. With the emergence of science, human thought about the supernatural was supplanted by a more secular morality. The idea that the mundane is governed by

the intentional intervention of supernatural beings was replaced with a rational view of mechanical causality. Religion, then, may be distinguished from secular morality and rational causality by an orientation toward a source of sacredness and a belief in the intentional intervention of the supernatural in the affairs of humanity. De Vos challenged the assertion that Confucianism is a religion and asked whether it is possible to identify what agency determines morality in the Confucian context. He said that in Confucianism, one must look to some source other than the supernatural for the embodiment of the sacred. A system of thought can be considered a religion only if something is held sacred within that system.

In Christianity, the continuity of the tradition emerges from the church and the sense of eternity. In Buddhism, the ego disappears into the cosmos. In Confucianism, the ego disappears into the family; the cult of ancestor worship provides a sense of continuity and may be seen as the seat of the sacred, or religious, element of Confucianism.

Roderick MacFarquhar said that most contemporary East Asians do not share the elite's concern about identity as Chinese or Japanese but do care about what it means to be an individual in a Confucian family. Confucius was right to emphasize the family's role as the root of stability, and it is incumbent on those who wish to understand Confucianism to examine the traditions from the bottom up, not from the top down.

Peter Bol said that China failed to preserve the traditions it originated. In his opinion, some present-day intellectuals, including Tu Wei-ming, have radically redefined Confucianism as a set of contrived values that do not accurately reflect the traditions. Bol believes that it is important to reexamine the original bases of Confucianism and is appalled that the Confucian classics are no longer a part of the Confucian curriculum. He objects to the manipulation of ideas by the elite to formulate a vision of Chinese society that is ostensibly in accordance with the Confucian tradition yet is devoid of regard for the original sources of values.

Dore added that in Japan, certain magical themes gradually became dissociated from their classical origins. Confucianism, for example, was partially transformed into a set of guiding moral principles divorced from the sanction of any supernatural force; it became entirely secularized.

Tu concluded by saying that the worldview of contemporary Chinese intellectuals has been so altered by Western ideas and the disjunctures of the past century that the Confucian world order is as alien to them as it is to non-Chinese. He said it is not clear that modern Confucian humanism is a reflection of elite mentality or that the best way to understand Confucianism is to take the state as the locus of moral order. The Chinese state is now in the process of disintegration, and its legitimacy, as well as that of the ruling elite, has been undermined. This conference on Confucian institutions made clear the need to look beyond the political arena to the family as the source of moral order and to redefine the cultural elite.

—*Alan Wachman*