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Confucianism as Grounding in Community

Ecological Ethics for China

It was a steaming hot day in Beijing in May 2008 as we made our way in and out of meetings with scholars and teachers, deans and directors. All of them professed interest in the environment even as we were surrounded by the intense air pollution of Beijing.[1] By mid-afternoon we found ourselves at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences talking with scholars who had read the Harvard volumes on religion and ecology. Indeed, not only had they read them, they had assembled a team of scholars and over a period of several years translated the volumes on Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism into Chinese. Such remarkable dedication to such detailed work. And why? Because they are living in one of the most polluted countries on the planet and want to find environmental values and ethics based on their own cultural traditions that are applicable to China.

Rapid economic growth and unregulated development have caused an explosion of construction in cities and across the countryside. Migrant workers have streamed into the cities providing cheap labor in the factories. Thousands of coal-fired plants have sprung up, spewing out particulates even though the central government has tried to stop them from being built and is now trying to shut them down. The relentless search for energy resulted in the construction of the Yangtze dam that took years to complete, uprooted more than a million people, destroyed ecosystems along the river, and flooded ancient archaeological sites. The

environmental problems surrounding it were such that even the World Bank withdrew funding. Silting is already occurring. It has also been reported that one of the causes of the Sichuan earthquake of 2008, which resulted in nearly seventy thousand human casualties, may have been the massive weight of the water and the concrete dam in the Yangtze River.

In the midst of these pressing realities the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences has indicated an interest in sponsoring conferences on environmental perspectives from the three religious traditions of China: Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. For this reason, they have translated these Harvard volumes. They are aware that environmental attitudes and values may be developed through their own traditions, not through Western religions or philosophy. Moreover, they have an Institute for World Religions that is the largest in the world, with some ninety full-time researchers.[2] A number of them are keenly interested in religion and ecology.

In the late afternoon, as we were preparing to leave the academy and face the searing heat once again, we went to check our e-mail. There was a message that we had hoped for but dared not assume we would receive. It said, "Come to the Environmental Ministry Office tomorrow morning at 10:30. The Deputy Vice Minister for the Environment, Pan Yue, will meet with you then." We were surprised and pleased by the opportunity. The vice minister was visiting Sichuan, where the devastating earthquake had recently occurred. He was arriving back in Beijing that night, and our plane to Japan was leaving at two o'clock the next afternoon. We had just enough time for the meeting, which in his eagerness to discuss the topic, he extended to an hour.

The next morning we were ushered through the security gates at the ministry and were led up to a conference room. We sat in nervous anticipation, sipping green tea and awaiting Pan Yue's arrival. Just a minute after 10:30 he walked in with a translator and two assistants. He immediately came to shake our hands warmly. We, too, were accompanied by a translator, one of the scholars from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Chen Xia, and James Miller, a British scholar of Daoism who teaches at Queens University in Canada.

Sitting opposite one another, like diplomats at a long negotiating table, we exchanged gifts. We gave Pan Yue a copy of the Harvard volume on *Confucianism and Ecology*, and he gave us a book with his speeches that had been translated into English. Many of his speeches explored the importance of Chinese religions for modern China. This arose from the fact that he had earned a PhD in the history of religions. Thanks to the

advice of a Chinese professor at Harvard, we had been following Pan Yue's speeches for more than a decade, but his detailed understanding of religions was something we discovered in our discussions. No doubt this prompted his writings about the need for "ecological culture" in China based on Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist perspectives. This had been one of the major inspirations for the Harvard conference series, that is, the importance of traditional religions responding to modern environmental problems. For Pan Yue the notion of a culture based on ecological values and behavior is evident in his remarks:

> Why is environmental protection considered a cultural issue? One of the core principles of traditional Chinese culture is that of harmony between humans and nature. Different philosophies all emphasized the political wisdom of a balanced environment. Whether it is the Confucian idea of humans and nature becoming one, the Daoist view of the Dao reflecting nature or the Buddhist belief that all living things are equal, Chinese philosophy has helped our culture to survive for thousands of years. It can be a powerful weapon in preventing an environmental crisis and building a harmonious society.[3]

We realized that environmental ethics would be formulated differently in China and India from in the West. A cultural sensitivity was necessary that would be attentive to the emergence of plural forms of environmental ethics. So when we began to read Pan Yue's speeches in 1998 we were struck by his insights. With great care and deliberation he had gone back to read the Chinese texts on Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. He wanted to study the classical traditions and their historical development. There he found a broad understanding of views of nature that were embedded in Chinese cultural understanding and practice. He understood in particular how these traditions were constantly interacting and cannot be studied in isolation from one another. His research was thorough and resulted in his thought-provoking essays, as is evident in appendix B. This is especially noteworthy because Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism had been nearly eradicated under the rule of Mao, especially during the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976.

