

## RECENT WORK

### **THE FUTURE OF CONFUCIAN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY**

Edited by STEPHEN C. ANGLE

**ABSTRACT:** *On February 14, 2017, Joseph Chan and Stephen Angle convened a Roundtable on the Future of Confucian Political Philosophy at the University of Hong Kong. Eight invited speakers each offered thoughts on the main topic, followed by discussion among the panelists and responses to questions from the audience. This transcript has been reviewed and edited by the main participants. Much of the discussion revolves around the relations and tensions between Confucian political philosophy as academic theory-construction and the lived realities of citizens in the modern world, especially in East Asia. How is Confucian theorizing connected to Confucian activism? Another central concern is democracy—as value or as institution, as necessary in pluralistic societies or as problematic monopolizer of political discourse. We also discuss translation, republicanism, meritocracy, the proposals of Jiang Qing and Daniel Bell, and the role of Confucianism in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and South Korea.*

**Keywords:** *Confucianism, democracy, pluralism, political philosophy, meritocracy, republicanism*

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**Angle:** Good afternoon everyone. On behalf of Professor Chan and the University of Hong Kong, it is my pleasure to welcome everyone to this Roundtable on the Future of Confucian Political Philosophy. This is an extremely experimental undertaking with eight different speakers. The afternoon is divided up into three different phases. In the first phase, each panelist will speak for 10 minutes, or less, presenting a few ideas as to where Confucian political philosophy is going or should be going. Then after a break we will have moderated discussion among the panelists, then we'll open this up for discussion with everyone.

**Chiu:** I'll briefly introduce each speaker before they start. We will start today with Professor Stephen Angle. He specializes in Chinese philosophy and Neo-Confucianism; his latest book is *Virtue Ethics and Confucianism* (Angle and Slote 2013). He has also published *Contemporary Confucian Political Philosophy* (Angle 2012) and *Human Rights and Chinese Thought* (Angle 2002), among other things. So without further ado, Professor Angle.

**Angle:** I want to begin with a provocative statement. I think that there is at most one community in which the majority thinks that Confucianism does or should adopt a progressive stance with respect to social and political issues. In the entire world I think there is one community that takes this view, and I think that is Anglophone specialists in Confucian political philosophy.

Which means a number of people here in this room. That is to say, I do not think that general Anglophone populations anywhere in the world think that modern Confucianism adopts a progressive stance in respect to social and political issues. I don't think that Sinophone populations, anywhere in the world, whether we're talking about Hong Kong, Taiwan, or Mainland China, think of Confucianism in this way. I don't think Sinophone intellectuals, whether we're talking about Taiwan or Hong Kong or the PRC, or even Sinophone Confucian specialists think of Confucianism in this way. There certainly are exceptions in any of these communities. Perhaps the exceptions within the Sinophone Confucian specialists are the greatest. And certainly the idea that Confucianism is a progressive modern political philosophy is by no means a generally accepted view among the Anglophone Confucian community either. I just think it's a common enough view in that context.

This seems to me to be both a challenge, but also an opportunity. I want to comment briefly on how it is an opportunity. But before that, a little more on why this challenge exists. First off, how could it be that this is the case? No matter what individual views people might have in these communities, I think that we lack, both in Chinese and in English, the vocabulary to make the progressive potential of

Confucianism explicit. We lack the arguments, both academic and more popular, to both *tell* and *show* the progressive side of Confucianism in practice. What do I mean by lacking the vocabulary? If you think about the way in which what I'm calling "the progressive potential of Confucianism," is labeled, to the extent that it's labeled at all, we tend to talk about it as a kind of "*liberal* Confucianism." I think that this is troubling vocabulary. It opens so-called liberal Confucians up to the charge of simply being liberals, and I think that's something that some of us in this room have experienced. It makes it too easy to think that the only choices are being either a more conservative Confucian, or an out-and-out liberal. The possibility that modern Confucianism is dynamic, vulnerable to critique in some ways, developing in new ways, ends up being denied by this dichotomy between traditionalist Confucianism or liberalism.

That's why there's this need for better vocabulary to articulate the full range of possibilities, and that's why I think talking about progressive Confucianism is better than talking about liberal Confucianism. One of the problems that has been very clear to me while I've been in Beijing these last few months, and it was also clear to me while I was back home in Connecticut last week, is that the mainstream understandings of Confucianism in China and abroad are as a conservative, traditionalist, even regressive, sometimes self-consciously fundamentalist movement. And whether you're talking about popular press or intellectuals in these different communities that's the assumption that is generally held. One of the reason for this: to the extent that there are progressive interpretations of Confucianism that are going on in Anglophone scholarship, they are almost invisible in China; very little of it has been translated into Chinese. Visibility is one problem. I also want to mention arguments. I think that in addition to the "telling" arguments—that is, *telling* people that there are good reasons for Confucians to be progressive, and spelling out those arguments—we also need *showing*. What I mean by that is engaging with concrete issues, in society, in our local societies that are timely and arguing from a specifically Confucian standpoint to a progressive critique or a progressive end. For example, if there is a problem with gender equality, we should have progressive Confucians, calling themselves something like that, critiquing the unequal concrete practices in society, for Confucian reasons. This is showing what progressive Confucianism is. I think it would be remarkably refreshing, instead of having the only Confucian voices that are heard—and I'm thinking in the voices of the Chinese media, for example—defending Confucianism's claim to Qufu or something of that nature. We need to show progressive Confucianism in practice.

Now, I want to admit, or acknowledge, that I'm not speaking of progressive Confucianism here as "Stephen Angle™, I'm-allowed-to-say-exactly-what-the-parameters-of-progressive-confuciansim-are." I don't think it's a one-size-fits-all theory, and I'm sure that my views are in many ways in need of improvement. So I'm talking about a broader movement rather than a particular understanding of Confucianism, and I also think that Confucianism can and should have different significances in different communities. This does have something to do with what was discussed this morning, in terms of a somewhat communitarian dimension; the

notion of republicanism's role in this is going to come up in what Ci Jiwei has to say this afternoon, in Elton's writings, and so on. So there are reasons why Confucianism should become distinctive in different communities. But I also think there is a great deal that is shared cross-culturally. Hong Kong has been a crucial location for some of the best things along these lines that have been done so far. There's a concentrated mass of people with different views, mostly using English as a shared language. (I think that cross-linguistic work is a challenge and is a reason for some of the difficulties.)

In my minute or so left, let me say that what I'm working on right now that's most directly related to doing something about all of this is that I'm in the process of setting up a Chinese-language website that's going to gather work that was originally written in English, translated into Chinese, and work that was originally written in Chinese, all of which is broadly written in this progressive vein. The intention is to help people to see that there is a progressive understanding of Confucianism that is relevant to the contemporary world.

**Chiu:** Our next speaker is Elton Chan, who was actually a former student of ours. He got his PhD under Professor Chan a couple years ago. He's now at Yale-NUS, working on Confucianism and Contemporary political philosophy (specifically perfectionism).

**E. Chan:** I want to start by saying that I started studying Confucianism in my formative years, so my early high school time. And I grew up with people looking at me saying "why are you so weird." And I still occasionally get that, "why are you so weird?" I think that this is the predicament of Confucianism, being completely out of place. It's out of place because we still exist. The texts are still there, the ideas are still there, we all know the name ("Confucianism"). But it is out of place in the sense that we do not really fit the modern world anymore, politically, economically, socially, all these institutions are working against us and we are not doing well for ourselves and we are not doing well in adapting to them. And this is why I believe the most important project in Confucianism today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the modernization of Confucianism. We have to convert Confucianism, refit Confucianism, from its ancient character into its modern practice. Now in the past ten years or so, I believe I have seen some dramatic improvement in the study of Confucianism, as an academic subject at least. But at the same time I believe that one of the most important limitations remaining is that we see Confucianism as an object to be studied. So we study it historically, study it philosophically; we study it. It's something that we try to learn *about* and *just find out what it is* and analyze, which is important work on its own, but it means that we have yet to develop it into a living paradigm for active public engagement. Just take an example: liberalism. Liberalism is a very vibrant paradigm. You have all the old texts. You have Mill, you have Hayek, you have Dworkin, you have these really old texts with you. And yet it's more than that. We provide very vibrant perspectives and engage in public affairs, we educate students about basic values. There are a lot of commentaries and writings. There's a very

vibrant applied philosophy of liberalism and all of that. Nothing like that exists for Confucianism. At this point we're still bogged down on if Mencius said this or if Mencius said that. These are very important tasks that we're working on. But if we're talking about the future of Confucianism, then I think it's about time for us to try and morph from this into a more extensive engagement with the world around us. And basically turn it into a more engaging paradigm. Now to do this I think that there are three levels of work that are crucial to this and can all be understood as translation.

One is the literal translation of Confucianism into different languages. One thing that we see at the present moment is that a lot of the classical Confucian texts have not been translated or are not very well translated. The classics such as the Five Classics are relatively well translated. Some of the works such as the *Analects* have been translated and re-translated many times in various ways, and we are making progress in terms of the Neo-Confucians in the Song-Ming Dynasties, and yet there are still a lot of texts at this point which remain to be translated. To me that is a big thing. Because what it means is that without translating these texts, then we will not be exposing the academic community to the full range of the perspective of Confucianism. That will limit the development of our thinking and the ideas that we can come up with. And more important than the translation of the old texts is the translation of the new texts, right? So a lot of the Chinese scholarship at the moment is not translated into English, yet. If we think about the great Contemporary New Confucians such as Mou Zongsan and Xu Fuguan, their work is primarily not translated. Even though they wrote some of the best work in the study of Confucianism. The situation gets even worse when it gets to South Korea and Japan. As far as I'm concerned, South Korea has many very important studies on the *Yijing* (the *Book of Classics*). And yet, most of those works are in Korean, which I am incapable of reading at this point. So actual translation is one of the steps that we have to engage in in order to move on from where we are at this point. And one thing that we can do is see if we are institutionally discouraging translation, because at the moment I believe that it doesn't count that much for tenure. So I am still not going to do very much translation before I get my tenure!

So I think these things actually matter, because we're talking about a whole range of people that might be interested in doing these things, who have the capacity to do these things, and yet they are stranded by the institutional arrangements at this point that they don't want to do things at this point. So I think these are things we can do something about. The second level of translation is the theoretical translation, which is different from linguistic. In linguistic translation, we can translate the Chinese into English, English into Chinese, we can do all that, but this does not mean we actually understand what we're saying. A lot of the Confucian texts were written and spoken and argued under certain semantic contexts that are completely distant from us. I give one simple example: the role of the *Yijing* in Confucianism. Wherever they talk about ethics or politics or history or what not, they all have that background. A lot of them, not all of them, but a lot of them have the background of the *Classic of Change*. So they will be freely using ideas in the *Classic of Change* and these ideas are not readily acceptable, readily understandable in the modern context. Even if we translate these

terms into contemporary Chinese or contemporary English, it's not really going to work because it's not a language issue; it's a semantic context issue. So what we need to do—the only way to do this—is that one needs to submerge himself into the old context and be familiar with the historical context and the way that those terms are used, to be very familiar with the classic texts, to be familiar with what they're saying. We cannot expect the wide academia to do that and even the public to do that, so our job as specialists is to tackle this job. Because if it is not intelligible, recognizable to the public at large, then no matter how beautiful Confucianism is, it's basically just a relic of the past. And I believe in order to do that we need not only to familiarize ourselves with Confucianism, but also produce political philosophies that people can understand. This is why I long used the method that I learned from Professor [Joseph] Chan, the idea of the “philosophical reconstruction,” which is exactly to find ways in which we can reconstruct ideas in our particular semantic context.

