

**Chinese intellectuals' reconstruction of  
Confucianism in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup>  
Century** CHINA.

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Chi Ho Ivan Hon

## Abstract

This thesis is about Chinese intellectuals' attempt to reconstruct Confucianism in reaction to the external challenges and internal changes of China in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Chapter 1 examines Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao and Zhang Taiyan's re-evaluation of Confucianism. It analyses their discourse on whether Confucianism was a religion, whether it should be transformed into a religion and adopted as the state religion, the religiousness of Confucianism and the religion-secular dichotomy.

Chapter 2 examines Kang, Liang and Zhang's reappraisal of Confucius and reconstruction of his images. It analyses how their different representations of Confucius were linked with their attempts to manipulate Confucius as a national, religious and cultural symbol of China to construct national identity, mobilise Chinese people for nationalist movements and promote cultural nationalism.

Chapter 3 examines Kang, Liang and Zhang's reinterpretation of Confucian notions. It analyses how Kang reinterpreted the Confucian notion of "Three Ages" and synthesized it with modern Western political and social ideas for advocating reforms, how Liang reinterpreted Mencius' notion of "Primacy of the people" for advocating democracy as well as how Zhang and Kang's arguments on the interpretation of "Three Ages" were linked with the political and ideological disputes between Chinese reformers and revolutionaries in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Chapter 4 analyses how the reconstruction of Confucianism influenced the intellectual and cultural development of China in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, such as the New Culture and May Fourth Movement, New Confucianism, the discourse on Confucianism's impact on modernisation and economic development as well as revitalising Confucian ethics and values as national ethical system and contents of moral education to solve the problems of modern societies.

In the conclusion, I argue that the reconstruction of Confucianism had influenced Confucianism's relations with religion, nation, modernity and culture as well as challenged and problematized these notions.

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## Introduction

Although China was forcibly opened to the West after the Opium War in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century, the Confucian orthodoxy and the traditional social, political and cultural order of China on which it was based remained intact until late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Although attempts had been made to strengthen China and develop its economy by adopting Western science, technologies, military skills and enterprises during the Self-Strengthening Movement (洋務運動 1864-1894), this was confined to learning from the West at a technical level while Confucian orthodoxy was asserted during the same period. However, China's military defeat in 1894 by Japan, which had undertaken comprehensive reforms based on Western lines and adopted Western ideas in large scale after the Meiji Restoration in 1868, had convinced many Chinese intellectuals of the need to reconstruct Confucianism, adopt Western ideas and strengthen China on Western lines.

Moreover, China was faced with drastic external challenges and internal changes in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. On the one hand, there was intensification of foreign aggression, influx of political and social ideas from the West and increase in influence of Christianity. On the other hand, reforms, revolutions and nationalist movements took place during this period which brought political and social changes in China. Since external events and internal realignment of groups and power encouraged reconstruction and new understandings of collective traditions, which involves reinterpretation of the pattern of memories, values, symbols, myths and traditions that compose the distinctive heritage of the nation(1), Chinese intellectuals such as Kang Youwei (康有為 1858-1927), Liang Qichao (梁啓超 1873-1929) and Zhang Taiyan (章太炎 1869-1936) reinterpreted and reconstructed Confucianism, which was a major component of Chinese tradition, in this period. Since Kang, Liang and Zhang were leaders of nationalist movements, their reconstruction of Confucianism was closely linked with the emergence and development of nationalism, nationalist movements and the nation building process of China in this period. It was also closely linked with their attempt to transform Confucianism to serve the interests of reform, revolution, nationalist movement and transforming China into a modern nation as well as to construct and justify their discourse on reform, revolution, nationalism and cultural nationalism.

Since nationalism, as a socio-political movement, emphasizes cultural gestation and representation, the ideologies of nationalism require an immersion in the culture of the nation and the rediscovery of its history(2). Therefore, Kang, Liang and Zhang had extensively immersed themselves in Chinese cultural tradition and reinterpreted Chinese history (e.g. Chinese historical figures and incidents) as the basis on which to reconstruct Confucianism for nationalist purposes.

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1. Anthony Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, ideology, history* (Polity Press, 2001), P.201

2. Ibid. P.6-8

Kang Youwei was the leader of the reform movement in China in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Kang was impressed with Western institutions during his visits to Hong Kong (1879) and Shanghai (1882) as well as being exposed to modern Western ideas through reading translated Western works in his early years. In 1887, Kang first indicated his idea to reform China in “*Introduction to the notes of Li Yun 禮運注敘*” while his ideas of social reform and the “world of great unity” can be traced to his “*Complete work on principles of truth and universal law 實理公法全書*” published in the same year.

In 1888, Kang first petitioned the Chinese emperor to reform China in his “*First petition to the Qing emperor 上清帝第一書*”. In 1891, Kang wrote “*A Study of the Forgeries of the Xin Dynasty 新學偽經考*” which argued that all Ancient Text Classics on which Confucian orthodoxy was based were forgeries. In 1893, Kang began to deify Confucius, transform him into a religious symbol and stress the relation between Heaven and Human in “*Dong’s study of Spring and Autumn Annals 董氏春秋學*” as the foundation of the religiousness of Confucianism. In 1895, Kang, together with a group of Chinese intellectuals, petitioned the emperor to reform again in reaction to China’s defeat by Japan, which marked the beginning of the reform movement. In 1898, Kang consolidated his reinterpretation of the Gong-yang notion of “Three Ages” as a theory of progressive historical evolution and published “*A Study of the Institutional Reforms of Confucius 孔子改制考*” which stressed the image of Confucius as an institutional reformer. Between June and September of that year, Kang launched a series of reforms in China, including the adoption of Confucianism as state religion. During his exile after the failure of the 1898 reform, Kang reinterpreted *Analects, Mencius, Doctrine of the Mean and Great Learning* between 1901 and 1902 as well as writing “*Book of Great Unity 大同書*” in 1902 which illustrated his ideal of a unified world of equality, democracy and fraternity. Before the 1911 Revolution, Kang wrote a series of articles like “*Republican form of government cannot be implemented in China 共和政體不能行於中國論*” (1905) and “*Study on the difficulty of differentiating races since there are alien races in the Han race while Yellow Emperor was also the ancestor to the Manchu race 民族難定漢族中亦多異族而滿族亦祖黃帝考*” (1911) to continue advocating constitutional monarchy in China while opposing the revolutionaries’ attempt to overthrow the Qing dynasty on a racial discourse and replace it with a republic. After the establishment of the republic in 1912, Kang indicated his concern with the moral decay in China and the loss of Chinese culture and tradition as well as his attempt to solve these problems by adopting Confucian religion as state religion in articles like “*Introduction to the Confucian Association 孔教會序*” (1912), “*Statement for the Journal of China Society 中國學會報題詞*” (1912), “*On reviving the soul of China 中國還魂論*” (1913) and “*Suggestion for making Confucianism a guojiao to match with Heaven 以孔教爲國教配天議*” (1913). Between 1913 and 1917, Kang launched the Confucian religion movement and proposed to put Confucian religion in the Chinese constitution when he served as the president of Confucian Association. Kang associated the problems and chaos of China in the early Republican Period with the republican form of government in “*A letter to Xu Shichang 致徐世昌書*” (1917) and “*Reflections on the republic 共和評議*” (1917) while he took part in the attempt to restore the Qing dynasty in July 1917.

Liang Qichao (1873-1929) was the disciple of Kang at Ten Thousand Wood Thatched Hall (*wanmu caotang* 萬木草堂) in Guangzhou from 1891 to 1894 and he had assisted in Kang's writing of "*A Study of the Forgeries of the Xin Dynasty*". Liang was also Kang's close associate in the reform movement. In 1897, Liang taught at the Shiwu Academy in Hunan where he proposed to propagate the teachings of Confucius to the entire world. Liang's intellectual and political views began to deviate from Kang's after his exposure to Western and Japanese ideas as well as his contact with Chinese revolutionaries during his exile in Japan (1898-1911). In a letter to Kang in 1899, Liang advocated transforming China into a republic. In a series of articles under the title of "*Yinbingshi notes on freedom* 飲冰室自由書" published in 1899, Liang stressed the importance of liberty, which led to his open dispute with Kang. In his reply to Kang's letter in 1900, Liang asserted the importance of liberty and freedom to China. In the same year, Liang attributed China's problems at that time to Chinese people's lack of the spirit of independence and their authoritarian tradition in "*On tracing the origin of China's weaknesses* 中國積弱溯源論". In 1902, Liang wrote "*Preserving the teaching is not the way to honour Confucius* 保教非所以尊孔論" to point out the fundamental differences between Confucianism and religion, oppose the deification of Confucius and stress the negative impact of adopting Confucian religion as state religion on China. In "*Relation between Buddhism and collective rule* 論佛教與群治之關係" (1902), Liang refuted the common misconceptions of Buddhism (e.g. Buddhism is superstitious and negative) and pointed out that the "jiao" in "kongjiao" meant "education" instead of "religion". In "*On the general trend of change in Chinese scholarship and thought* 論中國學術思想變遷之大勢" (1902), Liang stressed the importance of academic freedom and the negative impact of state religion on China's scholarship. In 1903, Liang attributed China's weaknesses to the slave nature and autocratic tradition of Chinese people again in "*On the character of Chinese citizens* 論中國國民之性格" and indicated his idea of renewing Chinese people's national character as the foundation of transforming China into a modern nation. In 1904, Liang attempted to show that the modern western idea of socialism can be found in Confucian classics in "*Chinese socialism* 中國之社會主義". After the establishment of the republic, Liang was actively involved in politics as a minister and leader of a political party. He wrote "*What are the actual benefits of Confucian doctrines to today's Chinese people* 孔子教義實際裨益於今日國民者何在" in 1915 to stress the importance of Confucius' teaching in cultivating the moral character of the citizens of modern China. Liang opposed Kang's association of the problems of China in the early Republican era with the republican form of government and strongly criticised Kang's involvement in the restoration of Qing dynasty in "*Telegraph in opposition of restoration of monarchy* 反對復辟電" (1917). As part of the "Eastern Culture Group", Liang opposed the idea of "the wholesale Westernisation of China" advocated by intellectuals like Hu Shi after the May Fourth Movement (1919). After his trip to Europe (1919-20), Liang wrote "*Biography of great people in the world: Confucius* 世界偉人傳: 孔子" (1920), "*Confucius* 孔子" (1920) and "*Reflections on the trip to Europe* 歐游心影錄" (1920) to combine the image of Confucius as a great human being, a symbol of Chinese culture and a great person of the world whose teaching was universally applicable to support his idea of promoting Chinese culture as a means to supplement Western culture in order to form the foundation of a new world civilisation.