As he described it in our meeting, he was calling for the creation of an ecological culture for China and an ecological civilization for the planet as a whole that respected cultural differences. He explained, "We have environmental laws on the books, but we can't enforce them because we don't have an ecological culture." "This is true in the United States as

well," we responded. "At times we have had to sue our own Environmental Protection Agency to enforce standards for clean water and air. This is because we have a weak ecological culture and strong lobbyists for the coal, oil, and gas industries."

As he became increasingly aware of how much we appreciated his cultural perspective, he threw back his head and laughed, saying, "Well, if you came to China to speak with someone about cultural traditions and ecology, you've come to the right guy!" Our meeting was lively, and Pan Yue was animated throughout. He acknowledged that he met with many high-level international environmental leaders, but few were attuned to this point of view. His interest spilled over into his hope to sponsor a conference on this topic. His deep desire to plant the seeds of ecological transformation by means of culture was infectious.

Indeed, what is striking about Pan Yue is that in many ways he is drawing on the model of the Confucian literati. These scholars studied the classics as a means of establishing humane government. To become officials they had to pass civil service examinations based on the classical texts. This was to ensure that they had understood the principles of humane and just governance so as to be effective officials. The model of the scholar–official endured for 600 years, until the end of the Ch'ing dynasty in 1905. Although abuses of power clearly occurred, the ideal of the scholar–official working for the common good was something that still inspired a civil servant such as Pan Yue.

This attention to the welfare of the whole may be one of the reasons why Chinese civilization has endured for so many centuries. The question then arises, What does Pan Yue see in this tradition that may help China shift course from an overreaching industrial revolution to a more balanced sustainability revolution? Surrounding this question is the historical reality that China degraded its landscape through deforestation in the premodern period.[4] Some would say that historically Confucianism did not constrain exploitation of resources. This can be further explored with more studies of environmental history in China.

In the last several decades China has created massive environmental problems with rapid industrialization. During this period it has followed a path of economic growth with little concern for ecological consequences and public health issues until recently. The lure of economic progress and development has been primary. Moreover, in the twentieth century traditional Chinese culture fell under attack as inadequate to modernization. Confucianism was undermined by Chinese intellectuals after the May 4th movement of 1919 and was severely attacked in the Cultural

Revolution under Mao between 1966 and 1976. Thus, there was little moral context to develop an effective environmental ethics in China. Although Confucianism and other traditional values have been under attack in the Maoist period, it cannot be disputed that there is now a revival of Confucianism in modern China. This results in part from a moral vacuum in the midst of excessive consumerism. Although this revival is a large topic with complex political and social implications, it is part of a broad struggle to rehabilitate culture, religion, and values in China today.

In this context some critical questions are emerging. What are the dimensions and values of Confucianism that might still contribute to a flourishing future, especially in creating an ecological culture for China? Why is there a growing interest in that question from government officials and academics as well as a broader public? Indeed, what is Confucianism, its past history, and its present implications?[5] In exploring these questions, we are aware of the gap between the ideals of Confucianism and present-day environmental challenges.

Overview: What Is Confucianism?

Confucianism has conventionally been described as a humanistic tradition focusing on the roles and responsibilities of humans to family, society, and government. Thus, Confucianism is identified primarily as an ethical or political system of thought with an anthropocentric focus. However, on further examination and as more translations become available in Western languages, this narrow perspective is being reexamined and enlarged.

Some of the most important results of this reexamination are the insights that have emerged from seeing Confucianism as not simply an ethical, political, or ideological system. Rather, Confucianism is now being appreciated as a complex religious tradition in ways that are different from Western traditions.[6] This may eventually result in expanding the idea of religion itself to include more than criteria adopted from Western traditions such as notions of God, salvation, and redemption. Moreover, Confucianism is being recognized for its affirmation of relationality not only between humans but also between humans and the natural world, and the cosmos itself.[7] In this sense it has been described as an anthropocosmic tradition.[8]

Confucianism manifests a religious ecology in its cosmological orientation. This cosmological orientation is realized in the connection of the microcosm of the self to the macrocosm of the universe through grounding oneself in natural and human communities, nurturing oneself in ritual relatedness, and transforming oneself through cultivation.