I believe only then can we fully begin to develop a kind of political perspective from Confucianism. Now one thing that we can do besides these theoretical translations is that we begin to develop a more vibrant set of applied Confucian philosophies that begin with using Confucian terminology and Confucian perspective to articulate and critique work-place relations, domestic violence, and so on. In time, it would be possible for us to accumulate a set of political language that can gradually be used by future leaders or future publics. Now on the third level is the institutional translation. I believe what we're facing here is that Confucian values in the end must be materialized not only through ethics, but also through some organized ethos. To do this I think Confucians at this point need to take politics seriously, in the sense that we need to be *realists* about things. Politics is not just about ethics; it's also about power and institutional arrangements like the balance of interests. These things need to be dealt with seriously, so that we can start to talk to about how to articulate Confucianism in this context. Now, my latest aspect highlights the realist aspect of Confucianism, that they take these things very seriously. They actually take political power seriously, they take individual impact on personal behavior very seriously, the psychological power on certain players really seriously, and I think as Confucians we need to look more into these issues so that we have a better understanding of the bedrock arguments, the bedrock perspectives they have in terms of institution building. And with our knowledge of the modern institutions as well, I think it's possible for us to devise—begin to devise—new institutions in order to articulate Confucianism better. And in that way, I think Professor Chan's book on the second chamber and Professor Kim's book were such attempts. And so I'm seeing these really encouraging developments going on. Personally, I believe that the future of Confucianism lies in republicanism, that will emphasize the balance between virtuous leadership and institutions, but I only have 55 seconds left, so I don't think I can go to details as such. If you're interested we can talk about this later. Just to wrap it up a little bit, I think we're on the right track, I think Confucianism has done really well in the past 10 years, we just need to keep doing what we're doing and we need to break away from this psychological barrier that we want to treat it as a specialist study. It

doesn't have to be, it can be a public philosophy, it can be a philosophy that we use as a perspective to engage the world around us; it can be a comparative or even competitive paradigm with other modern paradigms, so that in the future we can generate some new ideas, some new paradigms, as to how we understand the world. It need not be purely Confucian, need not be purely liberal, but for us to have any strong interdisciplinary study we need to have strong disciplines first. And so I believe Confucianism as a political paradigm needs to be built, and needs to be moved away from an objective study, toward an active paradigm of engaging the world.

**Chiu:** So next we have Professor Chan who is going to talk about bringing Confucianism into the practical world. He is the author of *Confucian Perfectionism: a Political Philosophy for Modern Times* (Chan 2014). As we all know there was a workshop about his book here about a year ago. He's also very active in Hong Kong University governance, trying to bring Confucianism into practice.

**J. Chan:** To the dismay of many democracy supporters, the year of 2016 may go down in the history of democratic development as a year of deep crisis. Brexit, the election of Donald Trump, the upsurge of nationalist populism throughout Europe seems to have signaled an unprecedented failure of democracy. Yet, depending on the individual, these perceived failures may take on very different meanings. For some it is the victory of authoritarian demagogues joining hands with ill-informed and protectionist voters to undermine democratic values and processes. But for others, it is the uprising of an alienated political class against self-serving political elites who have failed to represent the interests of the underclass.

Whatever the correct diagnosis might be, many people have responded by demanding more or better democracy, rather than its abolition. Democracy as an ideal, or a set of normative principles, has not been called into serious question, despite its many commonly known flaws in practice. I think one of the possible explanations for this continuous appeal to the hegemony of democracy is the apparent lack of a political alternative that commands respect or allegiance. Democracy is still very much "the only game in town," so to speak.

I think some of the flaws of democratic politics might stem from its unchallenged justificatory principles. In my view, democratic principles such as the moral right to vote, popular sovereignty, and political equality, are not only philosophically problematic, but may be the source of citizens' self-aggrandizing sense of entitlement, complacency, and limited imagination and courage to develop new political institutions that don't fit easily with the traditional narrow confines of democratic norms.

I think one way to prevent democratic ideals or practices from becoming stagnant or regressive is first, to reopen the debate on the democratic paradigm; second, to situate it in the context of comparative political institutions and comparative political theory; and third, and most ambitiously, to challenge it with a different perspective of politics altogether. But are there any such alternative perspectives in politics for contemporary times? Confucianism seems to be a good place to start, given its

historical status as a prominent intellectual and political tradition in East Asia. However, modern Confucianism has not been able to articulate a strong alternative political perspective to compete with the democratic view. Contemporary Confucian thinkers and scholars have tended to embrace or dismiss the democratic principles without giving them a rigorous, critical examination. Of course this is a generalization, I admit there are exceptions. But I think it is important for us to challenge the hegemony of the democratic ideal, because by doing so, individuals, whether they are in the West or in the East, North or South, will be encouraged to re-examine their political beliefs, expand their political imaginations, and explore new initiatives to modify and improve politics.

So there are two tasks I want to conduct in the near future. One is to try to develop in a more systematic manner the Confucian view of politics. I have already done something in my book (Chan 2014), but I would like to do something more, in more detail, for example the view of treating political rights as responsibilities rather than entitlements. This I think is the mainstream Confucian view. This might be too strong a claim, and we might need to modify it, but I think there is a deep insight there. The service conception of authority: the idea that mutual trust and commitment between citizens and officials is essential to the legitimacy of officials and the political rule. The idea that if there is inequality of power or standing, that inequality is best justified by the fact that such inequality will benefit the worst-off people. Not only economically, but those also in terms of merit and ability and knowledge pursuit, and virtue development. I call it the Confucian difference principle.

In the long run I would like to develop a more systematic perspective on politics, so as to serve as one possible yardstick or regulative ideal to evaluate both democratic and non-democratic institutions. And in terms of institutions, I think that once we think that democratic ideas don't give us the only standard of legitimacy, then it opens up a whole range of institutions that can be considered carefully. The idea of a mixed regime could be an alternative to a full democracy if the democratic principle of legitimacy is rejected. If you defend a mixed regime, you have to say that democratic legitimacy is not the necessary principle for legitimacy. And so, once the possibility of a mixed regime is open, we can freely and refreshingly consider many options, such as (1) the idea of two chambers, with one being democratically elected, the other by meritocratic selection. (2) The idea of restricted rights to run office, which requires some kind of tests to be administered, whether it be test by previous record or some other alternatives, to screen candidates. (If we had that test in the United States, Donald Trump would not have been elected.) (3) The idea of the enfranchisement lottery—instead of giving the right to vote to everybody, we select citizens by lottery, and those selected citizens would go through some education, discussion, and deliberation before they are asked to cast votes on legislative bills.

All these ideas could not be considered as legitimate if you believe that democracy is the only game in town. But I want to challenge that idea. I know that this is an uphill battle. Although a lot of people are dissatisfied with the performances of democracy, many still cling to this idea that democracy is the only game in town. And I think that this is the time to raise critical questions about this very idea.



**Chiu:** Next up is Professor Ci Jiwei, who has written many things, including *Two Faces of Justice* (Ci 2006), which is interesting but also very challenging. His recent book is a little bit more accessible to normal people, *Modern China in the Age of Reform* (Ci 2014), and he's going to talk about Confucianism and Republicanism.

**Ci:** Much of the argument for political Confucianism in the modern world seems to rest on the belief that Confucianism has a certain flexibility with regard to regime type. Traditionally Confucianism went together with monarchy and only monarchy. Contemporary proponents of Confucianism, however, seldom favor monarchy. And some of them find Confucianism, duly revised, eminently suitable for democracy. Blanket denial of Confucianism's claim to regime flexibility would obviously be misguided. I'm not a Confucian, but over the years I've become better disposed toward Confucianism as a potential moral resource—a disposition easily encouraged in this company.

Yet there is little doubt that Confucianism has more play in certain regime types than in others. If we think of this in terms of Confucianism playing a major structural role or only a minor, subsidiary role in a regime, it is possible to advance the hypothesis that Confucianism can play a major structural role only in certain regime types but not in others. Take liberal democracy as a regime type. Strictly speaking, liberal democracy is not a regime type, but we don't need to be overly strict in this context. In a liberal democracy, the constitutional essentials revolve around majority rule and the guarantee of individual rights and liberties. Within the parameters of such constitutional essentials, the most that Confucianism can do is twofold: first, to keep alive Confucian ideals and values in civil society, and thereby serve as part of the informal background of a liberal democratic political culture; and second, to contribute one comprehensive doctrine to a liberal democratic society where no single comprehensive doctrine holds sway. Within a liberal democracy then, there is no room for Confucianism to play more than a subsidiary, nonstructural role. It is not always clear what Contemporary Confucians of a broadly liberal democratic persuasion are up to. Are they happy to accept a subsidiary role for Confucianism within the structural parameters of liberal democracy, or are they, by virtue of the revisions they propose to liberal democracy, aiming for a regime type that is no longer liberal democratic, strictly speaking? If the latter, what exactly is the regime they prefer? More important, is such a regime possible in the modern world? It is against this background that I want to raise the question of Confucianism's regime flexibility.

Because of time limitations, I can do no more than lay out some terminological and conceptual preliminaries. Let me begin by introducing a complication. By regime type we usually mean the character and operation of political authority—say, who rules and on the basis of what principles. This is the way Aristotle among others has taught us to approach the matter. Now Aristotle already hinted that societal conditions play a role in the functioning of a political regime, saying for example that a strong presence of what we today would call the middle class is conducive to a stable

democracy. It was left to Machiavelli, however, to say categorically that a political regime requires favorable societal conditions to be set up, and especially, to endure and flourish. In other words, regime types have a strong correlation with society types. This is an insight that we have come to associate with Tocqueville when it comes to democracy. For Tocqueville, democracy is not merely a regime type, but first and foremost a certain type of society marked by what he calls equality of conditions, that is to say, equality of social conditions. I'm invoking Tocqueville because his understanding of democracy as covering both regime and society is a conceptual innovation that is exceptionally useful for my present purposes.

In light of this innovation, I must recast the question of what I have earlier called Confucianism's regime flexibility. To be more precise, what is at issue is Confucianism's flexibility with regard not so much to regime types as to society types—especially if we take society type to be inclusive of the corresponding regime type, in which case we can speak of a society-regime type. Tocqueville has a further value for my present exercise, in that he has performed an illuminating simplification, by reducing all society types into two. One of these is democracy, whose defining feature is equality of conditions. The other is aristocracy, based as it is on inequality of conditions. Aristocracy thus understood covers all nondemocratic ways of organizing social and political relations, including monarchy. Thus Tocqueville pits democracy in the broad sense against aristocracy in an equally broad sense, and speaks of them as marking “two distinct kinds of humanity.” Now, what are we to say of Confucianism if we put it in Tocqueville's binary scheme of society-regime types, bearing in mind the distinction between a subsidiary role and a structural role? We can make three fairly straightforward observations: first, that Confucianism can play a structural role only in aristocracy; second, that it can at most play a subsidiary role in democracy; and third, that since aristocracy is a thing of the past, the best that Confucianism can aspire to in the modern world is to play a subsidiary role in a democracy if the latter happens to have a more or less living Confucian tradition. This is bad news for those contemporary Confucians who entertain higher hopes for political Confucianism. Small wonder, then, that their work contains traces, and sometimes more than traces, of republicanism—not so much republicanism's valorization of political liberty and political participation as its emphasis on checks and balances, on the common good, and on civic virtue in both active and passive forms. Such traces seem to be informed by the intuition that if Confucianism is to play a structural role in the modern setting, there needs to be a third possibility in addition to aristocracy and democracy. This third possibility is republicanism.

I doubt that those Confucians who are drawn to republicanism think of republicanism as a society type, but just as a regime type. It may indeed strike some of you as odd to speak of republicanism as a society type at all. But there need be nothing incoherent about the idea of a republican society in the following sense: a society whose conditions favor the establishment and flourishing of a republican regime, which in turn promotes and helps give shape to those very conditions. It so happens that this usage finds some support from the American historian Gordon Wood, who conceives of the general conditions surrounding the American Revolution

in terms of the succession of monarchy (before the revolution), republicanism (in the wake of the revolution), and democracy (two or three decades after the revolution). By monarchy (included in aristocracy in Tocqueville's sense), republicanism, and democracy, Wood clearly means, in his book *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, the combination of societal and political conditions—or what I'm calling society-regime types (Wood 1993).

Two things are worth noting in the present context. The first is the affinity between the burgeoning Confucian republicanism of our time and the political mentality of what Wood describes as the republican phase of American history. The second is Wood's observation that by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, republicanism was decisively and irrevocably replaced by democracy. In this regard, Wood shows much greater sensitivity to the relation between society type and regime type than does, say, Michael Sandel, who seems to have little inkling that civic republicanism is rendered utopian by the thoroughly democratic character of American society today. I am not implying that by the same token Confucian republicanism is nothing but an unrealistically utopian doctrine. For societal conditions are not uniform in the modern world, not even today. If republicanism has little chance in America, the same need not apply in China, or in South Korea for that matter. The least one could say on behalf of Confucian republicanism is that in republicanism Confucianism finds an option that, while being normatively more congenial to it than democracy is, is also more realistic than aristocracy happens to be, which is not to say that it is realistic, period. On the one hand, the Chinese social imaginary still contains substantial space for a relatively (but only relatively) thick conception of the common good, a relatively prominent place for civil virtue, and relatively widespread support for meritocracy in terms of promotion of the common good led by those with exceptional civic and instrumental virtues.