Zhang Taiyan was part of the reform movement of Kang and Liang between 1895 and 1900. In 1897, Zhang disputed with Kang's followers when he worked at Kang's *Journal of Current Affairs* (時務報) since he opposed Kang's deification of Confucius and transformation of Confucianism into a religion. In 1899, Zhang pointed out Confucius' contribution to secularizing and humanising Chinese culture in "The true view on Confucianism 儒術真論" (1899) while he refuted the traditional notion of a mythical and transcendental Heaven with modern astronomy in the supplement of the article. In 1900, Zhang shifted to the revolutionary movement, which aimed at overthrowing the Qing dynasty and the imperial system, led by Sun Yatsen as a result of Qing government's failure to defend China from the invasion of foreign powers after the Boxer Uprising (1900) which had made him disillusioned with the Qing dynasty and the reform movement. After his shift to the revolutionary movement, Zhang began to make negative remarks about Confucius, Confucianism and Confucian followers in writings such as "Correcting Confucius 訂孔" (1902), "On various ancient schools of thought 論諸子學" (1906) and "Speech at the welcoming party of Chinese students in Tokyo 東京留學生歡迎會致辭" (1906). Between 1903 and 1906, Zhang was heavily influenced by Buddhism, especially the Yogacara sect (Weishi 唯識宗), during his imprisonment by the Qing government. After his release from prison in 1906, Zhang became the editor of the journal "Minbao 民報" of the revolutionary alliance *Tongmenhui* (同盟會) in Japan and a major propagandist of the revolutionary movement. In that year, he wrote "On the creation of religion 建立宗教論" (1906) which pointed out that the only function of religion was its contribution to people's morality, and criticised the worship of god as a real object. Zhang also pointed out the contradictions in the Christian notion of god in "On no God 無神論" (1906). In reaction to Kang's attempt to blur the distinction between the Han and Manchu race with the notion of "Three Ages", Zhang stressed the distinction between the two races, the distinct ancestral origin of Han people, Manchu's discrimination and persecution of Han people in history in articles like "The origin of men 原人" (1902) and "Refutation of Kang Youwei's essay on revolution 駁康有為論革命書" (1902). Moreover, to refute Kang's idea of gradual progressive historical evolution in "Three Ages", Zhang wrote "Differentiating the notion of evolution 俱分進化論" in 1906 to argue that evolution could move in both a good and a bad direction. In 1907, Zhang wrote "Reply to Tiezhen 答鐵铮" which pointed out self-reliance and independence from god and deities as the characteristics of the ethical teachings of China. During this time, Zhang was influenced by the anarchist thoughts of Japanese anarchist Kotoku Shusui. These anarchist influences, which had a great impact on Zhang's idea of revolution, were indicated in his critical attitude towards government and nation in "On five negations 五無論" (1908) and "On nation 國家論" (1908). In 1909, Zhang further refuted Kang's idea of historical evolution and social progress in "Three Ages" in "On four puzzles 四惑論" (1909) by arguing that progress in one area must be offset by reversal in another area and there is no real evolution. In that year, Zhang also wrote "The origin of ru 原儒" (1909) to point out the ancient meaning of "ru" to indicate that its meaning had shifted from a religious one (priests, shamans and sorcerers) to a secular one (people associated with education and moral teaching) at the time of Confucius. In 1913, Zhang wrote "Against establishing the Confucian religion 駁建立孔教議" to oppose Kang's proposal to adopt Confucian religion as state religion by pointing out that none of the teachings of China in history belonged to the category of religion. In 1915, Zhang

severely attacked Yuan Shikai's attempt to become the new emperor of China in a letter to him. In 1922, Zhang openly regretted having made negative remarks on Confucius and Confucianism in his early years in a letter to a professor at Nanjing senior teacher college. Finally, in the 1930's, Zhang advocated national learning, reverence of Confucius and study of Confucian classics in order to promote national culture, identity, consciousness and nationalism for mobilizing Chinese people to resist Japanese military aggression in China at that time.

The aim of this thesis is to find out and compare how Kang, Liang and Zhang reconstructed Confucianism, how this reconstruction was linked with their political activities, and how it influenced the cultural and intellectual development of China in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The method is to analyse their writings related to Confucianism, Confucius, religion and Chinese culture in this period (1880's to 1920's). The thesis will examine their reconstruction of Confucianism from three perspectives.

Chapter 1 will examine their re-evaluation of Confucianism based on their different interpretation of its origin, nature, content, essence, underlying principles and functions. Since these thinkers were confronted with the Western notion of religion as well as Kang's attempt to transform Confucianism into an organised religion and the state religion of China in their process of re-evaluating Confucianism, a major focus of the chapter will be on their discourse about whether Confucianism was a religion, whether it should be transformed into a religion and adopted as the state religion of China, the religiousness of Confucianism and whether Confucianism should be classified as the sphere of "religion" or "secular".

Chapter 2 will examine their reappraisal of Confucius and reconstruction of his images. Linked with their discourse on the nature, essence and religious dimension of Confucianism, the reappraisal of Confucius led to their discourse on the identity, religious and historical status of Confucius. I will also examine how Kang, Liang and Zhang's different (religious, human and historical) representations of Confucius were linked with their attempts to manipulate Confucius as a national, religious and cultural symbol of China as a means to construct Chinese national identity, mobilise Chinese people for nationalist movements and promote Chinese cultural nationalism.

Chapter 3 will examine Kang, Liang and Zhang's reinterpretation of Confucian notions and doctrines in search of its political use value and modern applications. I will analyse how Kang reinterpreted the Confucian notion of "Three Ages" and synthesized it with modern western political and social ideas (e.g. social evolution, progress, constitution monarchy, equality and democracy) for advocating reforms. I will analyse how Liang reinterpreted Mencius' notion of "Primacy of the people" for advocating western liberal democracy. I will also examine how Zhang and Kang's arguments on the reinterpretation of "Three Ages" turned into political and ideological disputes (e.g. monarchism versus republicanism) between Chinese reformers and revolutionaries in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Chapter 4 will analyse how Kang, Liang and Zhang's reconstruction of Confucianism influenced the intellectual and cultural development of China in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, in areas such as the New Culture Movement, May Fourth Movement, New Confucianism, the discourse on Confucianism's relation with modernity, its impact on modernisation and economic development as well as the discourse on

revitalising Confucianism as the national ethical system and content of moral education as a means to solve the social and moral problems of modern societies.

The conclusion will summarize the findings of the thesis and highlight the characteristics of these three influential Chinese intellectuals' reconstruction of Confucianism in this period. I will argue that Kang, Liang and Zhang's arguments about, reflections on and questioning of Confucianism not only revealed the underlying assumptions of their discourse on Confucianism but had a profound effect on Confucianism's relations with religion, nation, modernity and culture in contemporary China as well as on these notions themselves.