A Confucian religious ecology might be described as a series of concentric circles where the human is the center, not as an isolated individual but as grounded in overlapping rings of family, society, and government. This is especially clear in the text of the *Great Learning*:

> Those in antiquity who wished to illuminate luminous virtue throughout the world would first govern their states; wishing to govern their states, they would first bring order to their families; wishing to bring order to their families, they would first cultivate their own persons; wishing to cultivate their own persons, they would first rectify their minds; wishing to rectify their minds, they would first make their thoughts sincere; wishing to make their thoughts sincere, they would first extend their knowledge. The extension of knowledge lies in the investigation of things.[9]

All these circles are contained within nature and the vast cosmos itself. The ultimate context for human flourishing is the "10,000 things," namely, nature in all its remarkable variety and abundance.

Confucian scholar Tu Weiming has described Confucianism as the cultural DNA of Chinese society. He suggests that this is the reason for its survival down to the present, despite severe persecution under Mao, who wanted to eliminate Confucianism. However, Confucianism lives on within the family and involves the relationship of individuals to others. Family relations are primary, with respect for parents, grandparents, and one's ancestors at the heart of human life. Filial piety is an indispensable part of the obligations of children toward those who have given them life, nurtured them in their early years, and supported them into adulthood. The same sense of filiality is extended in the Confucian tradition to Heaven and Earth as the symbolic great parents of all life. Chang Tsai's *Western Inscription* reflects this:

> Heaven is my father and Earth is my mother, and even such a small creature as I find an intimate place in their midst. Therefore that which extends throughout the universe I regard as my body and that which directs the universe I consider as my nature. All people are my brothers and sisters, and all things are my companions.[10]

For some Confucian thinkers this motivates care for the Earth community. Heaven here is understood as a guiding moral force, like conscience, and Earth is the great web of life—human and more than human.

As such, Heaven and Earth are not ontologically distinctive spheres in Confucian thinking but woven into the human experience of lived reality.

In the Confucian tradition the goal is for the individual to add to social harmony through appropriate relations and ritual practices. The *Book of Rituals* describes in great detail how these rituals should be carried out. In Confucianism, individual conflict is to be avoided, and a communitarian ethics is to be honored. These complex social relations and emphases on harmony are still evident in China, as well as across East Asia. In Confucian cultures, traditionally one was encouraged to pursue education for moral self-cultivation and for contributing to the common good of the society. Today regard for the value of education is still strong in East Asia, although more often for economic gain or engineering prowess than moral edification. Yet there is a remarkable revival of Confucianism taking place in China today.

The Revival of Confucianism

In the twentieth century a modern epoch of Confucianism has emerged, called "New Confucianism." This represents a revival of the tradition under the influence of scholars who came to Taiwan and Hong Kong after Mao's ascendancy in 1949.[11] Mao thought that Confucianism was essentially a feudal tradition mired in ancient history and customs and that for his communist ideas to succeed, a radical break must be made with the past. The anti-Confucian campaigns during Mao's rule were virulent, especially in the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s.

However, after Mao's death there was a resurgence of interest in Confucian values, some of this encouraged by the government. Seven conferences on Confucius were convened in China between 1978 and 1989. This culminated in 1989 with major conferences in Beijing and in Confucius's birthplace, Qufu, to explore the future of the Confucian Way. These conferences were held to commemorate the 2,540th anniversary of Confucius's birth and marked a renewed interest in Confucianism to balance the unsettling effects of the rapid industrialization and modernization of China. The China Confucius Foundation, founded in 1984, sponsored them along with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. The International Confucian Association was established in 1994.

During this period, overseas Chinese scholars were instrumental in researching, teaching, and lecturing on the Confucian tradition. These included scholars such as Liu Shuxian at the Academia Sinica in Taiwan,

Tu Weiming at Harvard, Yu Yingshi at Princeton, and Cheng Zhongying at University of Hawaii. Tu Weiming "contributed more than any other individual to promoting a renewed interest in *ruxue* [Confucianism] through his lectures and networking in China, beginning in 1978."[12] Tu has made significant efforts to articulate the value of Confucianism for contemporary Chinese society and its contributions to philosophy in the modern world.