On the other hand, China is fast creating its own versions of atomistic individualism, value pluralism, postmodern irony, and rampant capitalism. Confucians definitely have their work cut out for them. What I want to hear from them especially is a plausible demonstration that a Confucian republican regime is a realistic prospect on account of China's present societal conditions. Short of this, political Confucianism will be caught between the binary options of aristocracy and democracy. Of these, one, aristocracy, is dead, and the other, more precisely called liberal democracy, allows only a minor, subsidiary role for political Confucianism.

**Chiu:** So next we have professor Fan Ruiping, who focuses on bioethics and Confucianism. He is the editor of a great many journals including the *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*. He is the author of *Reconstructionist Confucianism: Rethinking Morality after the West* (Fan 2010) and editor of *Contemporary Confucian Bioethics* (Fan 1999).

**Fan:** I think Confucian Political Philosophy encounters a dilemma: if it does not conserve Confucian ethics, it fails to be Confucian; but if it turns to Confucian ethics, it will be hard to deal with contemporary moral pluralism. Confucian political ideals

and Western political ideals are quite different. I don't exactly know what I mean by "Western," but I know a bit about the "American" ideal. Let me cite Benjamin Barber's work, *An Aristocracy of Everyone* to show the American political ideal as roughly equivalent to "freedom"—"freedom from rigid and heavily freighted traditional cultures" (Barber 1992). It's a unique story of freedom. In contrast, the Chinese Confucian political ideal is "ethics." It's a group of ethical values embedded in the Confucian way of life. As is well-known, Confucius wants government to "bring peace to the old, to have trust in friends, and to cherish the young" (*Analects* 5:26). Mencius teaches that "between parent and child, there should be affection, between ruler and minister, righteousness (*yi*), between husband and wife, different functions, between old and young, order, and between friends, fidelity" (*Mencius* 3A:4). Here I am not saying that Americans only have freedom, and don't have ethics. Or Chinese don't have the slightest sense of freedom. It is just a matter of degree. But the degree is really huge so the difference becomes a difference of essence between Americans and Chinese, I would say. If this is the case as I believe, there is this huge difference between the American political ideal of freedom and the Confucian political ideal of ethics. The American ideal of freedom is not Christian freedom, but it's a negative sense of freedom as proposed by the no-harm principle—namely individuals have the right to do whatever they like as long as there's no direct harm inflicted onto others. The Confucian political ideal is Confucian ethics, not Daoist ethics, Buddhist ethics, or any other kind of ethics. Politically, government is supposed to promote and maintain the Confucian values and the way of ethical life for the people. Now if we compare liberal and Confucian political philosophy, we will see that liberal political philosophy allows or leads to decadence. I think some presentations delivered this morning mentioned some examples of this trend. Of course by "decadence" I don't mean liberal political scholars must be more decadent than Confucian scholars. I think some liberal Confucian scholars, such as Steve Angle, are more virtuous than some conservative Confucian guys I know from China. However, in principle the liberal political ideal of freedom holds that anything goes for personal autonomy, as long as individual rights are protected and social justice is pursued.

The problem of Confucian political philosophy we face is *oscillation*. It's an oscillation between liberal principles of freedom and the Confucian ethics of virtues that I just mentioned. Joseph Chan's Confucian perfectionist political philosophy is very influential, and I like it very much. Roughly he tries to promote only those Confucian values that are still accepted by people. The problem is why he should not also promote those non-Confucian values and even anti-Confucian values that are also accepted by people through so-called public and rational discussion? In addition, what about some fundamental Confucian values that are not popular in contemporary society? It seems to me that his Confucian political philosophy will eventually be submerged in the liberal political philosophy.

My colleague Sungmoon Kim understands that certain Confucian values are still embedded in the contemporary political way of life led by East Asian people, such as the virtue of filial piety. So he argues for so-called public reason Confucian political

philosophy that differs from liberal political philosophy. However, it seems that Kim also very much wants to promote the modern Western democratic principle of equality. So he seems to oscillate between Confucian virtues and democratic equality, while Chan oscillates between Confucian virtues and liberal freedom.

Jiang Qing's comprehensive Confucian political philosophy tries to follow full-fledged traditional Confucian principles to establish a Confucian Constitution (Jiang 2013). Roughly he discusses three principles: the principle of heaven (*tian* 天); the principle of history; and the principle of people. It is indeed very comprehensively Confucian. But it faces the difficulty of how to persuade the people who do not affirm Confucianism to accept such principles.

So what is the future of Confucian political philosophy? I don't know. I guess all I can say is you can just put forward what you think is best or most suitable on the table, and let others see if it is appropriate. In the normal circumstances of moral pluralism we have today, you cannot really expect that you are able to offer a knock-down argument to convince all rational people and accomplish political consensus. I guess that is roughly impossible. But this may be good news that you scholars can do business as usual, and you Confucian scholars can continue to discuss issues like these. You can continue...

**J. Chan:** What do you mean by "you scholars?" You are also one of them!

**Fan:** So...whatever my reasoning is here, it is for discussion. So do not expect that you can offer a knock-down argument that everyone will accept.

**J. Chan:** Do you have a position on this trend, what is your alternative?

**Fan:** I think what Jiang Qing offers us to think about is interesting in the sense that he offers a real alternative to liberal democratic philosophy, in the sense that [Joseph] Chan's or Kim's is not. I heard you mention "imagination" several times. I think it will be really interesting if people try to make robust, new, initial proposals and try to really offer something different from liberal democratic philosophy. But still, I think [Joseph] Chan's and Kim's work is wonderful....

**Chiu:** Our next speaker is Huang Yong, and he is the co-chair of the Confucian tradition group of American Academy of Religion. He is also the editor-in-chief of *Dao*, which I know many of you are published in. He has written *Religious Goodness and Political Rightness: Beyond the Liberal and Communitarian Debate* (Huang 2001), as well as other books and articles on Chinese philosophy, ethics, politics, and religion and on the global age.

**Huang:** I think if I was asked to give a title, it would be "Meritocracy, Democracy and Confucianism," but of course this does not show what my view on it is. In case you don't want to listen anymore, I should say that perhaps my view is "Confucian meritocratic democracy," or "Confucian democratic meritocracy." I think my talk

basically will start from Daniel Bell, because in his book *China Model: Political Meritocracy and the Limits of Democracy*, he advocates his idea of meritocracy (Bell 2015). Now Bell is a Confucian, but in that book he does not make such Confucian elements explicit. In this talk I will not talk about his reasons. My view will be some sort of Confucian improvement on his model. I have two sets of notes. One is the role of virtue in meritocracy, and the second is the role of democracy in meritocracy. And I think I will not have time to talk about both, so I will just talk about the second one, the role of democracy in meritocracy. I think I will start from Daniel Bell, because Bell realizes that one of the main problems that political meritocracy has is its legitimacy, or its lack of legitimacy. And he says, “A government is legitimate, if it is morally justified in the eyes of the people.” Now this is a striking contrast to democracy, with which the issue of legitimacy rarely arises, if at all, as political leaders are elected on a one-person one-vote basis. Although there are some non-democratic measures for political legitimacy of meritocracy, Bell concludes that this problem can only be addressed by means of democratic reforms, including some form of explicit consent by the people. The question therefore is how to reconcile political meritocracy and democracy.

Bell considers two models of combining meritocracy and democracy, the model on the level of vertical public, giving more votes to more virtuous and educated people, and a horizontal model with both institutions of democratically elected officials and institutions of meritocratically chosen leaders, check-and-balanced by each other. Daniel Bell thinks neither of them is adequate on its own. He proposes his own vertical model: democracy at the bottom, experiments in the middle, and meritocracy on the top. In other words, at local levels, democracy should be practiced as the people have more knowledge of the leaders they choose. The matters at the local level are relatively straight forward, and easy to understand. Mistakes are least costly at a local level.

In contrast, for the very reason that liberal democracy should be practiced at the local level, Bell says, it should not be practiced on the top. Because, “ordinary citizens often lack the competence and motivation to make sound, morally informed political judgments....[M]any voters...vote in irrational ways... [and] often misunderstand their own interest. And when they do understand their interests, they tend to vote according to their short-term economic interests”; when they do vote according to their own long-term interests, they don’t vote for the common good; and “even when voters vote according to the common good of the voting public, such decision making can have disastrous consequences for future generations and people living outside the state who are affected by the policies of government.” Instead, meritocracy should be practiced on top, where political leaders are chosen through nomination, written examination, interviews, inspection of past performance, and final decision by the potential leaders’ superiors. Between democracy on the bottom and meritocracy on the top, there can be various experiments in the middle. And that is his solution.

Now here, I’m not concerned with any merits or, for that matter, demerits of Bell’s vertical model of reconciling democracy and meritocracy. Assume that Bell’s

meritocracy on top can indeed produce leaders with superior virtues and abilities, and thus can avoid the problems of electoral democracy that Bell lists. My concern is about the initial problem that Bell aims to solve with his attempt at reconciling meritocracy and democracy: the problem of legitimacy of political meritocracy. As we have seen, Bell himself realizes that this problem can be solved ultimately by democratic reforms including some form of expressed consent by the people. However, while Bell's vertical model does include both meritocracy and democracy, there is a disconnect between democracy on the bottom and meritocracy on the top. In other words, while there are indeed democratic reforms, which make possible explicitly expressed consent by people at the bottom, they are not translated to or even connected with the top, where everything is done non-democratically. So even if political leaders are chosen on the top through meritocratic processes are indeed people of virtue and ability, they have not received any form of explicit consent by the people. Thus, even by Bell's own standard, the problem of political meritocracy on the top has yet to be solved. I would like to conclude by making a modest, and I want to stress, very tentative attempt to address the legitimacy problem of political meritocracy, which I agree with Bell can be done ultimately by introducing some democratic measures to allow some explicit expression of consent by the people. Let's agree with Bell that electoral democracy on local levels can more often than not function in the sense that leaders elected this way are indeed people of virtue and ability, which of course is also the goal of meritocracy. In other words, on local levels such as "level A" the best way to practice meritocracy is to have electoral democracy. However, let's also agree with Bell that such electoral democracy will not produce the same results on levels above A, due to the list of the problems that Bell mentions earlier. Then in order to avoid this problem, and yet to maintain some democratic elements, even if just for the sake of rendering meritocracy legitimate, leaders on levels immediately above A, let's say "B," may be elected by leaders democratically elected on level A, perhaps also the existing leaders on level B and the leaders immediately above B, level C, if they themselves are also chosen on the model briefly proposed here. The leaders on level C, a higher level than level B, can be elected by all leaders on immediately lower levels, say level B as well as the current leaders on the same level, level C, and the leaders immediately above that, level D, as long as they themselves were elected this way. Then the same procedure may be carried out all the way to the leaders on the very top. Thus leaders on each level are elected by people on the level below all the way down to the leaders on the local level, who are elected by common people. Leadership on the top level can thus accomplish the type of legitimacy that Bell is looking for, as they have a certain form of expressed consent by the people.

Now it might be said that this proposed model is really a form of democracy, indirect democracy that is, and not meritocracy. I would like to make two responses to that: on one hand, as we have already seen, democracy and meritocracy, are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Democracy is more like a means of how to choose leaders, while meritocracy is more like a goal, in the terms, "what kind of leaders should be chosen?" In some cases, democracy might be the best means of reaching

the goals of meritocracy. Bell has convincingly argued that direct democracy is the best way to choose the leaders with virtue and ability on local levels. I'm arguing that indirect democracy might be a better way than direct democracy to choose leaders with the same qualities above local levels.