## Chapter 1: Re-evaluation of Confucianism and the discourse on “Confucian religion”

Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao and Zhang Taiyan re-evaluated Confucianism as a school of thought by reflecting on its nature, essence, underlying principles, content and function as well as repositioning it and recasting its status in their writings. This was an integral part of their reconstruction and new understandings of Chinese tradition, stimulated by external challenges caused by foreign aggression, Christianity and Western culture as well as internal changes caused by reforms and revolutions(1). Since the western notions of “religion” and “secular” and the religion secular dichotomy became prominent in China during this period with the spread and increase in influence of Christianity, while Kang proposed to adopt “Confucian Religion” as the state religion of China in 1898 and 1913, the re-evaluation of Confucianism and reflection on its nature formed the conceptual basis of these Chinese intellectuals’ discourse on whether Confucianism was a religion, whether it had any religious nature and dimensions, and whether Confucianism should be transformed into an organised religion and adopted as the state religion. I will argue that Kang versus Liang and Zhang represent two distinct views of contemporary Chinese intellectuals on the nature of Confucianism and Chinese cultural tradition in response to the notion of “religion”. The discourse was also closely linked with their perception of “Confucian Religion” as the state religion’s impact on the nationalist movements and nation building of China as well as how Confucianism could serve their discourse and agenda on reform, revolution, nationalism and cultural nationalism. Contemporary Chinese intellectuals searched for the political use, value and modern applications of Confucianism in their attempt to transform it so as to serve the needs of the modern nation, polity, and culture.

### 1. Kang Youwei’s view of Confucianism as a religion and his attempt to adopt “Confucian religion” as the state religion of China

Kang Youwei evaluated Confucianism in his articles “*Introduction to the Confucian Association 孔教會序*” (1912) and “*Suggestion for making Confucianism a guojiao to match with Heaven 以孔教爲國教配天議*” (1913). Kang perceived Confucianism as a “teaching of the human way” (人道之教) which Confucius formulated and preached due to his focus and emphasis on human beings as well as his concern for their well-being. That is, since human beings have thoughts, feelings and desires, the teaching of moral codes and virtues is important for them to know proper conduct and behaviour in life. Moreover, since human beings have all sorts of relations with each other in life, the teaching of the ways (ethics and rules) governing different human relations (e.g. benevolence and filial piety between parents and children, trust among friends as well as righteousness and loyalty between rulers and subjects) is important for them to know how to treat and relate with each other.

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1. Anthony Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History* (Polity Press, 2001), P.201

Since proper conduct, behaviour and human relations are the foundation of the smooth functioning of society as well as the maintenance of social order, harmony and peace, which are all vital for the well-being of human beings, Kang thought Confucianism's teaching of "the human way" had contributed to maintaining the social order and harmony of China in history as the foundation of the customs, morals and social rites governing the everyday lives of Chinese people which they had observed and respected for more than two thousand years(2).

Based on his reflection on the essence, underlying principles and functions of Confucianism, Kang proposed to adopt it as the "guojiao 國教" of China. Kang proposed to establish a "guojiao" as a means to establish and clarify the customs and moral standards of China, which he thought was essential at that time due to the signs of moral decay of Chinese people after the founding of the republic in 1912. Based on his perception of the centrality of Confucianism in Chinese culture and tradition, its close link with the customs and moral standards of Chinese people as well as its function in maintaining the social order and harmony of China, Kang thought Confucianism was the most suitable "guojiao" of China(3).

What was the meaning of "guojiao"? What did Kang mean when he proposed to establish Confucianism as a "guojiao"?

Since Kang considered "guojiao" a means to establish and clarify the customs and moral standard of a nation, a possible meaning of "guojiao" is "national teaching" (an ethical teaching of the moral codes and standards as well as the proper customs and behaviour of a nation). Such a meaning is consistent with Kang's perception of Confucianism as "teaching of the human way" and his stress on the importance of teaching (*jiaohua* 教化) to a nation in his writings(4).

Nevertheless, in "Suggestion for making Confucianism a guojiao to match with Heaven", Kang cited many examples of "guojiao" in different countries (e.g. Spain, Austria, Denmark, England and Germany) to indicate the importance of "guojiao" in establishing the appropriate customs and moral standard for a nation while there was no contradiction between the existence of "guojiao" and the principle of freedom of belief as well as the provision of freedom of belief in the constitution(5). These examples included "religions" (teachings and beliefs related to gods, deities and afterlife) like Christianity.

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2. *Collection of Kang Youwei's Essays Vol. 7 康南海文集匯編卷七* (1925), P.24/ See Kang's article "Statement for the Journal of China Society 中國學會報題詞" (1912) in *Collection of Kang Youwei's Essays Vol. 8*, P.13

3. *Collection of Kang Youwei's Essays Vol. 7* (1925), P.27, 30

4. *Ibid.*, P.24

5. *Ibid.*, P.30

Moreover, as part of the “*guojiao*” scheme, Kang attempted to transform Confucianism into a “*kongjiao* 孔教” modelled on the organisation and practices of Christianity. For example, following the practices of Christian priests preaching Christian doctrines and performing rituals, and of Christian believers worshipping god at Christian churches, Kang proposed to establish Confucian Associations (*kongjiao hui* 孔教會) all over China and appoint Confucian scholars to preach Confucian doctrines and perform rituals for Confucius while ordinary Chinese people could worship Confucius at Confucian Associations. Kang also suggested imitating Christianity’s practice of using Jesus’ year of birth as the year of counting by using Confucius’ year of birth as the year of counting for China(6). “*Guojiao*” also included religious rites and practices (rites and practices performed for gods and deities) like the worship of Confucius as religious master and deity together with Heaven by government officials at the Platform of Heaven (天壇) in the capital and by ordinary people at the Confucian temples in the countryside(7).

Since Kang proposed to make Confucianism a “*guojiao*” on the model of religion like Christianity, and while there are religious elements in his “*guojiao*” proposal, another possible meaning of “*guojiao*” is “state religion” (by combining the meaning of “*guo* 国” as “nation state” and “*jiao* 教” as “religion”). However, did Kang consider Confucianism a “religion”? Did he want to establish Confucianism as the “state religion” of China? In order to answer these questions, we should examine and verify Kang’s interpretation of the term “*zongjiao* 宗教” and the notion of “religion”; whether he thought Confucianism belong to the category of “*zongjiao*” and “religion”..

According to Kang’s interpretation of the term “*zongjiao* 宗教”, it is a combination of the word “*zong* 宗” (sect), which is derived from the Buddhist notion of “sect” and the word “*jiao* 教”(teaching) while the two words together form a literal meaning of “sectarian teaching”. The term was originally coined by the Japanese as the Japanese equivalent of the English word “religion” and it subsequently became the Chinese equivalent of “religion” as well. Since the notion of “religion” originally comes from the West, it bears the influence of Christianity and contains the meaning of “teaching of god” (神教). Since “*zongjiao*” is the Chinese equivalent of the western notion of “religion”, it also contains the meaning of “teaching of god”. As a result, the term “*zongjiao*” is always associated with the notion of god (e.g. “belief in god” and “worship of god”). Kang thought that was why Confucianism, which confines itself solely to matters of human beings and is not associated with the notion of god, was excluded from the category of religion(8).

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6. *Selected Political and Historical Essays of Kang Youwei* 康南海政史文選 (Zhongshan University, 1988), P.255

7. *Collection of Kang Youwei's Essays Vol. 7* (1925), P. 31

8. *Ibid.*, P.26

We can verify Kang's view by examining the meaning of "religion" when it was transmitted from the West to East Asia in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. As C.F. Keyes, Laurel Kendall and Helen Hardacre have pointed out, there was no indigenous terminology corresponding to ideas of "religion" in most Asian cultures prior to the modern period, while complex presuppositions about the nature of "religion" as being like creeds pledging exclusive allegiance and privatised relation to a deity were brought to Asia by western missionaries in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. We can also examine how the character compound "宗教" (*shūkyō*) became the equivalent of the western notion of "religion" in Japan as well as exploring the contemporary meaning of "religion" and "zongjiao" in English and Chinese.

As for the meaning of "religion" in the West in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, John Bossy and William Cavanaugh have pointed out that the English word "religion" was derived from the word "*Religio*", which in classical Latin referred to "a sense of duty or reverence for sacred things, object which inspires this frame of mind, a cult or worship in general". In early Christianity, "religion" meant "worship and a worshipful attitude" and in medieval Christianity, it referred to "monastic order and life". In the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, Humanists used "religion" to mean "a truly reverent, worshipful or pious life to God". After that, "religion" was increasingly used in association with Christianity in the West. Cavanaugh has also argued that the notion of religion as "a set of beliefs which is defined as personal conviction which can exist separately from one's public loyalty to the state" had been associated with Christianity by the state as a means to transfer public authority and people's ultimate loyalty, which originally belonged to the Christian church, to the state since the 16<sup>th</sup> Century(9). This indicates that the meaning of "religion" was closely linked with Christianity and the notion of god when it was transmitted from the West to East Asia in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

As for the association of the character compound "宗教" with the notion of "religion" and "teaching of god" in Japan, Helen Hardacre has suggested that the idea of "religion" was assuming a place in Japan's intellectual vocabulary for the first time during the Meiji Period, while the term "宗教" (*shūkyō*) developed in part through the exercise of translation, in a context highly coloured by the pressure to respond to the sudden onslaught of Western thought and culture. Isomae Junichi (磯前順一) has also pointed out that the formation of the notion of "religion" in Japan was a key element in the issue of accepting Christianity in the Meiji Period(10).