In the last decade there has been a revival of Confucianism from several directions.[13] On a popular level, books on Confucius have sold millions of copies, such as one written by Yu Dan in 2010. Conferences on Confucian thinkers and ideas are being held in various parts of China, sponsored by philosophy departments in many universities. In the model of the Alliance Française, Confucian Societies are being created abroad to expand knowledge of Confucian culture and values. In the United States, decades of efforts to study and translate Confucian texts have been led by Wing-tsit Chan, William Theodore de Bary, Burton Watson, Yu Ying-shih, Irene Bloom, Roger Ames, Henry Rosemont, and John Berthrong. There is a growing movement in China and across East Asia to reevaluate Confucianism for its role in a sustainable future, that is, creating ecological culture.[14] This has been encouraged by a number of leaders besides Pan Yue, including former president Hu Jintao and current president Xi Jinping.[15] In addition, there have been significant efforts in China toward constructive postmodernism, fostered by process thinkers such as David Ray Griffin and John Cobb.[16] This is inspired by the process thought of Alfred North Whitehead.[17] At Claremont University in California, an Institute for Postmodern Development of China has been created by Zhihe Wing and Meijun Fan along with John Cobb, Jay McDaniel, and others. They have held more than sixty conferences in California and China on topics such as "The Place of Harmony in Ecological Civilization" (April 2012). The retrieval, reevaluation, and reconstruction of the Confucian tradition in response to China's ecological crisis are occurring in the educational world and beyond. These efforts draw on traditional Confucian values to articulate new goals of sustainability for forming an ecological culture.

Models of Confucian Flourishing for Self, Society, and Nature

The effort to retrieve, reevaluate, and reconstruct Confucianism that is now taking place in China is drawing on key thinkers and texts from the early classical tradition, which includes Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi,

and the later Neo-Confucian tradition, which includes Zhu Xi. These figures and their writings are gradually becoming known in the West through translations and commentaries. Their fuller significance for ecological ethics in China is now being explored.

Confucius: Moral Rectification Extending Outward

The acknowledged founder of the Confucian tradition was known as the sage-teacher Kongzi (551–479 BCE). His name was Latinized by the Jesuit missionaries as Confucius in the sixteenth century CE (see figure 7.1 for a depiction of Confucius). Born into a time of rapid social change, Confucius was concerned with the goal of reestablishing political and social order through rectification of the individual and the state. The principal teachings of Confucius are contained in his conversations recorded in the *Analects*.[18] Here he emphasized the cultivation of moral virtues, especially humaneness (*jen, ren*) and the practice of civility or ritual decorum (*li*), which includes filiality (*xiao*). Virtue and civility were exemplified by the noble person (*junzi*), particularly within the five relations: between ruler and minister, parent and child, husband and wife, older and younger siblings, and friend and friend. The essence of Confucian thinking was that to establish order in the society one had to begin with harmony, filiality, and decorum in the family. Then, like concentric circles, the effects of virtue would reach outward to the society. Likewise, if the ruler was moral, it would have a ripple effect on the rest of the society and on nature itself, like a pebble dropped into a pond.

At the heart of this classical Confucian worldview is a profound commitment to humaneness and civility. These two virtues defined the means of human relatedness as a spiritual path. Through civility, beginning with filiality, one can repay the gifts of life both to one's parents and ancestors and to the whole natural world. Through humaneness one can extend this sensibility to other humans and to all living things. In doing so one becomes more fully human. The root of practicing humaneness is considered to be filial relations. The extension of these relations from one's family and ancestors to the human family and to the cosmic family of the natural world is the means whereby these primary biological ties provided a person with the roots, trunks, and branches of an interconnected spiritual path. Humans, nature, and the cosmos are joined in the stream of filiality. From the lineages of ancestors to future progeny, intergenerational connections and ethical bonding arose. Reverence and reciprocity are considered a natural response to this gift of life from parents and ancestors. Analogously, through reverence for Heaven and Earth as the

Figure 7.1 Statue of Confucius at the temple in Nanjing; Photo credit: Deborah Sommer

great parents of all life, one realizes one's full cosmological being and one's place in the natural order.[19] This can be considered a model for flourishing from the individual radiating outward. These ideas on cosmic filiality hark back to the early classic of the *Book of History* and are more fully developed in the Neo-Confucian tradition.

Mencius: Botanical Cultivation of Self and Nature

Confucian thought was further developed in the writings of Mencius, or Mengzi (385–312? BCE) and Hsun tzu, or Xunzi (313–238? BCE), who wrestled with the question of whether human nature was intrinsically good or evil. Mencius made a case for the former, whereas Hsun tzu argued for the latter. Mencius's position on the inherent goodness of human nature gained dominance among Confucian thinkers and gave an optimistic flavor to Confucian educational philosophy and political theory. This perspective influenced the spiritual aspects of the tradition as well, because self-cultivation was seen as a means of uncovering this innate good nature. Mencius contributed an understanding of the process needed for self-cultivation.[20] He did this by identifying the innate seeds of virtues in the human ("four beginnings"). Mencius suggests ways in which they could be cultivated toward their full realization as virtues, thus activating compassion for others:

> All human beings have a mind that commiserates with others. . . . The mind's feeling of pity and compassion is the beginning of humaneness; the mind's feeling of shame and aversion is the beginning of rightness; the mind's feeling of modesty and compliance is the beginning of propriety; and the mind's sense of right and wrong is the beginning of wisdom. Human beings have these four beginnings just as they have four limbs.[21]

Analogies taken from the natural world, such as the "seeds of virtue," extended the idea of self-cultivation of the individual for the sake of family and society to a wider frame of reference that also encompassed the natural environment. This can be described as a path of botanical cultivation.[22] In addition to his teachings on personal cultivation, Mencius advocated humane government as a means to promote the flourishing of a larger common good. His political thought embraced appropriate agricultural practices and proper use of natural resources. In particular, he urged that the ruler attend to the basic needs of the people and follow the way of righteousness, not profit.

Xunzi: Ritual Relationship of Humans and Cosmos

Xunzi contributed a strong sense of the importance of ritual practice as a means of self-cultivation.[23] He noted that human desires needed to be satisfied, and emotions such as joy and sorrow should be expressed in the appropriate degree. Rituals provided the form for such expression in daily human exchange as well as in rites of passage such as marriage and death. Moreover, because Xunzi saw human nature as innately flawed, he emphasized the need for education and ritual to shape human nature toward the good. Finally, he had a highly developed sense of the interdependent triad of Heaven, Earth, and Human that was also emphasized by many later Confucian thinkers. He writes, "Heaven has its seasons; Earth has its resources; humans have their government. For this reason it is said that they may form a triad [with Heaven and Earth]."[24] Heaven here is understood as the cosmos as well as a guiding force of the universe; Earth is seen as the natural sphere in which humans lived and flourished.

Zhu Xi: Forming One Body with All Things

Confucianism blossomed in a Neo-Confucian revival in the eleventh and twelfth centuries that resulted in a new synthesis of the earlier teachings. The major Neo-Confucian thinker Chu Hsi, or Zhu Xi (1130–1200) (figure 7.2), designated four texts from the canon of historical writings as containing the central ideas of Confucian thought. In 1315 these texts and Zhu Xi's commentaries on them became the basis of the Chinese civil service examination system, which endured for nearly 600 years until 1905. Every prospective government official had to take the civil service exams based on Zhu Xi's commentaries on the Four Books. The idea was to provide educated, moral officials for the large government bureaucracy that ruled China. Thus, the influence of Neo-Confucian thought on government, education, agriculture, land use, and social values was extensive. Views of nature, agriculture, and resource management were derived from Neo-Confucian understandings of the importance of humans' working to cultivate and care for nature as a means to fulfill their role in the order of things. Similarly, the role of government was to ensure healthy harvests and the storage of grain so as to create a flourishing society.

Zhu Xi's synthesis of Neo-Confucianism was recorded in his classic anthology *Reflections on Things at Hand* (*Jinsilu*).[25] In this work Zhu formulated a this-worldly spirituality based on a balance of cosmological orientation, ethical and ritual practices, scholarly reflection, and political participation.[26] The aim was to balance inner cultivation with outward

investigation of things in concert with the dynamic changes of the natural world. Zhu Xi affirmed these changes as the source of transformation in both the cosmos and the person.

Thus Neo-Confucian spiritual discipline involved cultivating one's moral nature so as to bring it into harmony with the larger pattern of change in the cosmos. Each moral virtue had its cosmological component. For example, the central virtue of humaneness was seen as the source of fecundity and growth in both the individual and the cosmos. By practicing humaneness, one could affect the transformation of things in oneself, in society, and in the cosmos. In so doing, one recognizes one's deeper identity with reality as forming one body with all things. As the *Doctrine of the Mean* stated, "Being able to assist in the transforming and nourishing powers of Heaven and Earth, one can form a triad with Heaven and Earth."[27]

Confucian Relationality and Nature: Embodied Transformation

From the classical texts to the later Neo-Confucian writings there is a strong sense of nature as a relational whole in which human life and society flourish. Indeed, Confucian thought recognizes that it is the rhythms of nature that sustain life in both its biological needs and sociocultural expressions. The biological dimensions of life depend on nature as a holistic, organic continuum. Everything in nature is interdependent and interrelated. Most importantly, for Confucians nature is seen as dynamic and transformational.[28] These ideas are evident in the *Book of Changes* and are expressed in the *Four Books*, especially in the *Analects*, *Mencius*, the *Doctrine of the Mean*,[29] and the *Great Learning*.[30] They come to full flowering in the Neo-Confucian tradition of the Sung and Ming periods. Nature in this context has an inherent unity, that is, it has a primary ontological source (*T'ai ji*). It has patterned processes of transformation (*yin* and *yang*), and it is interrelated in the interaction of the five elements and the 10,000 things. Nature is dynamic and fluid with the movements of material force (*qi*).