On the other hand, indirect democracy proposed here as a method to choose leaders of virtues and abilities on levels above local levels can work best if it is combined with some measures typically connected with meritocracy, including those mentioned by Bell, such as written exams, interviews, and inspection of past performance, among others. But I will exclude the crucial part mentioned by Bell, the final decision by superiors. These measures traditionally associated with meritocracy can be used to narrow down the list of candidates printed on the final ballot, for election in the form of indirect democracy. So democracy mixed with meritocracy this way can not only adequately address the issue of legitimacy of meritocracy, but can also better realize the goal of meritocracy: select political leaders with virtues and abilities.

**Chiu:** Okay, our next speaker is professor Jiang Yi-huah, and his work is on democratic theory, national identity, and Taiwanese politics. He's the author of *Liberalism, Nationalism and National Identity* (Jiang 1998) among other books, and he's also the founder and editor of *Societas: a Journal for Philosophical Study of Public Affairs*.

**Jiang:** The topic I'm going to share with you is a framework for democratic Confucianism. Before me you have heard a lot of people talking about the dilemma between liberal democracy and Confucianism and some people think it is possible to combine the two different ideologies or institutions, but for some it will be an impossible mission. Well, in my presentation, I will try to say that I think it might be possible to combine the two important political philosophies, but it must be done in a different way than what we have done at this moment.

So the topic for my talk will include these concerns. First of all, I will say, what do we mean by Confucian political philosophy? We are not today talking about Confucian metaphysics, or Confucian ethics, or Confucian epistemology, we are talking about Confucian political philosophy. So we need to start with what political philosophy in Confucian terms is, and the second part is: what is the modern type of Confucianism in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century, because that is the situation we are now in. And the third part will be some of my basic arguments for the idea of democratic Confucianism, and finally my conclusion, after which I look forward to hearing any comment or criticism from you.

Well, I think it is not a good time for a lesson about Confucian political philosophy, but I believe that more or less you will agree that the most important components of Confucianism as political philosophy should include the idea of commonwealth (*tian-xia* 天下), the principle of a benevolent government, the rule of virtue, and the politics of meritocracy. And there is one thing that we did not mention at all, which is the idea of abdication and the possibility of revolution from the people



in the just way, but because of the limit of time I'm not going to elaborate on any of the five points. But I think if we want to talk about political theory of Confucianism we need to face up to these elements, instead of friendship or virtue or be respectful to your friends or your brother or so on, which are nothing like these.

What is the possible type of political Confucian political theories today? I will try to say that, according to my limited knowledge, there are several different schools, which tried to promote a modern Confucian political theory. The first approach is advocated by Mou Zongsan, Tang Junyi and Xu Fuguan and people call it the school of New Confucianism (or Contemporary New Confucianism, *dang-dai xin-ru-jia* 當代新儒家). The point of New Confucianism is to combine Confucianism and liberal democracy. And for these intellectuals it is not impossible for the two important traditions to be put together.

The second approach is so-called called Political Confucianism or Civic Confucianism. The name of Jiang Qing has been mentioned and there is another important guy whose name is Chen Ming.<sup>1</sup> I think what they tried to do is to say that we don't need western liberal democracy and we don't think liberal democracy is a good thing for China. What we need to do is to construct a typical and pure Confucian political regime in which maybe a kind of a symbolic monarchy will be at the top and we will have three chambers and we will have a different way of running the country, not like western democracy. Maybe we will have some time to talk about these later.

The third approach is political meritocracy, because Daniel and Joseph both argue that democracy is not appropriate for the Chinese people or for the Confucian society, but on the other hand they think that meritocracy may be promoted again in a new way to combine or to modify democracy, so that democracy will not be the "only game in town." That is what Joseph said, but I also noticed that Joseph also mentioned that what you want to do is to *modify* democracy with some element from Confucianism, so I am a little bit confused by whether or not he wants to reject Western democracy totally, or does he just want to modify or revise democracy with some Chinese tradition elements? These are two different approaches.

The fourth approach—actually it is not an intellectual approach at all—is the communist usage of Confucianism. I think in the past a few years many of you have heard that Xi Jinping and some other political leaders of the communist political philosophy talked a lot about Confucianism and said that the Chinese communist are the true followers and upholders of the great Chinese culture, including Confucianism and maybe Daoism. It is quite confusing; many Westerners just cannot understand how communism or Marxism can be combined with Confucianism in a smooth way.

Instead of going into details on these four types, because of time I will go directly to the basis for democratic Confucianism. For me, and I think it is a very important question for any political theorist, we must ask: if you want to keep Confucianism as a viable option for modern people you need to answer the question of political

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<sup>1</sup> Chen Ming is the founding editor of the journal *Yuan Dao* 原道, and the author of (Chen 2013) among other books and articles.

legitimacy, you need to answer the question of how such a political institutional arrangement is possible, and you need to answer all the challenges that will come or arise out of society. So maybe one way to think about it is to ask ourselves similar questions: (1) what is to be kept in Confucianism; (2) what is to be rejected, to be denied and to be revised in Confucianism; (3) what Confucianism needs to include so as to enhance its potential as a political philosophy; and (4) what challenges Confucianism faces regarding its combination with democracy?

The first question is what is to be promoted in Confucianism. For me there are some core values of Confucianism, which are still quite relevant for modern people. For example, the idea of a morally good person, the idea that the government should be run by the virtuous and the competent, or at least the virtuous and the competent should be encouraged to take more responsibility in public affairs, and also the principle of benevolent government, which will include many major components of social welfare and the good. Confucianism emphasizes harmony and peace in family, society, and the world, which is also a great heritage for human beings. Needless to say their emphasis on education and spirituality is also a good side of Confucianism.

But what is the negative part that Confucianism needs to face? I think the idea or the system of abdication is no longer a possible in modern time. Hereditary monarchy and feudalism are no longer valid or applicable. The idea that a country should be run as a family with the political leader playing the role of parents is not a good idea. If you need to argue or discuss it in detail, I can do that later. And the culture of political leaders giving privilege to their family members as part of their family duty is not an appropriate way of doing public affairs today. Selecting government officials by an examination focusing on proficiency in literature is not a good way to choose officials, and the belief that natural phenomena have causal relations with politics is ridiculous in light of today's science.

What is to be included or enhanced? That is, what is lacking in the system of Confucianism? I think the idea of popular sovereignty is something to be considered, as well as the principle of constitutional government, rule of law, and due process. I think the people in Hong Kong have experienced of what due process should be, and how and why it is important. Institutional electoral democracy is inevitable; we cannot argue about that. Freedom of speech in all situations, freedom of free competition among political parties, independent judiciary, and some civic virtues which are not Confucian virtues (such as autonomy, toleration, participation, deliberation, and equal rights before the law)—all these need to be included or enhanced.

The last issue is about what needs to be overcome. I think there are some serious problems or challenges that modern Confucianism needs to face. The first one is how to reconcile between the Confucianism's deferential ethics and the agnostic spirit of democracy; democracy is always competitive, but Confucianism does not encourage or honor competition. The second problem is the tension between Confucian elitism and democratic egalitarianism. Joseph talked a lot about the latter. The third question is the barrier between Confucian familism and liberal individualism. Many of us seem not to like individualism and to assume that individual autonomy is not a good thing

in the Chinese society, but I don't agree. I think individual autonomy to some extent is a necessary condition for human beings. The fourth problem is the difference between Confucian emphasis on the outcome of political decisions and democratic emphasis on the fairness of political procedures, which is the difference between the ends and the means. I would say that the Chinese people and the Chinese society always want to see the outcome instead of a respect of the procedure.

So my conclusion is that if we can democratize Confucianism, maybe it will be good for Confucianism itself, and good for the world.

**Chiu:** Thank you very much. Last but not least, Sungmoon Kim. He has published many articles and recently published *Confucian Democracy in East Asia: Theory and Practice* (Kim 2014) and *Public Reason Confucianism* (Kim 2016). He's going to bring us to fundamental questions of methodology.

**Kim:** So I'm now trying to draw the implication of what I argued this morning for how to study Confucianism political theory.<sup>2</sup> In existing theories, a theorist tends to see herself primarily as a Confucian and takes the gist of her philosophical mission to be revivifying or developing classical Confucianism by reconstructing it in ways compatible with certain key—mainly liberal—values that are cherished in modern society, such as human rights, individual autonomy, freedom, and equality, just to name a few. One way we engage in this sort of a comparative philosophical reconstruction is the “Confucian first,” because her most impending goal lies in the modernization of Confucianism as her philosophic eye sees fit, even if the way in which she reconstructs Confucianism involves philosophical comparison and balancing. However, when the comparative philosophical work thus constructed is presented as a work of political theory, aimed at a betterment of the political community of the theorist's interest, be it national or global, some challenging questions arise. Why should a member of that community care about what is essentially modern Confucianism when or if she is not a Confucian and does not share the theorist's commitment to Confucianism? What does or should such a theory matter to non-Confucians and how can it be justified to and accepted by them? And worse, what if one finds the putative Confucian political theory to be nothing more than a mere fantasy of the self-claimed Confucian philosopher, having nothing to do with the East Asian reality? This is exactly the line of challenge that David Elstein raised to me in regards to my first book (Elstein 2016).

Again, there is nothing wrong with taking philosophical inspirations from one's own cultural tradition and reconstructing an old philosophical system into a modern one. But it is one thing to dedicate oneself to such a self-imposed cultural and philosophical task; it is quite another to present the outcome of her philosophical reconstruction as a normative political theory with an aim to affect the public life of citizens in East Asia. In a sense, anyone who self-consciously engages in what she

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<sup>2</sup> This presentation is reproduced, with slight modification, from the concluding chapter of (Kim forthcoming). We are grateful to Oxford University Press for the permission.

takes to be a Confucian political theory is bound to be implicated in this predicament. Inasmuch as one presents her normative political theory as a Confucian political theory, she inevitably puts herself under staggering pressure to prove the theory's Confucian credential, as much as its plausibility as a political theory. But the challenge posed to the type of Confucian political theory that I have just mentioned—let us call this “type 1” Confucian political theory—is doubling daunting because in addition to the burden of proof with regard to its Confucian authenticity, which many type 1 Confucian theorists appear to be willing to accept, it is further exposed to the burden of justification both to Confucians, and more importantly, to non-Confucian citizens.

This predicament can be alleviated, if not completely avoided, if we understand the nature and purpose of Confucian political theory somewhat differently. Instead of approaching Confucian political theory as a political philosophy inspired by classical Confucian philosophy and aimed at its philosophical reconstruction, we can build it as a political theory that aims to improve the public life of citizens in East Asia with direct focus on the circumstances of modern politics in the region.

Like type 1 Confucian political theory, this second type of Confucian political theory—let us call this type 2 Confucian political theory—also draws its normative inspiration primarily but not exclusively from the Confucian tradition but there is important difference in the guiding motivation between the two types. In type 2 Confucian political theory, the motivation is not so much *personal*, i.e., to develop a modern Confucian philosophy from the tradition to which one is culturally committed as a self-claimed Confucian scholar, but *political*, that is, to furnish a normative framework by which to make sense of, critically reflect upon, and morally improve the ways in which Confucianism (its culture, philosophical ideas, and ethical beliefs) interacts with modern social, economic, and political norms and institutions. The consequence is a political theory that helps us to mitigate various forms of contingences arising from the circumstances of modern politics, not by overcoming Confucianism but by means of its cultural resources and philosophical insights.

In this second understanding, the political theory is a Confucian political theory because it is targeted at the people whose social lives are importantly encumbered by Confucian norms, habits, rituals, mores, or civilities, both positively and negatively, notwithstanding their increasing subscriptions to diverse moral and religious doctrines as private individuals. As for those whose lives have been negatively encumbered by Confucianism, Confucian political theory enables them to criticize the aspects of Confucianism, as historically manifested in East Asian societies, that are morally demeaning and socially oppressive in light of its own moral ideal and to find a way to reform the existing political institutions and social practices as suitable to modern social circumstances they experience and create.

If Confucian political theory resembles this second type, there is no *prima facie* reason to believe that it is doomed to be rejected by non-Confucians simply because of its Confucian credential. In type 2 Confucian political theory, Confucianism is not the mere object of a theorist's cultural allegiance, however crucial it would be in motivating one's interest in Confucian political theory. Rather, what is at issue is

Confucianism in its broadest sense, which constitutes the background culture of civil society in East Asia, affecting *all* citizens in one way or another, regardless of their personal commitment to it. As long as citizens of East Asia are affected by Confucianism in their legal, economic, social, and political lives, it is and ought to be an important public concern. The task of Confucian political theory is to engage with the citizenry's public concern about Confucianism philosophically with special attention to its complex implications for important normative questions such as human and political rights, democracy, political authority, political legitimacy, political leadership, and social justice. Of course, certain arguments put forth by a particular Confucian political theory might be found implausible or unjustifiable but this is a problem endemic to any political theory. Potential exposure to such a problem does not in itself vindicate the claim that Confucian political theory inherently or ineluctably suffers the justification deficit.