9. See John Bossy, "Some Elementary Forms of Durkheim", *Past and Present*, Number 95 (May 1982), P.4-7 and William T. Cavanaugh, "The Wars of Religion and the rise of the state", *Modern Theology* 11 (1995), P.398-405
10. See Timothy Fitzgerald, *The Ideology of Religious Studies* (Oxford University, 2000), P.21-2 and Helen Hardacre, "The Shinto priesthood in early Meiji Japan: Preliminary Inquiries" (Feb 1988), *History of Religions*, Volume 27, Number 3, P.294-295

Isomae has further pointed out that the word “*shū* 宗” was derived from “*shūshi*” (宗旨) which referred to the affiliation with Buddhist sects under the Buddhist temple registration system (*teraukesei* 寺請制) in the Tokugawa Period and the word “*kyō* 教” was derived from “*kyōhō*” (教法) which referred to teaching and doctrine. Although both “*shūshi*” and “*kyōhō*” were used to represent the notion of “religion” before the Meiji Period, since the meaning of “*shū* 宗” was more associated with practices like Buddhist funeral rites and the *Danka* system (*danka seido* 檀家制度), it had to be combined with the word “*kyō*”, which was closely linked with the ideas of belief, faith and teaching, as “*shūkyō*” to represent the notion of “religion”(11).

As for the contemporary dictionary meaning of “religion” in English, it means “belief in the existence of a god or gods” and its examples do not include Confucianism. The contemporary dictionary meaning of the character compound “*zongjiao* 宗教” in Chinese is “belief in and worship of supernatural god” (“相信并崇拜超自然的神”) and the examples of “*zongjiao*” do not include Confucianism(12).

The above findings justify Kang’s view that Confucianism was excluded from the category of “religion” because the Chinese term “*zongjiao*” came from the Japanese term “*shūkyō*”, which was invented as the Japanese equivalent of the western notion of “religion” and was therefore closely linked with Christianity and the notion of “god”.

Based on this view, Kang considered it inappropriate to exclude Confucianism from the category of religion simply because it does not involve the “ways of god”. Kang argued that it was inappropriate to consider “teaching of god” religion but not “teaching of the human way” religion since it was actually more advanced than “teaching of god”. That is because while “teaching of god” was more significant in ancient time since ancient people emphasized supernatural beings, “teaching of the human way” was more important in modern times since modern people emphasize human beings and affairs. Moreover, Kang stressed the inseparability between “way” (道) and “human” (人) by citing from the “*Doctrine of the Mean* 中庸” (“道不遠人。人之爲道而遠人，不可以爲道”). Therefore, Kang argued that the notion of “religion” should be broadened so that Confucianism can be included in its category(13).

11. See Isomae Junichi (磯前順一), “The Emergence of Contemporary Study of Religion: the Formation Process of the Notion of Religion 近代宗教学の登場：宗教概念の確立過程”, The 58<sup>th</sup> academic panel of the Japanese society of the study of Religions (日本宗教学会第58回学術大会パネル部会レジュメ集), Nanzan University (南山大学), 1999, P.20-21
12. See *Oxford Advanced Learner’s English-Chinese Dictionary* (1994), P.1263-1264 and *Cihai* 辞海 (1999), P.2728

Kang's argument indicates that he considered Confucianism a religion and he wanted to adopt it as the state religion (*guojiao*) of China. However, does Kang's classification of Confucianism as a religion equivalent to the "teaching of god" contradict his perception of it as a "teaching of the human way" with its strong human focus and ultimate concern for the well-being of human beings? We can answer that question by examining Kang's interpretation of "teaching" (*jiao* 教/ *jiaohua* 教化), his perception of the dichotomy between the sphere of human and god (spiritual) in Confucianism and traditional Chinese teachings as well as the religious origin, nature and dimension of Confucianism's humanistic teaching based on the link between human and Heaven.

Based on Kang's writings, he perceived no distinction between "teaching of human" (人教) and "teaching of god" (神教) in traditional Chinese teachings (e.g. Confucianism and Buddhism) while he considered "human way" (人道) and "ways of god" (神道) the same as "teaching". Moreover, Kang made a simile between Confucianism and the Buddhist Hua-yan (華嚴宗/ Flower Garland/ Avatamsaka) Sect. By applying the Hua-yan notion that "there is no world of dharma without this world" ("舍世界無法界"), Kang thought Confucius mainly talked about matters of the human world because he perceived no distinction between the human and spiritual world(14).

Since Kang perceived the unity between the sphere of human and god in Confucianism and other traditional Chinese teachings, I suggest that in Kang's view, "teaching of human" was also "teaching of god" and "human way" was also "way of god". Since the western notion of "religion" was closely linked with the teaching and way of god, it indicates that the word "*jiao* 教" and "*jiaohua* 教化" in Kang's writings bear both the meaning of "teaching" and "religion".

Moreover, Kang perceived the way of Confucius as originated in Heaven (*tian* 天) which was based on the nature of Heaven and human beings ("夫孔子之道本于天人之性出于天。故因人性以爲道"). I suggest that this indicates Kang's perception of the religious origin and nature of Confucianism's "teaching of the human way" based on the unity of Heaven and human(15). I can support my argument by indicating the religious meaning and implication associated with the notion of "Heaven" and its similarity to the western notion of "god", with which the western notion of "religion" was closely linked.

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13. *Collection of Kang Youwei's Essays Vol. 7* (1925), P.26, 29/ Xia Yanzhang (夏延章), *Modern Interpretation of Great Learning and Doctrine of the Mean* 大學中庸今譯 (Jiangxi Renmin, 1983), P.33
  14. *Collection of Kang Youwei's Essays Vol. 7* (1925), P.26/ See Liang Qichao's article "The biography of Master Kang Nanhai 南海康先生傳" (1901) in *Collection of Yinbingshi Volume 6* (1941), P.83-84
  15. *Collection of Kang Youwei's Essays Vol. 7* (1925), P.24
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In the Shang Period (商 1600 B.C.-1045 B.C.), Chinese people believed that there existed a supreme deity (*di* 帝 or *Shangdi* 上帝) with personality and will, whom they worshipped as a personal deity. This was similar to the western notion of “worship of god” and “privatised relation to a deity”. After the Zhou (周 1045 B.C.-256 B.C.) replaced the Shang, the Zhou people worshipped the deity *di* as the Shang did. Although the notion of *tian* (Heaven) as an impersonal cosmic power emerged in the Zhou Period (e.g. Mencius understood *tian* as the way which prevails in both the natural and human world), the role played by *tian* for the Zhou was the same as that played by *di* for the Shang and for a long period of Zhou, *di* and *tian* were interchangeable. Moreover, there was a Confucian conviction of *tian* as a creator (in the sense of the ultimate source of things), which was very similar to the western notion of god as the creator and ultimate source of all things. We can also find Kang’s perception of *tian* (Heaven) and *Shangdi* as the creator and origin of all things in his writings (“天者，萬物之祖，萬物非天不生” / “故祭上帝者，報本反始之義也”)(16).

In my view, Kang’s perception of the religious origin and nature of Confucian teaching as well as the unity of “teaching” and “religion” based on the link between Heaven and human was rooted in Confucian tradition. For example, Han Confucian thinker Dong Zhongshu (董仲舒 179 B.C.-104 B.C.), who had a great impact on Kang, based on his notion of “interaction between Heaven and Men” (天人感應), stated that teaching (*jiaohua* 教化) was based on the demand of Heavenly deity and will of Heaven. Therefore, Confucius’ teaching was also based on the way and will of Heaven. Moreover, Dong believed that since education (“*jiao*” can be translated as “education” as in “*jiaoyu* 教育”) is capable of awakening the moral potentiality in human nature, it becomes a necessity for the fulfilment of the will of Heaven and has a cosmic significance(17).

16. See Pei-jung Fu, *The Concept of Tien in Ancient China: With Special Emphasis on Confucianism* (Yale University, 1984), P.9, 12-3, 22, 152, 154-5/ See Kang’s article “*Dong’s Study of Spring and Autumn Annals Vol.6 董氏春秋學卷六*” (1893) in *Complete Works of Kang Youwei (康有为全集) Vol.2* (Shanghai Ancient Books, 1990), P.800 and “*Letter to Parliamentarians 致國會議員書*” (1916) in *Political Writings of Kang Youwei 康有为政论集* (Zhonghua, 1981), P.962
17. Ren Jiyu (Zongjiao Wenhua 2000), P.424, 426/ Tzey-yueh Tain, *Tung Chung-shu’s System of Thought: Its Sources and its Influence on Han Scholars*, PhD dissertation, University of California at LA (1974), P.138
18. See Du Weiming (杜维明), *Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Confucian Religiousness 論儒學的宗教性* (State University of New York Press, 1989), P.10
19. *The Inner and Outer Books of Philosopher Kang 康子内外篇* (Zhonghua, 1982), P.12-14/ Ren Jiyu (任繼愈), *Collection of Essays on the Arguments on Confucian Religion 儒教问题争论集* (Zongjiao Wenhua 2000), P.439-440

New Confucian thinkers also stressed the religiousness of the humanistic teaching of Confucianism based on the notion of “unity of Heaven and Human” (天人合一). Many of them, like Mou Zongsan (牟宗三 1909-1995) and Du Weiming (杜維明 1940-), recognised that the “human way” (人道) and the “way of Heaven” (天道) are closely connected, as in the manifestation and realization of the way of Heaven through the practice of the human way. For example, Du suggested that the moral values of Confucianism, which are rooted in the way of Heaven, are manifested in the everyday lives and human relations of Chinese people(18).