The Morality of Nature: Affirming Change

For Confucians, humans are anthropocosmic beings in relationship, not anthropocentric individuals in isolation. The human is viewed as a microcosm in relation to the macrocosm of the universe. This is expressed most succinctly in the metaphor of humans as forming a triad with the cosmos and Earth. These relations were developed during the Han period with a complex synthesis of correlative correspondences involving the elements,

Figure 7.2 Statue of Zhu Xi at Wuyi Mountain; Photo credit: Deborah Sommer

directions, colors, seasons, and virtues.[31] This need to consciously connect the patterns of nature with the rhythms of human society is very ancient in Confucian culture.[32] It is at the basis of the anthropocosmic worldview where humans are seen as working together with Heaven and Earth in correlative relationships to create harmonious societies. The mutually related resonances between self, society, and nature are constantly being described in the Confucian texts and are evident in art and architecture as well.

In Confucianism, nature is not only inherently valuable, it is morally good. Nature thus embodies the normative standard for all things; it is not judged simply from an anthropocentric perspective. There is not a fact–value or is–ought division in the Confucian worldview, for nature is seen as an intrinsic source of value. In particular, value lies in the ongoing transformation and productivity of nature. A term repeated frequently in Neo-Confucian sources is *sheng-sheng*, reflecting the ever-renewing fecundity of life itself. In this sense, the dynamic transformation of life is seen as emerging in recurring cycles of growth, fruition, harvesting, and abundance. This reflects the natural processes of flourishing and decay in nature, human life, and human society. Change is thus seen as a dynamic force that humans should harmonize and interact with rather than withdraw from.

In this context, the Confucians do not view hierarchy as leading inevitably to domination. Rather, they see that value rests in each thing but not in each thing equally. Everything in nature and society has its appropriate role and place and thus should be treated accordingly. The use of nature for human ends must recognize the intrinsic value of each element of nature but also its value in relation to the larger context of the environment. Each entity is considered not simply equal to every other; rather, each interrelated part of nature has a particular value according to its nature and function. Thus, there is a differentiated sense of appropriate roles for humans and for all other species. For Confucians hierarchy is seen as a necessary way for each being to fulfill its function. In this context, then, no individual being has exclusive privileged status in relation to nature. Rather, the processes of nature and its ongoing logic of transformation (*yin* and *yang*) is the norm that takes priority for the common good of the whole society.

Humane Society and Government: Grounds for Flourishing

Confucians were mindful that nature was the basis of a stable society. Thus, if humans did not tend nature carefully, imbalance would result.

There are numerous passages in *Mencius* advocating humane government based on appropriate management of natural resources and family practices. Moreover, there are various passages in Confucian texts urging humans not to cut down trees wantonly or kill animals needlessly.

The establishment of humane society, government, and culture inevitably results in the use of nature for housing, production, and governance, however. In this sense, Confucians might be seen as pragmatic social ecologists (rather than deep ecologists) who recognize the necessity of forming human institutions—both educational and political—for a stable society. Nonetheless, it is clear that for Confucians human cultural values and practices are grounded in nature and part of its structure, and thus humans are dependent on its beneficence. In addition, the agricultural base of Confucian societies has always been recognized as essential to the political and social well-being of the country. The Confucians were consummate agricultural managers, encouraging irrigation projects and careful planting and harvesting techniques, as well as the storage of grain. Humans prosper by living within nature's boundaries and are refreshed by its beauty, restored by its seasons, and fulfilled by its rhythms. For Confucians, human flourishing is thus dependent on fostering nature in its variety and abundance; going against nature's processes is self-destructive. Human moral growth means cultivating one's desires not to interfere with nature but to be in accord with the great Way (*Dao*) of Nature. Thus the "human mind" expands in relation to the "Mind of the Way."

Conclusion

For Confucians, harmony with nature is essential. Moreover, human self-realization is achieved by being grounded in nature and in the human community. The great triad of Confucianism, Heaven, Earth, and Humans, signifies this understanding that humans can attain their full humanity only in relationship to both Heaven and Earth. This became a foundation for a religious ecology of relationality and grounding applicable to spheres of family, society, politics, and nature itself. This is a broad ethical basis for Confucian flourishing and the foundation of ecological cultures.

Many Chinese ask whether these ethical principles can be retrieved, reevaluated, and reconstructed in the face of such rapid development and relentless modernization. Or will the dream of overarching economic growth inspired by the myth of modern progress continue to be the dominant driver for China? What of the pollution of water, air, and soil undermining the health and livelihood of present and future generations?