The approach that I am proposing here is particularly germane to Confucian democratic theory because it takes the perspective of a citizen, rather than that of a political elite or that of a theorist as a self-conscious Confucian, in evaluating the value of Confucianism and its relation to the effective, legitimate, just, and/or good political life. Since citizens are the addressees of the coercive power, which is justified by or works through Confucian mores, habits, rituals, and philosophical doctrines, a Confucian political theory that aims to make it authoritative and legitimate and the relationship among citizens just and fiduciary as acceptable to citizens themselves naturally takes a form of democratic theory.

Still, there may be an objection. Even if Confucian political theory can be relevant to non-Confucians as a normative project aimed to come to terms with public concerns of the entire political community, it is a wholly different matter that the coercive power exercised by the state in favor of certain Confucian values, which pragmatic Confucian democracy allows in the name of Confucian democratic perfectionism, would be justifiable to non-Confucians. For example, what if one who has committed a family crime protests against enhanced punishment, as justified by the Confucian value theory of criminal punishment, by arguing that it is completely at odds with his liberal-retributivist belief that criminal desert must be purely individualistic? How can the Confucian conception of criminal justice be justified to this person? Here it should be recognized that the same argument can be made with equal force by non-liberals in liberal theory. How can the protagonist's liberal claim and the state's coercive power predicated on it be justified to those who do not subscribe to the idea of pure desert and rights-bearing individualism?

Of course, if there exists a perfectly impartial and neutral framework of justification, this conundrum revolving around the aporia of justification would not arise in the first place. But as I discussed elsewhere, and maybe in the morning, even liberal anti-perfectionism championed by (the later) Rawls, which works through public reason that is allegedly unadulterated by any comprehensive doctrine, is inevitably perfectionist (and sectarian) from the perspective of non-liberals, when placed in an actually existing liberal society (Kim 2016, ch. 2).

This is not to say that a non-democratic Confucian political theory is illegitimate or has no philosophical or public value. One can create a normative Confucian political theory in a way justifiable, not necessarily to actual citizens in East Asia, who some Confucian political theorists claim to have limited knowledge in public affairs and lack an ability for self-government, but to the best doctrines or ideals gleaned from classical Confucianism. The result may be a Confucian political theory with a distinctive normative and political orientation, be it communitarian, meritocratic, democratic, or something else, and that is fine as long as the theory in question remains mainly a philosophical argument or a regulative ideal, with only limited contact with or implications for East Asia's less than ideal sociopolitical situations. But if the ultimate aim of Confucian political theory is to engage with and improve the public life of East Asian citizens, as is often the case with most normative proposals currently available in Confucian political theory, I argue that the best way to do justice to citizens, in the service of whom the theory is developed, is that it begins with the circumstances of modern politics in which citizens find themselves and takes their variegated interests, desires, and viewpoints seriously, to which traditional Confucian virtue politics has not done due diligence. I believe and want to submit that this is where the future of Confucian political theory lies.

**Chiu:** Right, so welcome back everybody. The presentations coalesced around a bunch of themes such as: what the future Confucianism is; what does it really have to do to become a practical, living philosophy; its relation to democracy and various regime types; the relationship between meritocracy and democracy; what does it mean for there to be a republican Confucianism, and how should we even be Confucian to begin with.

So what I'd like to do is to open the ground for speakers to make comments about each other's presentations or ask each other questions.

**Fan:** I'd like to make a comment on Elton's presentation. I like your idea of modernizing Confucianism, including modernizing some rituals. I am from Inner Mongolia. In Inner Mongolia we have a wild life on a huge land, so our communication with each other must be made from a distance. So we have to yell and shout in order for others to hear. That's why we speak very loud.

Now we come to Hong Kong, and say to ourselves, "Oh, use a lower voice." People practice model rituals in Hong Kong and they speak in a low voice. So I think you're absolutely right. We must modernize ourselves and learn new rituals, transform some old rituals. However, on the other hand, I also think we need to traditionalize Confucianism. We've already lost some old rituals and virtues, such as ancestor worship for example. Sungmoon, fortunately, has added in his piece that ancestor worship is such an important virtue, such an important ritual for the Confucian way of life. If we don't practice it, it will be quite difficult to maintain a Confucian way of life, and eventually it will make no sense to develop Confucian political philosophy.

**E. Chan:** Thank you for liking the points. My very quick response is that I agree we have lost a lot, and that these are tough times for us. On the other hand, I have two points. First, this is not the first time that we are in such a disastrous moment, in history we have at least two, maybe three times, that Confucians asserts that civilized culture just collapsed, either due to internal warfare or invasion from an alien race, or from foreigners. And what we see is that Confucianism survived, and they always revived themselves by reinventing themselves. Second, I think that one important thing is that it is rooted in something that, at least, we have a deep commitment in believing that these are things that are in-built in us. That is, whether or not we change our human conditions, these things will always last. So I suppose that, yes, I agree with you that we have lost a lot of important rituals, but it does not mean we cannot build new ones. But, to build new ones we have to first understand the old ones. It will be our job to do that work.

**Verbeek:** I wanted to ask—this is particularly to Elton Chan, because I have this feeling that you’re possibly the youngest in the group—do you perceive very different interpretations of these debates in the younger generations? Because these are the generations that are going to be the wise people, like you, in the future, having this debate. I’m interested in the contrast between these two groups of people. By the way, I’m Florian Verbeek, I’m a PhD candidate here at Hong Kong University in curriculum design.

**E. Chan:** I don’t think it’s divided that way, actually. I don’t think it’s a generational issue at all. I think it has to do a lot with life experiences, the kind of education that we have, and the kind of family that we have. I have a peer who knows very well about the Chinese texts, because her family keeps telling her to study these Chinese texts and for these reasons she hates them. So I don’t think it’s an issue of generation at all. I think it’s an issue of Confucianism or Chinese philosophy is not modernized yet, and this is why we’re having the mismatch that we’re having. So before we can persuade anyone or talk about whether we can or cannot reconcile certain differences, we have to first cover the basics. We have to first build the theory in such a way that is comprehensible to everyone first, before we can even talk about reconciling differences.

**Verbeek:** Can you elaborate on what you mean by “Materializing Confucian values into concrete organized actions,” as it says on the flyer? I don’t think anyone else today has said something like this. The only other person who said something similar is Professor Angle; he’s the only other one who has actually talked about doing something.

**E. Chan:** I think that’s the next step that we have to take. We cannot just stay on paper without engaging in practices. But I also think that the theory is not very strong at this point, right? But by concrete organized actions, I’m referring to associations, for example, a book club. It could begin with reforming certain clan associations that

we have in Chinese society and what not. So we have to think about different institutions as the carrier for the development of Confucian values. In the grand scheme, of course, we have to think about the stage we are at. How is this stage going to be reformed for the articulation of Confucianism in the future? Now, when we talk about how we're going to translate this into institutional arrangements, I don't think that we can just push it into society immediately. Some people have to design it first, and then persuade people to get on board with the project. And this is going to be a long process, it's not like we're going to be able to just accomplish it tomorrow. But I agree that concrete action might not be something that is very vibrant at this point.

**J. Chan:** I would like to talk a bit about the relation between Confucianism and the real world, whether Confucianism can find itself in thoughts or in ways of life, or in practice or in rituals or exist in society. I think today, and including this morning's session<sup>3</sup>, I can see four people touching on this very point and question. Steve talked about Confucianism as a civil religion in contemporary East Asian society, and my response is that we need to find out if there is really a civil religion at all, I mean, you haven't given me enough substance to the idea of civil religion to assert that there is in fact a civil religion of Confucianism in society today. So his account seems to strike me as empirically optimistic. And Elton's point is that, in simple terms, "maybe there isn't much remaining in society, but let's do something that will create it or re-create it, through translation of texts, through translation of theories, through rituals and stuff." I think what he suggested to do is possible and we should do this. By "we" I don't mean necessarily everyone of us, because we're scholars, but I'm sure that there are people in Taiwan and a lot of people in mainland China who want to do that on the civil society level, and I hope there are people in Hong Kong who want to do that as well. And in regards to Jiwei, Jiwei mentioned about the Chinese conditions and whether or not the conditions in Mainland China are ready for some massive change of a republican nature that admits for a greater role for Confucianism to play. Actually, he strikes me as simply just an external observer, who is not recommending anything, and just passing an observation, you know, just an external player, not advocating anything, not creating, not recommending, and this is very typical of what he does.

I'm not making this point as a criticism! We want someone who is impartial and disinterested to tell us if in reality this is the case or not the case. And I think he did a terrific job!

And I'd like to end by mentioning Sungmoon. You contrast two types of political theory, and probably you had me in mind when you talked about the first type.

**Kim:** Not only you but a lot of people.

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<sup>3</sup> Earlier the same day, many of the same people took part in a "Symposium on Sungmoon Kim's *Public Reason Confucianism*" (Kim 2016).



**J. Chan:** You prefer the second type of political theory, which states that the theorist has to respond to existing conditions in East Asia, reflect upon them, and draw upon theoretical implications out of the current way of life and values that people share. I think that this is a possible approach, I buy this, I think people should do this. But my only question is, if you really follow this approach consistently, then you might not be as openly committed to the idea of democracy as you have done in your book or in previous works. It strikes me that in previous writings, you almost take democracy either as a given, or as a defended idea because of the conditions of modernity, because of the plurality of interests and disagreements. And when you defend democracy, you might not give enough attention to the shared values of East Asians. You do not follow this strategy of the type-2 approach. I think you follow the type-1 approach, as a philosopher, as a theorist, you think democracy is given, is fully justified, given the conditions of modernity. But if you really are recommending the second type, then I would say that maybe the reality is much more messy than you expect, even when it comes to the question of democratic values. Recently I read an article written by Doh Shin (Park and Shin 2006). He and another colleague, drawing on world value surveys and the Asian Barometer, argued that a lot of East Asians, although in the abstract they defend the notion of democracy as the only game in town, but when confronted with questions about paternalism or authoritarian practices of certain kinds in conducting elections and adopting practices, they prefer what is called a “hybrid” understanding of legitimacy. So if you really reflect on the public opinion of East Asian societies, then you have to allow a greater role for the possibility of a mixed regime or a hybrid notion of civil society.

**Chiu:** Sungmoon, would you like a chance to respond?

**Kim:** Yes, just briefly. First of all, with all due respect, I don't think that the kind of research that Professor Doh Shin and his collaborators do accurately tells about Confucian values because survey questions from the Asian Barometer or the Korean Barometer are not asking about Confucianism or Confucian values per se. They have their own, very general, set of questions. For instance, they ask questions like, “Are you going to help someone if you happen to find them lying down in the street?” Professor Shin tends to capture this in terms of, *ren*, the Confucian moral virtue. But we should note that the designers of the survey data had no reference to Confucianism. We can see this as sheer compassion or benevolence, which is a universal human moral sentiment. And it is political scientists who operationalize concepts like this into testable variables and call them “Confucian” variables. So my point is, the data that Prof. Shin presents are useful, but there is a liability in basing one's argument entirely on them as they are operationalized by the researcher *as* Confucian values. When I say that we East Asians live under circumstances marked by value pluralism in societies of the Confucian heritage, I only mean that Confucian culture is still viable and other cultures such as Daoism and Buddhism do not give rise to politically salient problems, say, in relation to constitutional jurisprudence or public policy making. In our society, people are confronting with each other about different values,

even when they are roughly immersed in Confucian values and moral sentiments. But then, we should give everyone an equal say about their ideas, beliefs, and values. In this case, the institutions that can best accommodate each person's value judgment and (moral and material) interest in a way that can give justice to their equal public status is, I believe, some sort of democratic form. In my view, democracy can best accommodate different ideas, values, and opinions equally without prioritizing or giving weight to views for those who are more virtuous or more educated and without discriminating against those who are not very well off. Of course, I'm open to an alternative type of regime, if it can fulfill this task better.