Kang had also indicated his view of the humanistic teachings of Confucianism as a kind of religion in his early writings. In an article “*Essay on the study of nature 性學篇*” (1886), Kang included Confucianism in the category of universal religions (e.g. Buddhism, Christianity and Islam). He argued that although Confucianism’s teaching of “human way” was different from Buddhism’s teaching of “relinquishing human relations and desires” (去倫絕欲), their nature as religion was the same. Moreover, Kang already used the term “*kongjiao* 孔教” to represent Confucianism in the article(19). This indicates that the word “*jiao*” both means “teaching” and “religion” while “*kongjiao*” both means “Confucian teaching” and “Confucian religion” since Kang’s early writings.

Finally, Kang perceived the important role of “*jiao*” in governing a nation and its inseparable link with politics (“教化之與政治如車之雙輪而並馳。缺一不可者也”). This was consistent with Confucius’ idea that to govern (政) is to correct (正), i.e., the very process of governing is a process of moral rectification. As Rodney Taylor has suggested, for the Confucian, moral rectification implies a return to the way of the moral virtue of the ancient sage kings, which was that of the way of Heaven while there was an established religious dynamic at the very heart of the ancient Chinese political order. It further indicates the religious implication and connotation of Kang’s notion of “*jiao*”(20).

Based on the above findings, I suggest that there is no contradiction between Kang’s classification of Confucianism as a religion equivalent to the “teaching of god” and his perception of it as a “teaching of the human way” with its strong human focus. Moreover, Kang’s view of the important role of “*jiao*” in governing a nation and its inseparable link with politics, his classification of Confucianism as a religion as well as his interpretation of “*jiao*” as carrying both the meaning of “teaching” and “religion” are coherent with each other. They form the foundation of his discourse on transforming Confucianism into an organised religion; “Confucian religion” (*kongjiao*), adopting it as the state religion (*guojiao*) of China and making it the core of his reform movement as the means to strengthen China and transform it into a modern unified nation.

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20. *Collection of Kang Youwei’s Essays Vol. 7*, P.24/ Rodney L. Taylor, *The Religious Rimension of Confucianism* (State University of New York , 1990), P.8-11, 16

Kang first attempted to adopt “Confucian religion” as state religion when in June 1898 he petitioned Emperor Guangxu (光緒 1871-1908) to honour “Confucian religion” as the state religion, set up the ministry of religion (*jiaobu* 教部) and make Confucius’ year of birth as the year of counting (21). This served his reform movement in several ways.

First, Confucian Religion as state religion could reinforce and legitimize Kang’s use of Confucianism as the ideological justification of his reform discourse (e.g. Kang’s view of Confucius as reformer who wrote Confucian classics for reform purposes and his reinterpretation of the Confucian notion of “Three Ages” for advocating reform and constitutional monarchy, as will be discussed in Chapters 2 and 3).

Moreover, by transforming Confucius into a religious symbol and the object of worship of Chinese people, Kang could manipulate Confucius, who had traditionally been revered by Chinese people as the symbol of Confucianism which was closely linked with their social values, morals, psyche and collective conscience, as a national religious symbol to mobilise Chinese people for achieving his nationalist goals and asserting Chinese national identity(22).

The role of Confucian Religion in Kang’s nationalist discourse and its function in transforming China into a modern unified nation can be further illustrated by applying Durkheim, Anthony Smith and Benedict Anderson’s ideas on religion and nation. Durkheim has defined religion as “a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things which unite people into one single moral community”. Anthony Smith has suggested that nation can be grasped as a “sacred communion of citizens” while Benedict Anderson has defined nation as an “imagined political community”(23).

Since “Confucian Religion” was a religion with Confucian doctrines and worship of Confucius as its unified system of beliefs and practice relative to Confucius as a sacred figure (religious master, demigod and deity), it could unify Chinese people into one single moral community according to Durkheim’s definition of religion. It served to reinforce China’s political unity with a cultural moral religious unity since, in Kang’s view, Confucianism was the foundation of Chinese people’s morals and the core of Chinese culture. Moreover, since modern Chinese nationalism and the concept of China as a nation state were emerging in this period, a state religion could help to create an “imagined political community” in the minds of Chinese people. By making “Confucian Religion” the core of his reform movement, Kang could also synthesize his reform movement with a moral religious movement and justify his reform discourse with a religious dogma.

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21. *Selected Political and Historical Essays of Kang Youwei* (Zhongshan University, 1988), P.221-223

22. Anthony Smith, *National Identity* (Penguin, 1991), P.73/ Dawa Nobu, *Culture and the Politics of Third World Nationalism* (Routledge, 1992), P.130, 134

23. Anthony Smith (Polity Press, 2001), P.11, 35

Second, “Confucian religion” served Kang’s scheme to catch up with western powers and to defend China from their aggression. Since most western nations had a state religion at that time, establishing a state religion could enhance China’s status among them. Kang also believed that “Confucian Religion” could play a role in strengthening China, similar to the role played by Christianity in the formation of the wealthy and powerful nations of Europe (Kang formulated an idea that religion was the source of Europe’s superiority after his visit to Shanghai in 1882 and his reading of Western books)(24).

“Confucian religion” could also protect China from the imperialist activities associated with Christianity, Christian missionaries and converts (e.g. western imperialists’ use of Christianity as a means to legitimise their interests in China, Christian missionaries’ intervention in local Chinese politics and bullying of Chinese people as well as Chinese Christians’ reliance on foreign missionaries to protect their interests) by functioning as its counterpart.

Moreover, as Timothy Fitzgerald has pointed out, Western missionaries’ representations (and misrepresentations) of local thought and belief would generate oppositions and counter-propaganda from local representatives of traditional culture. They would come up with newly invented entities imagined as an equivalent type to Christianity while they tried to prove to the Christian missionaries that they were indigenous forms of life which could be classified as “religion” in their culture. Therefore, by reinterpreting Confucianism, which Kang perceived as the representation of Chinese culture, as a religion and transforming it into “Confucian religion”, Kang could present it as an equivalent of Christianity to Christian missionaries (In 1912, in the introduction to a book “*On Confucian Religion 孔教論*” written by Kang’s follower Chen Huanzhang 陳煥章, the famous English missionary Timothy Richard stated that Confucianism was a religion)(25).

Finally, based on his perception of Confucianism’s centrality in Chinese culture and tradition, its close link with the customs and moral standards of Chinese people as well as its function in maintaining the social order and harmony of China, Kang thought the preservation and strengthening of Confucianism as a school of thought was crucial to the preservation and strengthening of China as a nation as well as Chinese people as a race. Such a link was indicated in Kang’s slogan of “preserving the nation, teaching and race” (保國，保教，保種) in his reform movement.

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24. See Shimada Kenji (島田虔次), *Pioneer of the Chinese Revolution: Zhang Binglin and Confucianism* (Stanford University, 1990), P.93, P.101 and Marianne Bastid-Bruguiere (1998), “Liang Qichao and the Problem of Religion 梁啟超與宗教問題”, *Dongfang Xuebao Volume 70* (東方學報京都第 70 冊), P.336

25. See Timothy Fitzgerald (Oxford University Press, 2000), P.30-31/ Chen Huanzhang (陳煥章), *On Confucian Religion 孔教論* (Shanghai Commercial Press, 1912), P.1-5

“Confucian religion” could strengthen Confucianism as a school of thought in several ways. Confucianism was never institutionalised in history. Moreover, due to the civil service examination and scholar-official system of China, Confucian scholars had traditionally been preoccupied with examinations and administrative works while they devoted little time to the preaching of Confucian doctrines. These were obstacles to the spread of Confucian doctrines to ordinary Chinese people. With “Confucian religion”, Confucianism could be institutionalised and Confucian doctrines could be spread to ordinary Chinese people by professional Confucian priests(26).

“Confucian religion” could also popularise Confucianism among ordinary Chinese people by letting them worship Heaven together with Confucius. In Kang’s view, ordinary people were also “sons of Heaven” (“人人皆爲天之子”) and they should be allowed to worship Heaven as their origin. This was a breakthrough from the traditional notion that only the emperor could worship Confucius as the “Son of Heaven”(27).

Kang attempted to adopt “Confucian religion” as the state religion of China again in the early Republican Period. Kang proposed to put “Confucian religion” and “The way of Confucius is the foundation of moral cultivation in national education” (“国民教育以孔子之道为修身大本”) in the Chinese constitution in 1913. He made the proposal again in his open letters to the Chinese president, prime minister and parliamentarians in 1916(28).

Although similar in content, the second attempt was different in context and purposes. I suggest three ways Kang attempted to use “Confucian religion” for cultural and political purposes in the new context.

First, Confucian religion served Chinese cultural conservatives’ attempt to preserve traditional teachings, morals and practices in the early Republican Period.

