

Review

Reviewed Work(s): *Way, Learning, and Politics: Essays on the Confucian Intellectual*. by Tu Wei-ming

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of the early activities of those Chinese Communists who found their faith and acquired their first political experience in Europe in the 1920s.

While the overall contours of this book are clear, the amount of detail presented on such an array of student organizations, many of them minuscule in membership and fleeting in duration, is at times daunting. Some arguments are overstated: the so-called three struggles of 1921, which involved between one hundred and four hundred students in protests against the Chinese embassy in France, and ultimately the French authorities, are presented in quasi-apocalyptic terms. While these events undoubtedly radicalized some of the participants, it seems excessive to claim that the expulsion from France of a hundred demonstrators from Lyons had “dramatic consequences for the direction of Chinese politics” (p. 87).

Two very useful appendices providing biographies of the major participants and sketches of the major student organizations complete this well-researched and well-presented book.

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WAY, LEARNING, AND POLITICS: Essays on the Confucian Intellectual. By Tu Wei-ming, Albany (New York): State University of New York. 1993. xix, 202 pp. US\$14.95, cloth. ISBN 0-7914-1775-1.

A “single thread” connecting these essays, which cover over 2,500 years and draw on several academic disciplines, is that of “inner sageliness and outer kingliness.” This formula both points to the Confucian inseparability of the inner and outer, the personal and the social, the sacred and the profane, and draws our attention to the tensions within these pairs. Both themes are abundantly present in this third collection of essays by Tu Wei-ming, a Harvard scholar, passionately concerned with the past, present, and future of Confucian humanism, which he sees as “one of the most complex and influential living traditions in East Asia” (p. 1). First published in book form in Singapore in 1989, these essays originally appeared between 1982 and 1987 in publications for specialists and for more general scholarly audiences.

The first four essays, mostly originally directed at non sinologists focus on classical Confucianism and examine both its core values and the uneasy relationship between them and the institutionalization of Confucianism by the early imperial state. At several points Tu provides correctives to both the May 4th view of Confucianism as a purely secular humanism and the somewhat related Weberian misunderstanding of it as this-worldly accommodationism. On the contrary, writes Tu, the Confucian view posits a perfectible human nature, endowed by heaven, that can provide the means for our transformation into sages. This process of self-cultivation takes place through an individual commitment to “pain and suffering” (p. 45–56) but is a communal act involving other social and political relationships. Though political involvement was a Confucian ideal, it did not take precedence over the civilizing mission to transmit the

culture of the sages. The early Confucians lost the struggle for state control to the Legalists. The Han Dynasty then made Confucianism state orthodoxy. However, in the end, "it was the practice of the king-sage, not the idea of sage-king, that became an enduring political reality in Chinese civilisation" (p. 28), as a politicized Confucianism held greater sway than a humanized politics.

The three essays dealing with Neo-Confucianism are the most substantial and scholarly. Though perhaps of lesser interest to scholars of contemporary China, they do illuminate the questions with which they deal. They also raise issues relevant to modern China. For example, Tu's analysis of the refusal of a Yuan Dynasty Confucian master to serve in government illustrates the Mencian principle that "the great man carries out the Way alone, when the times do not permit him to join the government" (p. 92). Similarly, Tu explains the rise of scholarly "erudition" in the mid-Qing as a reaction to a "'felt reality' of a highly oppressive atmosphere created by a conscious imperial policy of bringing the articulate minority in line with 'official' and thus 'orthodox' learning" (p. 138).

Confucianism in this century and its future in the next provide the focus for the last two essays. One legacy of the May 4th Movement was a discrediting of Confucianism. However, Tu points out that there have been enduring undercurrents of Confucian culture in mainland China, and a New Confucianism has emerged outside China, particularly in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Extensive contact with Chinese intellectuals in those places has convinced him of the possibility of a "third epoch of Confucian humanism." Nevertheless, for this to occur, Tu suggests, Chinese intellectuals would have to "trap the resources of both their own tradition and that of the West. . . . [A] fruitful path could be the creative interaction between Confucian humanism and democratic liberalism in a socialist context" (p. 178).

This wide-ranging collection suffers slightly from repetition and a changing focus, and, partly due to the original publication dates, does not engage much with recent scholarship on Confucianism. Nevertheless, Tu writes as both a scholar and a transmitter and thus enriches our historical understanding, while illustrating how Confucianism can inform our appreciation of the great transcendental issues of human existence. Perhaps some day he will turn these considerable talents toward meeting the need for a general history of the Confucian project.

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ORDER AND DISCIPLINE IN CHINA: The Shanghai Mixed Court 1911–27.
By Thomas B. Stephens. Seattle: University of Washington Press (Asian Law Series No. 9). 1992. xiv, 159 pp. US\$40.00, cloth. ISBN 0-295-97123-1.

IN THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING WORLD, the study of law in China takes place between the horns of a dilemma: Is law in China an entirely different