**J. Chan:** But that's a type-1 defense of democracy.

**Kim:** I think what I'm proposing is a type-2 defense because type-1 is a theory in which a self-claimed "Confucian" scholar engages in philosophical reconstruction of Confucianism in order to modernize it.

**J. Chan:** I mean it's philosophical. Type-1 is more philosophical; type-2 is more a sort of responding to reality and people's actual beliefs.

**Kim:** No it's not responding to people's actual beliefs. It's more formalistic in the sense of how can we respond to people's very different beliefs, ideas, and inspirations in an equal way. And an institution that can do that kind of job, I think, is a democratic institution, among available political institutions. Still, there may be some other better types of regimes of someone's making, but as far as I'm concerned I think among the available political arrangements, a democratic institution, whether it is designed as Confucian or Islamic, can better, if not best, accommodate these different ideas and interests on equal terms, because there is no way in which someone's interest can be claimed to be weightier than others, in the absence of a certain independent standard. Anyhow, so that's what I'm pressing us to be more concerned about. Again, type-1 is, "oh, I'm Confucian and I'm interested in these texts and ideas and I'm going to remake Confucianism without attending to its justifiability or acceptability to the people. And I'm going to revise classical Confucianism and recreate it in a way that I see fit." I think it's a legitimate intellectual exercise and I would call it modern Confucianism, but I'm not sure whether it's normative political theory; because it is affecting people's lives, people should have equal say about this whole process about being affected so. In this regard I think the second path would be much more productive.

**E. Chan:** My question here is will you be willing to go so far and say that the democratic regime is actually beyond dispute. That is even though there are a lot, if you look at the ground and whatever people are saying, a lot of people who are actually against democracy. If you treat them equally then what if 70% of them, out of Confucian inspired notions, are against democracy, will you go so far and say "no, this is the fundamental ground we are not moving or touching, because we should

treat them equally”? But, once we get that we are in the type-1—the type-1 philosophical defense rather than the on-the-ground-one.

**Kim:** It’s a tough question but at the end of the day I would say that something like this: I don’t think democracy is in-itself good in absolute terms, such that it would prevent us from investigating or exploring different types of regime. And political theory in a sense is about different types of regime and different types of organizing our collective life. Now, my guiding problem here is the circumstances of our modern life but we can define “our modern life” differently and some critics are even challenging modernity itself. I believe critiquing modernity is a legitimate intellectual exercise. That being said, I am realistic enough to accept modernity, as we have somehow embraced it in Hong Kong, Singapore, and South Korea, and what is central to our modern life is some sort of pluralism, involving different degrees or different kinds, that gives rise to disagreement. In Hong Kong, in South Korea, or even in China, then, what would be the best or the better way to organize our disagreement in a way that can be respectful of our equal public standing? So in my view, still, democracy can do better compared to political meritocracy and compared to socialist regimes that collectivize the means of production. If someone comes up with a better alternative Confucian political theory with full attention to the modern social circumstances, then, I am open to it. So I don’t think democracy itself is absolutely good. But amongst available arrangements, I think democracy is the best in meeting particularly modern social societal challenges.

**Mang:** I think there are maybe three ways to present a political philosophy. One is to appeal to people’s consent. Basically actually consent, or at least implied consent. The second one is to persuade people of not just your reasons, but if you care about the practice of philosophy, to persuade citizens in the real world that your theory, your arguments are true. Of course this second point might not be separate from the first one, but let me make this distinction because I think it might be helpful. The third way is maybe to appeal to procedure, and then let’s see what we can produce. So a rigorous democratic theory may say, we shouldn’t take too many presuppositions to start with, otherwise we restrict people’s discussions. This last point is pretty much what Michael Walzer has said in his response to democratic theorists. But let me just make one or two short remarks. I would say that appeal to actual consent seems to be hopeless, given the fact that people disagree about so many things. The thing with truth—that I hope to say more about later—the importance of trying to present a true theory, it seems to be ignored to some degree by political philosophers, including I think Confucian philosophers. So I’ll give you one example: Ronald Dworkin would simply tell you that “My theory is true. I have tried my best to accommodate for pluralism of a certain kind, but I don’t want to consider what you think, when I think my theory is true.” But that is not what many philosophers, including Confucianism’s philosophers would argue. On the other hand they make a lot of arguments that are supposed to be true. So there is something unnatural here, and I hope that we can clarify these things, and that we can proceed in a better way.

**Angle:** This is kind of a new question and it's kind of the same question. I think it's very interesting how many people have talked around the relation between—the difference between but also the necessary relationship between—Confucian theorists and Confucian activists. This is getting to the earlier conversation about *doing* something and that, well, are we advocating *doing* something, or not. For example, there's type-1 and type-2. There's the question in terms of Jiwei's looking at the fact of society types, and it's almost as if he is telling us, “Well if you actually want to advocate full-scale structural Confucianism in China you'd better do it fast, because the opportunity is getting away,” and so on. I think a number of people have touched on related questions. And, I guess my thought is that I want to emphasize the way in which the theorist and the activist go hand-in-hand. Unless and until we make clear what in a concrete fashion it means to be a modern Confucian, then the possibility is not going to be salient, it's not going to be obvious. People are not going to conceptualize in these terms. So this morning some of you talked about “creating Confucian citizens.” Right? Creating Confucian citizens doesn't exactly sound like what you call type-2 theory. It sounds more like type-1. It's based on a set of commitments to the fact that there is something here that we need to better articulate. So Ruiping very nicely raised an important dilemma, this challenge to preserve Confucian ethics, while simultaneously accepting pluralism and so on. And I think for that not to be just a dilemma, we need creative thinking at the abstract level and also at the concrete level to see what that would mean.

The example I'm going to give is that we talked a little bit about rituals, and Elton talked a bit about inventing new rituals. So I think that at the theoretical level we need to articulate the Confucian insight into the ubiquity of rituals, and how important they are. But then we also need the modernizing activist move to say, “But a lot of our rituals, a lot of the existing Confucian rituals, much less traditional Confucian rituals that were based in an agricultural society centuries old, need critique.” And I mentioned this earlier, but I'm mentioning this again. The last chapter of Robert Neville's new book, called *Li is One and Its Manifestations are Many*, the last chapter is titled, “Confucianism and Feminist Revolution: Ritual Definition and the Social Construction of Gender Roles” (Neville 2016). And it's about, in a fairly concrete way, a feminist Confucian critique of existing patriarchal rituals, and that we need to reconstruct rituals in a more egalitarian fashion. That would be an example of the sort of work that we need to do to create Confucian citizens.

**Chiu:** Can I ask you [directed towards Angle] a question. I don't know if you ever thought of this, but could you give an example of something you think might be a useful ritual for creating or reinforcing citizenship among Confucians. Is there stuff out there or, do you have any thoughts?

**Angle:** So...I confess that I am very tempted by the idea of inventing new rituals, but on the other hand rituals seem to be the sort of things that have long histories and so on and so-forth, and, well, who gets to invent a ritual?

**Ci:** You!

**Angle:** On the basis of what? So, I think there's a lot of work on this. There is an essay on the invention of tradition, but partly its theme is that traditions get invented by deceiving people into thinking they're old, when in fact they're not. I don't think we want to get into the business of deception. Neville's understanding of rituals is extremely broad: basically any meaning-based behavior is ritual. And maybe that's going too far—he has his reasons, of course—but to the extent that's he's right, then we're creating new patterns of meaning-based behavior all the time. Maybe my worry, that invented ritual almost seems like an oxymoron, maybe that's the wrong way to think. Because, I remember that there was a conversation in a philosophy class that went along the lines of, "If we're all feminists, then is it the case that we should be holding the door open for women? If not, should we just close the door in peoples' faces? Maybe we should hold the door open for everyone!" But that's a tiny example of the broader conversation that needs to be held.

**E. Chan:** I think I might be using the wrong word when I used the word "invent." Because if we look at Confucianism there are essentially two types of discourses: one is like the Xunzian style where we talk about the sage-kings, they *invented* the rituals, right? But if we look at the *Record of Rituals* we talk of rituals as something that happens spontaneously. When your parents die, you become very upset and start walking on the rooftop and start crying out into the wind, that was the beginning of sacrifices and rituals. And at the first time that they cooked rice and the smell comes up from the rice, and they feel really great, and blessed, and that's the first time they say they're thankful to Heaven and that's the beginning of their rituals. So in that strand of understanding rituals, ritual is something of an organic development rather than an artificially created one. At times they got re-arranged and codified and they learned from that and they built something. So in this sense if we look at ritual in that sense as symbols mediating appropriate meaning and symbols in certain contexts in an appropriate way. Then we still have rituals. We still have rituals anywhere and everywhere. For example whenever I see Professor Chan I do this [bowing] because he is the teacher! And seriously, I try. Because if I don't remember I will be at fault because to me this is important. And when I do this, this is not me necessarily thinking in terms of Confucianism. And I'm not the only one who does that. A lot of Professor Chan's students do that to him!

These rituals still exist. What we need is to be aware of and clarify are the ritualistic paradigms that we have, and then we start building a Confucian theory to reframe and reinterpret the actions we are having at this point. And *then* you can start saying that *these* are the rituals that we have that indicate *these* particular sets of meanings and they are appropriate and they are right. So perhaps when we talk about invention, it should not always be imposition. Rather it should be re-interpretations as a discursive method.

**Chiu:** One question that this raises for me is how common a “popular ritual” has to be. Clearly you have your own private ritual with respect to Professor [Joseph] Chan, but presumably if you’re talking about trying to promote or create Confucian citizens, there is going to need to be some sharedness to it, and this is going to be difficult in diverse societies where there is lots of disagreement.

**Kim:** Actually it’s not about the rituals, it’s about the difference between type-1 and type-2. What I’m concerned about is something like this: basically I’m coming from a political science background, so that’s why my conclusions are a little bit different from those from philosophically trained theorists here. Why we need a democracy in the first place or why we need a political regime in the first place has to do with the question of how to *organize* our society. One of the ways to organize our society is in terms of a market. In fact, many scholars including Anthony Downs, support imposing a market style as a way of organizing political society. There are libertarians of course. They have arrived at ways to organize our collective life that are not (fully) democratic. But as I keep saying we need to think about what is the best way to organize our collective life “under our modern social circumstances.” Democracy? Bureaucratic meritocracy? Through market mechanisms? Or through communism? So the point is, we can think of a democracy without necessary reference to a certain culture or certain ideas, but then look at people in East Asia: in Taiwan and in Mainland China, for instance. They protested against authoritarian regimes and fought for democracy, *not* because they were inspired by Confucianism, but because they thought the authoritarian regime was fatally incapable of coordinating their complex social interactions (economic, political, and social) in an effective way and in a way meeting public equality. And they thought (I believe) democracy could *better* accommodate their needs and interests. Then the question becomes: the societal context is different between East Asian society and American society, for instance. Our East Asian society is deeply influenced by Confucian values. Then once we enter into a certain institution that we call democracy, a certain type of institution or organized power, how can we make it relevant, intelligent, and meaningful to us who are influenced by a particular set of cultural values? Actually, my second book is a snapshot as to what type of democracy I would propose to citizens in East Asia, such that it would be better in conducting their life in a way that makes sense to their Confucian sensibilities on one end, and democracy on the other (Kim 2016). In other words, the book is concerned with a lifestyle that has been modified or moderated by democratic institutions after they embraced democracy. Again, my guiding position is that a political institution (and political theory) should be responding to the needs of the people, instead of starting with the reasoning such as: “Oh, Confucianism is good, so I’m going to create Confucian democracy out of nowhere, without response to people.” So that’s where I believe there is room for exploration. I’m still worried that what I have said so far might be a bit confusing, but I think that I’ve said enough about the difference between type-1 and type-2 Confucian political theories and the relation between my current project and the one we discussed in the morning (Kim 2016).