The Republican government had extensively abandoned traditional teachings, rites and customs while adopting Western ideas and practices after the founding of the republic in 1912. For example, it abandoned the cult of Confucius on the ground that it violated the principle of freedom of belief, and the study of Confucian classics in school because it violated the principle of freedom of thought and speech. Moreover, many radical Chinese intellectuals (e.g. Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 1879-1942) severely criticised traditional teachings, morals and rites as well as people who upheld them in this period(29).

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26. Kong Xiangji (孔祥吉), *Study of the Reform Proposals of Kang Youwei 康有为变法奏议研究* (Liaoning Jiaoyu, 1988), P.247-249

27. *Selected Political and Historical Essays of Kang Youwei* (Zhongshan University, 1988), P.253/ *Completed Works of Kang Youwei Vol.2* (Shanghai Ancient Books, 1990), P.800/ Li Shen (李申), *History of Confucianism as a Religion in China 中国儒教史* (Shanghai Renmin, 2000), P.1038

28. *Political Writings of Kang Youwei* (Zhonghua, 1981), P.960-962

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In response to these phenomena, many Chinese cultural conservatives had a deep sense of crisis for the loss of Chinese culture and tradition, which they thought was a major cause of moral decay in China at that time. Kang was one of these cultural conservatives in the early Republican era. Kang thought that the Republican government's abandonment of traditional teachings and customs as well as its adoption of western practices had led to the spiritual disorientation of Chinese people and was a major cause of moral decay in China at that time. Like other cultural conservatives, Kang had a deep sense of crisis for the diminution of Chinese culture and tradition, which he considered a threat to the continued existence of the Chinese race. He argued that while a race could revive even though the nation was destroyed if its culture and tradition remained (e.g. India and Judea), it would never revive if they were lost (e.g. Latin America). Therefore, if China continued to relinquish its traditional teachings, it would follow the case of Mexico and the result would be worse than the destruction of the nation(30).

Based on such views and his perception of Confucianism as the core of Chinese culture and the national spirit of China (中國之國魂), Kang thought that giving Confucianism an official, legal and constitutional status in republican China could preserve Chinese culture, tradition, nation and race. This was consistent with Kang's idea during his reform movement in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century that preserving the teaching (Confucianism) was crucial to preserving China as a nation and Chinese people as a race, as discussed earlier. Since Confucianism was closely linked with traditional Chinese morals and customs, it could also clarify the customs and moral standards as well as solve the moral problems of China. The fact that many scholars and bureaucrats who upheld traditional teachings, morals and customs in the early Republican era supported the Confucian Association and Confucian Religion Movement also indicates that Confucian religion was used by cultural conservatives as a vehicle to preserve and assert traditional teachings, morals and practices in that period(31).

29. Li Shen (Shanghai Renmin, 2000), P.1075/ See Chen Duxiu, "The statue of Krante 克林德碑" (1918) and "My thoughts on the suicide of Mr. Liang Juchuan 我對梁巨川先生自殺之感想" (1919) in *New Youth Volume 5 No. 5 and Volume 6 No.1* (新青年第5卷第5號, 第6卷1號)
30. *New Youth Volume 6 No.1*/ See "On reviving the soul of China 中國還魂論" (1913) in *Collection of Kang Youwei's Essays Vol. 3* (1925), P.2, *Vol. 7*, P.25 and "Statement for the Journal of China Society" (1912) in *Vol. 8*, P.13-15
31. *Collection of Kang Youwei's Essays Vol. 3* (1925), *Vol. 8*, P.14/ Han Hua (韩华), "Chen Huanzhang and the State Religion Movement in the Early Republican Period 陈焕章与民国初年的国教运动", *Modern Chinese History Studies*, March 2002, P.210

Second, Confucian religion served Kang's attempt to assert Chinese cultural nationalism. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, China continued to be humiliated by foreign aggression and the superiority of Western economic, scientific and military power while it kept failing to strengthen itself through political means (e.g. reforms and revolutions). As Anthony Smith has suggested, cultural nationalism will step in as political nationalism falters in its aims, in order to build up the community's collective cultural resources and to regenerate the moral community of the nation on its own soil. It attempts to assert the innate spiritual superiority of native culture as a means to safeguard the inner dignity of the humiliated and promises a status reversal.

If we apply Smith's idea in the Chinese context, it explains why cultural nationalism emerged in China during this period. I suggest that Kang attempted to use Confucian religion as a form of cultural nationalism to increase Chinese people's confidence in their cultural tradition and overcome their sense of inferiority by asserting the superiority of Confucianism, traditional Chinese teachings and morals. This could refute radical Chinese intellectuals' claim of the superiority of modern Western culture over traditional Chinese culture and resist Western cultural influences (e.g. Christianity). It could also regenerate the moral community of China by re-establishing its moral standards. It was another attempt by Kang to transform China into a "single moral community" and "sacred communion of citizens"(32).

Third, Confucian religion was closely linked with monarchism as well as monarchists' attempt to restore imperial rule in the early Republican Period.

As will be discussed in Chapter 3, Kang believed that the problems of the early Republican Period were due to China's adoption of a political system (a republic) which it was not suitable for, and that adopting constitutional monarchy could solve these problems. Eventually, Kang became a key figure in an abortive attempt to restore the Qing dynasty in 1917. As many Chinese intellectuals in that period (e.g. Chen Duxiu) had pointed out, there was an inseparable link between Confucianism and imperial rule ("孔教與帝制有不可離散之因緣") due to the central role of the emperor in implementing the way of Confucius in politics and the function of the imperial system as the institutional manifestation of Confucian doctrines (e.g. the emperor as the subject of implementing benevolent rule, the Confucian notions of "Honouring the king" and the "Three Bonds" which reinforce the authority of emperor). This indicates that there are inherent links between Kang's attempt to adopt Confucian religion as the state religion and his attempt to reinstate the emperor, to restore the monarchy and Qing dynasty(33).

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32. See Anthony Smith (Polity Press, 2001), P.30, 77/ *Collection of Kang Youwei's Essays Vol. 3*(1925), *Vol. 8*, P.13

33 *Draft of Qing History 清史稿* (Zhonghua, 1977), P.12832/ See Kang's articles "A letter to Xu Shichang 致徐世昌書" (1917) and "Reflections on the republic 共和評議" (1917) in *Political Writings of Kang Youwei* (Zhonghua, 1981), P. 992-995, 1018-1051/ See Chen Duxiu, "Refuting Kang Youwei's letter to the president and prime minister 駁康有為致總統總理書" (1916) and "Restoring the monarchy and Honouring Confucius 復辟與尊孔" (1917) in *New Youth Vol. 3 No.6* and *Vol. 5 No.5*

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I agree with this view because, as discussed before, Kang perceived the important role of “*jiao*” (teaching/ religion) in governing a nation and its inseparable link with politics. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that Kang considered the adoption of “Confucian religion” as state religion as inseparable from, and a precondition of, re-establishing monarchy and imperial rule in China (one of the clauses in an edict Kang drafted for Emperor Pu Yi 溥儀 during the brief restoration of the Qing dynasty in 1917 was to adopt “Confucian religion” as the state religion).

Moreover, there is other evidence which suggests that promotion of Confucian doctrines and the cult of Confucius in the early Republican era were closely associated with the attempt to restore autocratic and imperial rule. For example, this was indicated in Chinese president Yuan Shikai (袁世凱 1859-1916)’s promotion of Confucian doctrines and cult of Confucius. In a presidential decree in 1914, Yuan stated that the cult of Confucius was a traditional rite which should be continued, while he claimed that the doctrines of Confucius were without equal among mankind(34). In the same year (1914), Yuan re-established autocratic rule in China by dissolving the parliament and in the following year (1915), Yuan began to make himself the new emperor of China.

The fact that many key figures of the Confucian Association and Confucian Religion Movement were loyalists to Qing dynasty, monarchists and advocates of constitutional monarchy in the late Qing period further suggests that Kang’s second attempt to adopt Confucian religion as state religion was closely linked with the monarchists’ attempt to restore the Qing dynasty and adopt constitutional monarchy in the early Republican Period(35).

Nevertheless, as will be discussed later, Kang’s proposal was opposed by Zhang Taiyan as well as Chinese intellectuals like Cai Yuanpei (蔡元培 1868-1940), Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao (李大钊 1888-1927) during the New Culture Movement. Eventually, it was rejected by the drafting committee of Chinese constitution in 1917(36).

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34. John K. Shryock, *The Origin and Development of the State Cult of Confucius* (Century, 1931), P.216

35. Han Hua (*Modern Chinese History Studies*, 2002), P.210-212

36. See Huang Kewu (National Taiwan Normal University), P.1/ *New Youth*, Volume 2 No.2, No. 3/ Han Hua (*Modern Chinese History Studies*, 2002), P.201, 205

## 2. Liang Qichao and Zhang Taiyan's distinction between Confucianism and religion and their opposition to adopting "Confucian religion" as state religion

Liang Qichao and Zhang Taiyan represent an opposite set of views to Kang in the re-evaluation of Confucianism in response to the western notion of "religion" and "secular". In contrast to Kang, they drew a sharp distinction between Confucianism and religion; stressing the dichotomy between the sphere of human and god (spiritual), they interpreted "jiao 教" as "teaching" or "education" with no religious implication or connotation while emphasising the secular nature and character of Confucianism's humanistic teaching.