There are no clear answers to these questions. But with more than 66,000 environmental protests a year, the Chinese know they will have to make some serious changes as they attempt to balance economics and the environment. Indeed, they are already leading the way in green technologies and alternative energy systems. However, the combination of efficacious environmental values and a robust ecological culture is still on the horizon, as it is for so many countries. This will require the creative interaction of many other disciplines such as science, law, urban planning, and public health.

His fullness from the whole of nature and undiminished in each part, in the varieties of natures as one who has no variation and is always the same, in composites, as One who is simple, without parts, in things which have their beginning in time, as the One without beginning, as the Invisible in the visible, the ungraspable in tangible things. For our sake He received flesh to embody Himself and to incarnate within letters and deigned to be expressed in syllables and sounds [Holy Scriptures]. The purpose of all this is to draw us after Him and to gather us together in His presence within a short space of time having become one in spirit, we, who are thickened in mind." *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ*, 58.

28. See Dragos Bahrim, "The Anthropic Cosmology of St. Maximus the Confessor," in *Journal for Interdisciplinary Research on Religion and Science* 3 (July 2008):11–37.

29. It is significant that both Pope Benedict XVI and the Ecumenical Patriarch cite Maximus the Confessor's emphasis on reality as "the cosmic liturgy" from his *Mystagogia*. For Pope Benedict, see his June 25, 2008 remarks in St. Peter's Square, and for the Patriarch, ibid., 315.

30. Chryssavgis, *Cosmic Grace, Humble Prayer*, 57.

31. Ibid., 55 and 313.

Chapter 7

1. Air pollution has increased, see http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/13/science/earth/beijing-air-pollution-off-the-charts.html.

2. For a history of the Institute, see Wu Yungui, "The History of the Institute for World Religions, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences," at http://www.iop.or.jp/0010/yungui.pdf.

3. Pan Yue, "Green China and Young China," in *China Dialogue* (July 2007), http://www.chinadialogue.net/article/show/single/en/1168-Green-China-and-young-China-part-two-. China Dialogue is one of the best Internet sites for information on China (www.chinadialogue.net).

4. Mark Elvin, *The Retreat of the Elephants: An Environmental History of China* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004).

5. It might also be observed that Daoism and Buddhism have important perspectives on these issues. See Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams, eds., *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Center for the Study of World Religions, 1997). See also Norman Girardot, James Miller, and Liu Xiaogan, eds., *Daoism and Ecology: Ways within a Cosmic Landscape* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Center for the Study of World Religions, 2001).

6. Tu Weiming and Mary Evelyn Tucker, eds., *Confucian Spirituality*, 2 vols. (New York: Crossroads, 2003–2004). These volumes illustrate the religious and spiritual dimensions of the Confucian traditions from the classical period to the present. See also Stephen Angle, *Sagehood: The Contemporary Significance of Neo-Confucian Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Anna Sun, *Confucianism as a World Religion: Contested Histories and Contemporary Realities* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013); John and Evelyn Berthrong, *Confucianism: A Short Introduction* (London: Oneworld, 2000); John Makeham, "*Rujiao* [Confucianism] as Religion," in *Lost Soul: "Confucianism" in Contemporary Academic Discourse* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008), 277–309; William Theodore de Bary, *The Great Civilized Conversation: Education for a World Community* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

7. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Berthrong, eds., *Confucianism and Ecology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Center for the Study of World Religions, 1998).

8. This term was first used by historian of religion Mircea Eliade and then by Confucian scholar Tu Weiming. See Tu Weiming, *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985).

9. William Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom, eds., *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, Vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 330–31.

10. Chang Tsai's *Western Inscription* continues as follows: "The great ruler [the emperor] is the eldest son of my parents [Heaven and Earth], and the great ministers are his stewards. Respect the aged—this is the way to treat them as elders should be treated. Show affection toward the elder and weak. . . . The sage identifies his virtue with that of Heaven and Earth, and the worthy is the best [among the children of Heaven and Earth]. Even those who are tired and infirm, crippled and sick, those who have no brothers or children, wives or husbands, all are my brothers who are in distress and have no one to turn to." de Bary and Bloom, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 683.

11. This generation of New Confucians kept alive the tradition in Taiwan and Hong Kong. They include Xiong Shili (1885–1968), Fang Dong Mei (1899–1977), Tang Junyi (1909–1978), and Mou Jongsan (1909–1995).