**Mang:** Professor Kim's remarks are very helpful. I think I can see why you want to "invite," to use the word you used in the morning, invite East Asians to think about how they may go about making policies appealing to views that are widely shared and so on. But what I am wondering is if you are more inclined to take a certain kind of procedural approach, it is hard for me to see then what is the genuine hope for an active kind of promotion of Confucian values. It seems that the theory might come to the point of letting people decide, we should not restrict our imagination, which I agree, but that doesn't seem to be a very ambitious way to go. On the other hand, that is of course about type-1, type-2, and broadly speaking about whether there can be a middle path between consent and appealing to truth, of which Joseph Raz is very critical. But I'm not going to discuss Joseph Raz. My point is, I'll make this brief: it seems that you and some philosophers, some Confucian philosophers are already on the way of requiring or advising people to take Confucian values seriously, or at least more seriously than they have been doing. But that is not any kind of duty, a moral duty that people should have in political justification. So just one example is John Rawls's duty of civility. So according to Rawls, people are under the duty to appeal to shared political, liberal values in discussions of justifying policies. And it would not be wrong for people not to do that, for example if they were appealing to Joseph Chan's perfectionist judgment, or Jiang Qing's judgments. But it seems that Sungmoon and other Confucian philosophers haven't yet made it clear that citizens are under this sort of duty in political discussions and justification. So if that is the case, what I think will happen is that it is more like the procedural approach: let's see what will happen, but we can only hope for what we hope to happen. But that might not be a very nice thing for some philosophers. But for me it's not an issue.

**Ci:** Just one thing about the type-1 / type-2 distinction. Sungmoon, would you agree with translating your distinction between type-1 and type-2 into the following distinction: between doctrinal Confucianism on the one hand—I'm using doctrinal neutrally as I usually do—and pragmatic Confucianism on the other. Pragmatic in the everyday sense and perhaps also the sense that American pragmatism uses it.

**Kim:** Okay, that's really an important insight that you've captured, because the title of my new book will be *Democracy After Virtue*, with the subtitle "Toward Pragmatic Confucian Democracy." So, you've captured the core of my project clearly. But I don't want to call the type-1 Confucian political theory *doctrinal*. For, at the end of the day, as Joseph rightly mentioned, whatever Confucian theory we engage in we will somehow have to embrace the type-1. In fact, in my own works, I am also drawing on Confucius and Mencius. So, I would say that the difference is more of a matter of degree. I don't think that it's possible to sever these two, or even desirable to sever them, one from the other, clearly. Then, we will be likely to lose Confucianism again. Again, we are under huge pressure to justify our theory in Confucian terms, and for that type-1 style of explanation is necessary. My point is that we don't want to drive Confucianism *solely* or *chiefly* toward type-1. I think that

has been the predominate model of Confucian theory in the contemporary endeavor, but I think now is the time to think more seriously about how to make the theory appealing to the actually existing East Asian citizens. Of course, it's up to them to decide whether they are convinced by whatever type of proposal we come up with. And even if they adamantly object to it, and decide they want to go with Marxism, to go with Classical Confucianism, or to go with liberalism, we cannot control it. As a democratic theorist trained in political science, all I am hoping for is that at the very least we want to come up with a viable political theory that makes sense not only to us, theorists, but also to citizens who are not necessarily trained in normative political theory. So that they might want to resort to it in imagining or even practicing Confucianism in their collective way of life. That is my own view; I cannot impose this on them as if this is the only right way for them to go.

**Ci:** Perhaps you are suggesting that, in a way, Joseph starts from the armchair, then goes into the field.

**Kim:** Yes, Joseph does both.

**Ci:** Once he's come up with a version of Confucianism in the armchair worth seeing the light of day, he then goes into the field to spread the word. But of course, when Joseph does his work in the armchair, he constantly takes sideways glances at the field so he is doing both at the same time. Are you suggesting that if you switch to type-2 as a paradigm then you start from the field and end in the field?

**Kim:** Or, whether we see ourselves as philosophers, primarily disinterested in actual social or political life, or we see ourselves as participants in public life. If we see ourselves as citizens, not only ones who create political theory but also the addressees of a theory of our own creation, and see ourselves as on par with other citizens, then perhaps we can come up with a very different style of theory, because we are going to be subject to that theory that we have created.

**Fan:** Well a word about ritual first. To answer your question I think it's quite easy to maintain and create rituals inside of families. I know some Chinese families are actually renewing or creating Confucian rituals nowadays. Anyways, my question is for Professor Jiang Yi-huah, about Taiwan democracy. You have experienced Taiwan democracy. If you have to identify Taiwan democracy, how would you define it? A liberal democracy? A Confucian democracy? A Buddhist democracy? Or whatever-kind of democracy? And why, why would you want to understand it as that kind of democracy? Then the second question is, if I understand you correctly, you hold a kind of Confucian democracy as ideal. If you want to improve current Taiwan democracy according to your ideal of Confucian democracy, and want to revise or amend the constitution, what would you see as important to do, that is significantly different from the liberal democratic principles that you want to put into the constitution? I guess I have the similar questions for Sungmoon about South Korea



democracy. But if there's no time for it, I would primarily like to hear about Professor Jiang's comments.

**Angle:** So I had a question I wanted to ask Professor Jiang, and it's closely related. A book I read recently by Joel Fetzer and Christopher Soper called *Confucian Democratization and Human Rights in Taiwan* talks about the lack of Confucian discourse behind the democratization movement in the 60's, 70's, and into the 80's, and the diagnosis of the authors is that the reason for this had to do with the sort of strong-arm tactics that the government had been using in particular in the 1960's and early 70's to try and promote Confucian values (Fetzer and Soper 2012). And so, in intellectual culture in Taiwan at that time, what people learned was, "Confucianism equals anti-democracy." So there was no way that people were going to draw on Confucianism in order to develop democracy. Now, the authors go on to say, that they think things are changing, and that you can start to see a more positive relationship between Confucian discourse and democracy in contemporary Taiwan. I don't know whether you [Professor Jiang] want to comment on this?

**Jiang:** Thank you very much for the three very interesting questions. The first question from Fan Ruiping is about an appropriate description of Taiwanese democracy. If I can use a new in-term, I can say that Taiwanese democracy is a populist democracy; it is not a liberal democracy nor a Confucian democracy. It has nothing to do with Confucianism, as a matter of fact. The second question is you asked me to clarify is about what I mean by Confucian democracy. Well my title is "A Framework for Democratizing Confucianism," not "A Framework for Confucian Democracy," and there's some reason for the wording of my title. Because at the beginning of my attempt to theorize Confucianism and democratic theory, yes, I tried to figure out a theory of so-called, "Confucian democracy." In that case, we will be able to provide the world, the intellectual world, with new a new option of political theory about institutions, or about practice, and that will be Confucian democracy and it will be different from liberal democracy, socialist democracy, or whatever democracy that you want to say. It could be a brand of democracy, but it will be Confucian in nature. But then I found out that it's kind of impossible, because if you accept the paradigm of democracy as Joseph has mentioned earlier, then the Confucian element or Confucian nature that you want to try to carry into the new paradigm—which you want to still describe as democracy—well, it's either about the way that the constitution will be settled, about the relations between different institutions, or about the content of civic virtue. You need to figure out what it means to say that it is a Confucian version of democracy. And I find that it is almost impossible to build up a so-called Confucian democracy, especially in the context of Taiwan. On the other hand, I find that maybe the approach of democratic Confucianism is possible, and that it is more urgent than the other method. Let me introduce my ideal of democratic Confucianism. It is not an invention by me, but actually I think several decades ago, people such as Jin Yaoji, at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, emphasized again and again that what we need to do about

the modernization of Chinese society—one thing at least—is to democratize Confucianism. Because Confucian culture is such an important ingredient of the tradition of the Chinese society that we just cannot forget about it. But the problem is, that tradition already has a political tradition that is not a democratic tradition. But if we want to bring China, or the Chinese world into the modern stage, it is inevitable that some kind of democracy needs to be transplanted into the society, and that will be liberal democracy. So how to democratize Confucianism will be the mission for the modern intellectual, rather than how to Confucianize democracy.

Okay that is the answer to the second question. As to Stephen's question, that is very interesting, because I think I cannot agree with the argument of the authors of the book you mention. I think there is a relation between Confucian discourse and Taiwanese democratization, especially from the 60's to the 80's, but I don't think it is because Confucianism was regarded as anti-democratic that therefore people did not like Confucianism. I think it has something to do with the intellectual background of those people who want to promote democracy. If you are familiar with Taiwanese intellectual history, then you will know that the *Free China Magazine* (*Ziyou Zhongguo*) played a very important role in the process of Taiwanese democratization. But the major guys of *Free China*, such as Lei Zhen, Yin Haiguang, and others: all of them are followers of the May Fourth Movement in the earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century. I think the influence of Hu Shi and some other Republican intellectuals are much, much greater than all the other resources, including for example the Nationalist government's promotion of Confucianism. And that is why I think that all the traditional Chinese culture, not only Confucianism but also Daoism, Buddhism, and anything that can be an embodiment of ancient China, was something that Chinese intellectuals wanted to get rid of during the 60's. And that is the reason why we do not have a strong support for Confucianism behind the Taiwanese democratization.

That brings me to the last comment I want to make toward [Mr. Verbeek's] question. You asked the youngest presenter what is the difference between different generations regarding their attitude towards Confucianism. Well, I think the answer depends on which society you are talking about. If we are talking about the Chinese society in Mainland China, if there is a difference between the older and younger generation, I think that might provide some reason for difference between Taiwan and Hong Kong. As far as Taiwan is concerned, I would say that two reasons are most important: the first one is about the influence of modernity. Because of the effect of modernity, people are now more and more so-called westernized or liberalized, we are fond of the idea of an open society, we are by nature inclined to believe in moral pluralism, and of course we do not believe in the very conservative, and very authoritarian doctrine of Confucianism. That is one reason. But there is another reason, which is very typically Taiwanese, but not one you can see in Mainland China or in Hong Kong. And that is because in Taiwan, the national identity problem is a huge issue right now. I would say in the past two decades that some people identified themselves as Taiwanese instead of Chinese, although there are some that would still say they are Chinese, and not Taiwanese. And because of this there is a process of de-Sinocization or de-Chinesization. So younger generation are becoming more and

more hostile to anything related to Mainland China, including Chinese traditions, and Confucianism in particular. So if you ask a student or a young person in Taipei right now, about his attitude or her attitude towards Confucianism, I think the answer you will get will quite disappoint you if you are a Confucian, because they don't like Confucianism. Confucianism is not only a symbol of conservatives; it is also a symbol of Chinese hegemony. So that is something that the young generation wants to fight against. I am not sure whether or not that situation will happen in Hong Kong someday...

**Huang:** My question is towards Professor Jiang. Your comments are very interesting. You make a distinction between democratizing Confucianism and Confucian democracy, and I think we can deal more with the latter instead of the former. This reminds me of some proposals about democratizing the Catholic Church. That means, among others, that the pope should be selected or elected democratically, but that will not be a problem of political philosophy. So when we're talking about democratizing Confucianism, we are also not doing political philosophy. In addition, while we can talk about democratizing the Catholic Church, as there is a point in democratizing the process of selecting the pope, it does not make much sense to talk about democratizing Confucianism, since Confucianism does not have a figure like that. So there is not such an urgent need to democratize Confucianism, because Confucianism is not like an organization or group, right? But then it's interesting because the reason you've been focusing on democratizing Confucianism instead having a Confucian democracy, is because it is about what we can do with democracy by bringing in any Confucian elements. I think that, when we talk about Confucian democracy, one of the most important things is that the political leaders should be the ones with virtue and ability, and of the two, virtues are more important than abilities. So I think that if we talk about Confucianizing democracy, it is to do things with democracy so that it is more likely to elect leaders with virtue and ability, not leaders like Donald Trump, who may or may not have some abilities, but certainly not virtues. I think that if Trump has any virtue, it must be below average. But of course he's democratically elected. So, we can do a lot of things to Confucianize democracy, and this is one of them. Moreover, when some of us today talk about the virtue of political leaders, the focus is on civic virtues. But traditional Confucians are primarily concerned not with civic virtues but with moral virtues, because the leaders are supposed to be moral exemplars. I think this is the Confucian goal. And suppose that our currently practiced democracy more often than not cannot realize this goal—after all, you spoke of “populist democracy” in Taiwan—and if this is indeed the case, then we need to do some Confucian modifications of democracy.