Liang had indicated his view of Confucianism and religion in the article "*Preserving the teaching is not the way to honour Confucius 保教非所以尊孔論*" (1902). Liang perceived religion as "matters related to beliefs, soul, spirit, worship and the next world" which was similar to Kang's interpretation of the western notion of religion as "teachings and beliefs associated with god, deities and afterlife". Liang perceived Confucianism as "the teachings of what human being should be, what human community should be and what nation should be", which was similar to Kang's perception of Confucianism as "the teachings of the human way". The similarities can be explained by Liang's strong intellectual influence by Kang at Ten Thousand Wood Thatched Hall and his close association with Kang during the reform movement(37).

Nevertheless, in contrast to Kang, Liang drew a sharp distinction between Confucianism and religion, based on his perception of their fundamental differences.

First, while Kang tried to undermine the distinction between Confucianism and religion by undermining the dichotomy between the sphere of human and god (spiritual) in Confucianism, Liang perceived Confucianism's focus on the sphere of human (this world) and religion's focus on the sphere of god (spiritual/ afterlife) as their fundamental difference. Liang stated that Confucianism focuses on worldly and national affairs, ethics and morality, with no superstition, no worship and no concern for an afterlife, while religion focuses on superstitions and beliefs, with soul and spirit as its foundation, with worship as its ritual, with renouncing the mundane world as its objective, with nirvana, Heaven and the disaster and fortune of the next world as its ultimate concern(38).

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37. *Selected Works of Liang Qichao 梁啟超選集* (Shanghai Renmin, 1984), P.305, 311/ Philip Huang, *Liang Qichao and Modern Chinese Liberalism* (University of Washington, 1972), P.13/ Chen Pengming (陈鹏鸣), *Evaluation of the Intellectual Thought of Liang Qichao 梁啟超学术思想评传* (Beijing Library, 1999), P.16-18
38. *Selected Works of Liang Qichao* (Shanghai Renmin, 1984), P. 305-306

Second, Liang pointed out a fundamental difference between Confucianism and religion which was not raised by Kang. That is, since the foundation of religion (e.g. Christianity) is built on the faith of believers, it inhibits believers' suspicion, and restricts believers' freedom of thought, as well as rejects other religions and schools of thought. By contrast, since the foundation of Confucianism is built on practice and it is an open system of thought with the spirit of liberalism, it does not inhibit followers' suspicion, restrict believers' freedom of thought and reject other teachings(39).

In my view, Liang's view was based on his influence by liberalism during his exile in Japan. Liang was influenced by Rousseau (1712-1778)'s notion of Social Contract introduced by Nakae Chomin (中江兆民 1847-1901), John Stuart Mill (1806-1873)'s ideas of liberalism and the liberal ideas of Fukuzawa Yukichi (福沢諭吉 1834-1901). These influences were revealed in his writings during this period. For example, in "Preface to *Yinbingshi notes on freedom* 飲冰室自由書序" (1899), Liang quoted John Stuart Mill's saying that "There is nothing more essential to the progress of human beings than the freedom of thought, speech and publication"(40).

This explains why Liang considered Confucianism's liberal spirit and open attitude to be its major differences from religion's (e.g. Christianity's) authoritarianism and conservatism. In his article "On China's religious reform 論支那宗教改革" (1899), Liang stressed that Confucianism is progressive instead of conservative as indicated in the Gongyang notion of "Three Ages 三世說" and it emphasizes equality instead of authoritarianism as indicated in Mencius' notion of "Primacy of the people 民本論"(41).

Kang and Liang's open dispute on the issues of liberty and freedom further indicates that Liang's influence by liberalism was an underlying cause of their different views on the distinction between religion and Confucianism. This was demonstrated in the correspondence between them during Liang's exile in Japan. In a letter to Liang, Kang expressed his discontent with Liang's obsession with the notion of liberty. In response, Liang asserted his conviction of the importance of liberty and freedom to China in his reply to Kang in 1900(42).

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39. *Selected Works of Liang Qichao* (1984), P. 305-6, 309, 312-3

40. See *Special Collection of Yinbingshi Vol.2* (1942), P.1/ Philip Huang (University of Washington, 1972), P.45/ Xia Xiaohung (夏晓虹), "Liang Qichao and Japanese Meiji Culture 梁啟超與日本明治文化" in *Culture: China and the World* (文化: 中國與世界) Vol.5 (Sanlian, 1988), P. 189

41. *Collection of Yinbingshi Vol.3 飲冰室文集之三* (1941), P.58-59

42. See Liang's "Letter to Kang Youwei 致康有為書" (1900) in *Selected Works of Liang Qichao* (1984), P.136/ Xia Xiaohung (Sanlian, 1988), P.189

Finally, while Kang interpreted “*jiao*” as carrying both the meaning of “teaching” and “religion” based on the religious origin and nature of Confucian teachings, Liang interpreted “*jiao*” as “education” without any religious meaning and implication. In an article “*Relation between Buddhism and collective rule 論佛教與群治之關係* (1902), Liang explicitly pointed out that the “*jiao* 教” in “*kongjiao* 孔教” meant “education” (*jiaoyu* 教育) instead of “religion” (*zongjiao* 宗教).

Moreover, while Kang stressed the religious connotation of “*jiao*” based on its important role in governing a nation and its inseparable link with politics due to the religious dynamic in the political order, Liang clearly distinguished politics as the sphere of “this world” from religion as the sphere of “beyond this world” (“政治屬世間法，宗教屬出世間法”)(43).

Liang’s perception of the fundamental differences between Confucianism and religion thus became the foundation of his opposition to Kang’s idea of transforming Confucianism into “Confucian religion”. Moreover, in contrast to Kang’s perception of the crucial role of “Confucian religion” in mobilising Chinese people for the reform movement, strengthening China and transforming it into a modern unified nation, Liang perceived the various negative impacts of “Confucian religion” as state religion on the nation building of China.

First, Liang’s influence by liberalism made him believe that the protection of freedom was vital for protecting both people and nation. For example, Liang stressed the importance of protecting the freedom of people and nation in the article “*The sin of giving up freedom 放棄自由之罪*” (1899) and “*Nation’s right and people’s right 國權與民權*”(1899). Therefore, he was deeply concerned with state religion’s infringement on people’s religious freedom because it would put pressure on people to convert to the state religion(44).

Second, Liang was concerned with state religion’s inhibition of freedom of thought, which he thought was important for China’s development into a modern nation. Influenced by John Stuart Mill’s ideas on the importance of freedom of thought and discussion so that all possible truths could have a hearing and be invigorated by the challenge of conflicting ideas, Liang thought freedom of thought and competition between different ideas are the bases of the progress of civilisation and the world. Therefore, as many doctrines of the world should be brought into China as possible because that would contribute to its development into a modern nation(45).

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43. *Selected Works of Liang Qichao* (1984), P. 308

44. *Special Collection of Yinbingshi Vol.2* (1942), P.23-24, 31

45. Philip Huang (University of Washington, 1972), P.75-77/ See “*On China’ religious reform*” (1899) in *Collection of Yinbingshi Vol.3* (1941), P.58-60

Second, influenced by Fukuzawa Yukichi's notion of enlightened civilisation (*bunmei kaika* 文明開化) and Tokutomi Soho (徳富蘇峰 1863-1957)'s idea of creating a modern social system where each individual would be free and independent while individual liberties and rights must be attained in a modern nation, Liang believed that the spirit of independence and liberty was the key to the power and progress of the nation. Such belief was linked with Liang's idea of renewing Chinese people's national character as the foundation of transforming China into a modern nation (新民說). It was indicated in the article "*Spiritual education is liberal education* 精神教育者自由教育也" (1899) in which Liang claimed that liberal education is the key to creating the independent character of Chinese people and strengthening China. Therefore, Liang thought state religion's inhibition of freedom of thought and its authoritarianism would impair the spirit of liberty and independence and have a negative impact on China's nation building.

Liang's view was reinforced by Fukuzawa's view on the role Confucian notions (e.g. loyalty) and Confucian scholars had played in assisting autocratic rule in history in the articles "*An invitation to learning* 學問の勸め" (1880) and "*Brief thesis on civilisation* 文明論之概略" (1875). Liang cited Fukuzawa's view that Confucian rites and music have contributed to people's submission to rulers in the article "*On tracing the origin of China's weaknesses* 中國積弱溯源論" (1900). Since Liang believed that Chinese people's lack of the spirit of independence, their stress on obedience and fear of authority were the causes of China's humiliation and backwardness (Liang pointed out that Chinese people were used to being slaves under autocratic rule in an article "*On the character of Chinese citizens* 論中國國民之性格" in 1903 and suggested that Chinese people's slave nature was the cause of China's weaknesses in history in his letter to Kang in 1900), it contributes to his perception of the negative impact of Confucian religion as state religion on the building of a modern China.