12. From Makeham, *Lost Soul*, 43.

13. Makeham, *Lost Soul*; Daniel Bell, *China's New Confucianism: Politics and Everyday Life in a Changing Society* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

14. Liu Zongchao, *An Outlook on Ecological Civilization* (Xianmen, China: Xianmen University Press, 2010).

15. President Hu Jintao first mentioned ecological civilization at the seventeenth Party Congress on October 24, 2007. At the eighteenth Party Congress, held November 8–14, 2012, President Hu mentioned ecological civilization fifteen times in his report. In the same Party Congress, the new president, Xi, also mentioned ecological civilization as benefitting contemporary and future generations.

16. See professor of philosophy at Beijing University Tang Yijie, "The Enlightenment and Its Difficult Journey in China," in *Wen Hui Bao* (Shanghai newspaper), November 14, 2011.

17. Yang Fubin, "The Influence of Whitehead's Process Thought on the Chinese Academy," *Process Studies* 39(2) (Fall–Winter 2010):342–49.

18. *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation*, trans. Roger Ames and Henry Rosemont (New York: Ballantine, 1999).

19. Mary Evelyn Tucker, *Moral and Spiritual Cultivation in Japanese Neo-Confucianism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989); and Mary Evelyn Tucker, *The Philosophy of Qi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

20. See Irene Bloom, *Mencius* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

21. de Bary and Bloom, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, Vol. 1, 129.

22. Sarah Allan, *The Way of Water and Sprouts of Virtue* (Albany: State University of New York, 1997).

23. Burton Watson, *Xunzi: Basic Writings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

24. de Bary and Bloom, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, Vol. 1, 171.

25. *Reflections on Things at Hand: The Neo-Confucian Anthology Compiled by Chu Hsi and Lü Tsu-Ch'ien*, trans. Wing-tsit Chan (New York: Columbia University Press,

1967); see also Wing-tsit Chan, *Chu Hsi and Neo-Confucianism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986).

26. Julia Ching, *The Religious Thought of Chu Hsi* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2000).

27. de Bary and Bloom, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, Vol. 1, 338.

28. These ideas of the organismic process of Chinese thought as marked by continuity, wholeness, and dynamism are developed by Tu Weiming, "The Continuity of Being: Chinese Visions of Nature," in *Confucianism and Ecology*, ed. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Berthrong (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Center for the Study of World Religions, 1998), 105–21.

29. For a commentary on the *Doctrine of the Mean*, see Tu Weiming, *Commonality and Centrality: An Essay on Confucian Religiousness* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989).

30. Daniel Gardner, *The Four Books: The Basic Teachings of the Later Confucian Tradition* (Boston: Hackett, 2007).

31. de Bary and Bloom, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, Vol. 1, 346–48.

32. See David Hall and Roger Ames, "Chinese Philosophy," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1998, revised 2013). From http://www.rep.routledge.com/article/G001.

Chapter 8

1. On ritual and ritualization, see Tom Driver, *The Magic of Ritual: The Need for Liberating Rites That Transform Our Lives and Our Communities* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993).

2. My thanks to Father Pat Twohy, SJ for that early conversation at the American Academy of Religion in 1984. Some of Pat Twohy's reflections on his experiences at Inchelium and among the Colville Confederated Tribes from 1973 to 1984 are available in his book *Finding a Way Home: Indian and Catholic Spiritual Paths of the Plateau Tribes* (Inchelium, WA: St. Michael's Mission, 1983). Mary Evelyn and I were also assisted by my nephew, Ed Grim, who teaches at the secondary school in Inchelium. Ed graciously asked permission of Martin Louie for permission to attend the Louie family Winter Dance. He and his wife, Karen, gave me hospitality over those years before and after the Winter Dance, for which I thank them.

3. The language designation *syilx* is more appropriate for Salish. However, because *Salish* is a more familiar term it is used here to refer to a number of Interior Plateau Indigenous peoples who transmit the Winter Dance ceremonial. *Okanagan* could also be used to designate this central grouping of Indigenous peoples. See the Okanagan Nation Alliance's website at http://www.syilx.org. The Winter Dance, *snyxwám*, sometimes called "Spirit Dance," or "Jump Dance," refers here to the major winter ceremonial also practiced by peoples other than Okanagan in this Columbia River region.

4. See Harry Robinson, *Nature Power: In the Spirit of an Okanagan Storyteller*, compiled and edited by Wendy Wickwire (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1992); for a historical overview see Larry Cebula, *Plateau Indians and the Quest for Spiritual Power 1700–1850* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2003); and Douglas Hudson, "The Okanagan Indians of British Columbia," in *Okanagan Sources*, ed. Jean Webber (Penticton, BC: Theytus, 1990), 54–89.