**Jiang:** When I say that we need to democratize Confucianism, I am talking about the possibility of building up a new political theory. I'm not talking about something like ethics, or something metaphysical, that is what I tried to say at the beginning of my presentation. I like Confucianism, especially the ethical theory of Confucianism. But if we look at Confucianism as a political theory, we need to recognize that in ancient

times Confucianism was the predominant political ideology of all the institutional arrangements and so-called politics of China. When you say that we should select the most capable and virtuous person as leader of our country, that this is a Confucian ideal of political leadership. But the political theory of Confucianism is much more than that, it has to deal with establishing people's trust in the government, how to answer the question of legitimacy, how to deal with the competition over political power. And those answers constitute what I call "Confucian political theory." It includes the idea of commonwealth, which means we should look at heaven, and learn from heaven that we should try to be fair and to be nice to everybody. And the idea of a benevolent king, benevolent monarch, that is Confucian political theory. I am not talking about ethics. And when we talk about rule of virtue (*de-zhi* 德治), we are talking about Confucian political theory. And most importantly, when we talk about the idea that a former leader will pass his power to his successor in a very charismatic way, without any power struggle or without inheritance of the power from the parents, that is a Confucian idea, although it was never implemented into practice.

Now the problem is ever since the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we do not have any possibility to have monarchy, especially a hereditary monarchical system, again in Mainland China. We need to deal with the problem of how to generate one generation after another of leadership. It seems to me, that there is no possibility except for democracy, no matter how much you like or dislike democracy. I don't think that democracy is the perfect or the best regime, or option that we have in town. But just as Winston Churchill says, democracy is the least worst government. And that's it. Because it answers the problem of how to handle the competition for power. But of course democracy is not only about elections. Lot of people would like to equate democracy to electoral democracy. But as I understand if you do not have some sort of other elements behind election, then you will not have a good democracy.

So that's why I will talk about the rule of law, constitutionalism, or multiple party systems, all these elements for me are very, very important, and they are part of the idea of democracy. And that is why I wonder why Joseph is so ambitious and courageous to challenge that idea, to create an alternative to liberal democracy. Because if you admit that elections are inevitable, if you think that open party competition is inevitable, if you think that an independent judiciary is important to Hong Kong, or if you believe in the idea of due process, if you want the citizens to enjoy freedom of expression, publication, religious belief and association, and if you want to see everybody tolerate those with different beliefs, then democracy seems to be the answer. We don't have to like democracy itself, especially after the American presidential election. People will ridicule the United States, and think it's now a worldwide joke. They got a president who is lacking of virtue, of competence, who is a populist, who is incredibly stupid; and we don't want to look at the good side of democracy, but what about all the elements that I just mentioned? If we do not want all of the institutional arrangements for dealing with social conflict, then of course we do not need democracy. But if we want to handle all these questions, what can we do without democracy? Should we try to create something totally different from

democracy, say for example the system that Jiang Qing tries to promote in his writings? For me that is not a good choice for the Chinese people. If we want to go back to ancient times to allow the offspring of Confucius to be the symbolic monarch of the country, and he will be the king, and then we will elect all the Confucian scholars to be members of the college of *Ru*, *Ruyuan* 儒院. Then they will have the supreme power to override the representatives of people. I just can't imagine how that would be a better choice than democracy. So I just want to come back to your question. If we just want to have good leadership, persons who are capable and virtuous, then that is fine. And that is what I think Confucianism can share with the rest of the world. But if we think that as soon as we have good leadership or virtuous people then all the problems will be solved, I don't think so.

All the problems will still be there. People with different beliefs, for example, communitarians, socialists, anarchists, they will still exist in society and they might want to compete with the so-called Confucian scholars or intellectuals for supreme power. And how will you handle this situation, besides resorting to democracy or procedural democracy? I simply cannot figure out any better way. Well I'm a little bit out of order, but that's what I think.

**J. Chan:** Well, in my writings I always try to differentiate between democracy as a set of principles and as a set of institutions. So I think there are certain democratic institutions that are useful, not perfect of course, and the best thing about elections as a democratic institution is that it allows peaceful transfer of power and removal of leaders, that's what I see is the best defense of democratic institutions, in terms of elections. I have great problems with democratic principles, however. If one uses certain principles such as popular sovereignty, which you used in your presentation and Sungmoon uses freely in his work, all the fundamental moral rights to vote or elect or the idea of political equality as a normative core principle that everybody has to accept, that I have a problem with. I want to argue that one could give a modest defense of democratic institution—such as elections—without drawing upon these more problematic ideas. And once you reject these ideas, or principles, then you will have a much more open-minded approach to see an election. Then you will allow fine tuning of electoral mechanisms, even to the extent that you might not have strictly one person one vote, you can have plural vote, you can have two chambers, one chamber supplementing the other chamber based on one-person one-vote.

And as to other pillars that you mentioned as essential to the functioning of democracy, like an independent judiciary with law, and civil and political rights as protected by a constitution, I have no problem with that. They are not the essential to what I narrowly defined as democracy. I call this whole set of institutions “constitutional democracy.” That is, a democratic set of political institutions *constrained* by a constitution for reasons *other than* the idea of democracy. I don't want to touch on this anymore right now.

Back to my original point, I think that the reason why democracy seems to be the only game in town is partially because of hegemony of the West. But perhaps also because people found that there is no widely accepted principle of transfer of power

that is stable and that we perceive as fair. And so election based on one-person one-vote seems to be perceived as a fair rule to resolve conflicts. I want to draw a distinction between perceived fairness and real fairness. Because in real terms often elections are not fair, even in Western democratic elections. But also philosophically it is not true that one-person one-vote is the fairest way, or even a fair way, of resolving conflicts. I noticed Sungmoon, in your book, you refer to Waldron's idea that since we cannot agree on anything, that there is disagreement all the way through, so the only fair way of resolving this conflict is to give persons an equal-weighted vote so if that one-person one-vote is a fair way and it rises above the disagreements of first-order issues. And that particular way of resolving the first-order issues will not be challenged by others as unfair. And I happen to think that in many occasions to give people equal-weighted vote is not fair. We could go on, but I do not want to spend so much time on this topic.

So philosophically, the fairness of democratic elections I think rests on some dubious, shaky foundations. Although I must admit that in popular culture, elections are perceived as fair. Whether or not it is truly fair is another question. And that gives rise to the stability of democracy as the way of transferring power peacefully. And that is the strength of democracy. So until we can develop an alternative way of transferring power, which is also equally perceived as fair, then yes, perhaps democracy is the only game in town. But it is a matter of political struggle and ideology.

**Huang:** Yes, I think I agree with Professor Jiang that democracy is perhaps the least bad system, and I think that's the reason we should practice democracy. But that should not be an excuse for us not to do anything to improve it. Democracy is not something that you have to either accept or reject but something you can improve. Joseph mentioned some measures to improve it. I'm thinking of the system currently practiced in Hong Kong. You have the electoral committee consisting of 1,200 people to elect the chief executive. Such a system is not bad by itself. The problem with its particular practice in Hong Kong is that, on the one hand, the committee is too small, and, on the other hand, not all members are freely and openly elected.

Let's suppose we increase it, suppose that we allow for 5,000 or 10,000 people. And each of the committee members is elected locally. And these people are elected because of their virtues and abilities. And in this case I guess I agree with Daniel Bell that on a local level, people know each other better. For example, I know that Joseph is a good person, and I'm going to vote him. But I don't know about other people beyond the local level. I think that's still democracy, although indirect democracy. But even in the United States, it's also indirectly elected democracy. You elect the congressmen, and they make decisions for you. I'm not saying that this is just something we need to do. I'm saying that democracy is not something fixed, something you have to either accept or reject. As people like Daniel Bell say, democracy has some serious problems of its own. Some may be inseparable from democracy but others can be fixed, so we should do things to improve democracy, for

example, to make it more meritocratic. That is different from choosing meritocracy as an alternative to democracy, perhaps like Jiang Qing, which I do not like.

**Fan:** When people read Jiang Qing, they are easily shocked by some of his dramatic institutional proposals, such as that Confucianism should be the state religion of China, or Confucian scholars should be members of a branch of the legislature. These kinds of institutional proposals make scholars feel that Jiang is a totalitarian guy, and therefore is extremely conservative or even barbaric in some sense. But we should not overlook that his major concern is not about particular institutions, but about political legitimacy, as Joseph Chan emphasizes, namely whether democracy should be the only game in town. What Jiang Qing holds is that one-person one-vote democratic principle should not be the only principle of political legitimacy, but should only be one principle among others. His supreme belief is that although the Chinese people should accept this democratic principle in contemporary China, they should also accept other non-democratic, non-liberal principles. And he offers a kind of tripartite structure of principles. So we should recognize that the genuine disagreement between Jiang Qing and many others is not about the setting of particular institutions, but is first about fundamental principles. In addition to the liberal democratic principle of people, he also added the Confucian principles of history and Heaven for political legitimacy. The history consideration makes quite some sense to me. For example, I look at my mother's life and find that she has her particular concerns and worries; and I look at my children and find that they have different concerns and worries. So a kind of balance between these concerns and worries embodied in the principle of history for political legitimacy seems quite sensible and reasonable. Right? For the principle of Heaven, the rationale behind this principle is that when you look at society, you'll always find both religious and non-religious people. In the case of China, you will find some people believing in supernatural things and others who do not. Then why should the principles of political legitimacy be only secular principles? Isn't a balance between secular and religious principles more reasonable and more fair than only secular principles? Some people believe legitimate principles must be neutral to different religions or cultures. Is this really possible? When an American president comes to take the oath, he has to put his hand on the bible, as you know. What do you mean by being neutral? You need a kind of balance between religious beliefs and secular beliefs at least in relevant areas of politics. I haven't seen any country that is completely culturally neutral. On the other hand, what is really politically legitimate? If we only consider non-religious principles for political legitimacy, overlooking the basic beliefs of a great number of people, is that really more legitimate than Jiang Qing's comprehensive considerations?

I'm not saying that I can fully defend Jiang Qing's tripartite principles, but it's not so unreasonable or ridiculous as some people who have never read him at all feel or think, even if his particular proposal of certain institutions is problematic. So I think for us to really propose an alternative to liberal democracy, Jiang Qing offers us a perfect example, whether you agree with him or not. If we want to do Confucian political philosophy but just repeat liberal democracy, then we're simply wasting time.

Why don't we just do liberal political philosophy? If political scholars are really trying to offer something different, something new, for people to consider, they should take Jiang Qing's principles seriously. It is up to people to decide whether they like Jiang Qing's proposal or not. I think that Jiang Qing actually has some very useful resources for people to think about.

**Ciccotti:** I'm Jesse Ciccotti. I'm a PhD student at Hong Kong Baptist University. The question has kind of risen to my mind listening to the seminar today, and even just seeing the title, "Debating Confucian Political Philosophy." In the spirit of Master Kong's statement that we need correct names (*zheng-ming* 正名), I wonder if even the title that we've given this of "Confucian Political Philosophy" is a hindrance to developing something that would become accepted in any society anywhere. Because it is in a sense restricting it to, a certain—I don't want to use the word bias because that sounds negative, but it's a non-neutral perspective, whereas the idea of democracy is not based on a particular idea of virtues or that type of thing. For example, we don't speak of "Socratic" political philosophy, or "Aristotelian" or "Ciceronian" political philosophy, we talk about democracy. An Athenian democracy is very different from contemporary American democracy and it's also different from British democracy; as Professor Huang was talking about, we have different kinds of democracies. And to speak of Confucian political democracy seems to me to almost parochialize it to particular cultural backgrounds that are historical in a sense. When we study Confucian political philosophy it automatically becomes historical political philosophy rather than something that can be contemporary. So my question is, can we be more creative and think of something other than "Confucian political philosophy"—because many of the elements of political philosophy that arises from the *Ru* 儒 tradition are monarchical and many of the other things that Professor Jiang brought up. But it's not to say that many of the principles behind it are bad, for example the idea of virtuous leaders as such. But when we say Confucian political philosophy it almost seems to automatically historicize it and remove it from contemporary relevance in a sense.

**Angle:** Just briefly, there are different projects around the room here, some of which are aimed at particular societies and depend on a commitment to Confucianism. But another way to go, which is going to be congenial for other projects that have been discussed, is to just to talk about global political philosophy or comparative political philosophy, philosophy in inclusive modes where more piecemeal ideas are part of a broader conversation. But I don't think that in terms of the various ideas that have been put out here, we can say that something like global political philosophy is the only thing that we have been doing, because not everyone is operating in that mode.

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