Moreover, influenced by Fukuzawa's notion of "practical learning" (*jitsugaku* 実学), Liang was convinced that Japanese practical learning enhanced by Western utilitarian values laid the foundation for the success of modernization in Japan. Consequently, he formulated a utilitarian and practical approach to Chinese modernisation. That, together with Fukuzawa's view of Confucianism as empty and useless learning (無用虛學), further undermined Liang's valuation of Confucianism's role in the modernisation of China in the early 1900's(46).

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46. See Hiroko Willcock, "Japanese modernisation and the emergence of new fiction in early 20<sup>th</sup> Century China: A study of Liang Qichao", *Modern Asian Studies*, Volume 29, Issue 4 (Oct 1995), P. 819, 820, 824, 826/ *Special Collection of Yinbingshi Vol.2* (1942), P.35-36/ *Selected Works of Liang Qichao* (1984), P.136, 206-233/ *The Complete Works of Fukuzawa Yukichi Vol.4* 福沢諭吉全集第四卷 (Iwanami Shoten, 1959), P.161, 163/ *Collection of Yinbingshi Vol.5*, P.29, *Vol.14* P.2/ Xia Xiaohung (Sanlian, 1988), P.195-6

Third, Liang thought state religion would restrict intellectual freedom, based on his interpretation of Chinese intellectual history. In Liang's view, China's scholarship and thought was most developed during the Warring States Period (戰國時代 403 B.C.-221 B.C.) when China had profound intellectual freedom. However, after Confucianism was adopted as the state ideology of China in the Han Period, other schools of thought were suppressed. Even within Confucianism, some schools (e.g. the Zhu Xi School) were adopted as orthodoxy while others were rejected as heterodoxy. The stress on adherence to orthodoxy in Chinese intellectual tradition had hindered the progress of Chinese scholarship in history. Therefore, adopting Confucian religion as state religion would hinder both the progress of China's scholarship and the development of Confucianism as a school of thought(47).

Fourth, while Kang thought Confucian Religion could contribute to unifying Chinese people, Liang thought the existence of state religion would lead to religious and political conflicts which would create divisions among Chinese people due to the artificial division between state religion and other religions or schools of thought. Moreover, while Kang thought Confucian Religion could protect China from the imperialist activities associated with Christianity, Liang thought the idea of "preserving the teaching" (Confucianism) through Confucian Religion would lead to direct conflicts with Christianity and provoke diplomatic conflicts with western countries, similar to the Boxer Uprising (義和團) in 1900. Liang also refuted Kang's belief that "Confucian Religion" could play a role in strengthening China similar to the role played by Christianity in the formation of modern Europe by pointing out the declining influence of Christianity in contemporary Europe(48)

Finally, although Liang still identified with Kang's reform movement during his exile in Japan, his political standpoint wavered between pro-republic and pro-constitutional monarchy during this period. For example, in his letter to Kang in 1899, Liang suggested that transforming China into a republic was the only way to save it(49). Since Confucian Religion played a crucial role in Kang's political agenda of strengthening the Qing dynasty and protecting the emperor, I suggest that the shift in Liang's political standpoint contributed to his negative view on Confucian Religion.

47. *Selected Works of Liang Qichao* (1984), P.309/ See "On the general trend of change in Chinese scholarship and thought 論中國學術思想變遷之大勢" (1902) in *Collection of Yinbingshi Vol.7* (1941), P.39, 56-7

48. *Selected Works of Liang Qichao* (1984), P.307-8, 310-1

49. See Liang's "Letter to Kang Youwei 致康有為書" (1899) in *Selected Works of Liang Qichao* (1984), P.113/ Philip Huang (University of Washington, 1972), P.5

Zhang Taiyan, however, re-evaluated Confucianism in a very different manner from Kang and Liang. First, Zhang identified the nature of Confucianism and its followers by tracing the original meanings of the word “*ru* 儒” (the Chinese character which stands for Confucianism, as in “*rujia* 儒家”) in ancient texts. In the article “*The origin of ru 原儒*” (1909), Zhang pointed out the ancient (pre-Confucius) meaning of “*ru*” as “an elite group of priests, shamans and sorcerers in service to the rulers” (“儒者,術士也”/“明靈星舞子與以求雨者謂之儒”). However, the meaning of “*ru*” had been transformed into people associated with education and teaching, e.g. education officials (司徒之官) who assisted rulers in teaching (教化) and people who taught morality and the six arts (六藝) to ordinary people. Zhang stressed that “*ru*” was closely linked with the moral way (道), moral virtue and moral teaching (“儒以道得民”)(50).

Lionel Jensen has suggested that Zhang pointed out the ancient meaning of “*ru*” (which had been used to represent “the School of thought founded by Confucius” since the time of Confucius) in order to clear it of its association with the mythology that had grown up around Confucius and his traditions. This was because Zhang thought the meaning of “*ru*” had been distorted after its association with Confucius. Zhang also thought it was Confucius himself who had initiated the shift of the meaning of “*ru*” from a religious to a secular one, which was a metaphor of the transformation of the focus of Chinese culture from religious to secular one(51).

I agree with Jensen’s view but I suggest that Zhang’s stress on the shift of the meaning of “*ru*” from a religious into a secular one and its close link with education and moral teaching also indicates his perception of Confucianism as a secular moral teaching with no religious implication and connection. As will be discussed later, this is a major basis of Zhang’s sharp distinction between Confucianism and religion.

Second, on the basis of his systematic study of the ancient Chinese schools of thought, Zhang repositioned Confucianism as “one of the schools of thought in ancient China”. By this he meant that Confucianism was one ancient philosophical school among many others (e.g. Taoism 道家, Legalism 法家, Mohism 墨家....etc.) in the same period.

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50. *Selected Political Writings of Zhang Taiyan 章太炎政论选集* (Zhonghua, 1977), P.489-493

51. See Lionel Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism* (Duke University,1997), P.159-161

Zhang's study of ancient non-Confucian thought was influenced by the trend of studying ancient philosophical schools (*zhuzixue* 諸子学) among Chinese intellectuals in the Qing Period. (Following the tradition of the School of Investigation 考証学, many Chinese intellectuals in the Qing Period attempted to investigate and verify the authenticity of the facts in Confucian classics through studying the schools of thought in the same historical period as Confucianism. As a result, the writings of the ancient philosophers were studied as the scholarship of an original group of thinkers during this Period). For example, when Zhang attended the Confucian institute "Gujingjingsha" (詁經精舍) in his youth, he was influenced by his teacher Yu Yue (俞樾 1821-1907), who was famous for the study of ancient non-Confucian philosophies as a means to verify the meanings of Confucian classics(52).

Such a trend had led to an intellectual fashion of comparing the teachings of ancient philosophical schools with those of Confucian classics since the mid-Qing Period. Such a comparison gave rise to the quest for the re-evaluation of ancient philosophical schools since many Chinese intellectuals found a lot of similarities and mutual influences between Confucianism and other ancient schools of thought. The rediscovery of the close relation between Confucianism and other ancient schools of thought during the Qing Period contributed to Zhang's view that they were on an equal level, while Confucianism was only one of the schools of thought in ancient China(53).

Based on such a view, Zhang attempted to recast the status of Confucianism in Chinese people's minds by repositioning it as "one of the schools of thought in ancient China" to support his revolutionary discourse. Zhang wanted to show Chinese people that the predominant position of Confucianism in China since the Han Period was not because of the superiority of Confucian doctrines over those of other ancient schools. It was Zhang's attempt to weaken the ideological foundation of monarchy and imperial rule which he was trying to overthrow.

Third, despite his attempt to undermine the status and image of Confucianism, Zhang considered it part of the "national essence" (*guocui* 国粹) of China and tried to use it as a means to support the revolutionary movement, nation building and to construct the national identity of China.

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52. Jiang Yihua (姜义华), *A Study of the Thought of Zhang Taiyan* 章太炎思想研究 (Shanghai Renmin, 1985), P.15/ Shimada Kenji (Stanford University, 1990), P.91-2/ Zhu Weizheng (朱维铮), *Liang Qichao's Two Works on Qing Intellectual History* 梁启超论清学史二种 (Fudan University Press, 1985), P.49
  53. Wang Fanshen (王凡森), *The Thought of Zhang Taiyan and its Shocking Impact on Confucian Tradition* 章太炎的思想及其對儒學傳統的衝擊 (Shibao wenhua, 1985), P.26-33

As Anthony Smith has pointed out, national identity is constructed by identifying individuals with the distinctive heritage of nations and its cultural elements (e.g. collective memories of great persons, myths of origins, customs and rituals), which represent recurrent elements of collective continuity and difference. That explains why Zhang advocated the “national essence” of China, which included the distinct language, literature, institutions, great men of the past and philosophies of China, as a means to construct Chinese national identity and enhance Chinese nationalism for creating a new Han Chinese nation(54). Since Confucianism was an indigenous philosophy of China, while the distinct rites and customs of China were closely linked with Confucian teachings, Confucianism was regarded by Zhang as an important component of the “national essence” of China. However, while Kang manipulated Confucianism for the mobilization of Chinese people, construction of Chinese national identity and assertion of the distinctiveness of China as the core of Chinese culture, Confucianism was only part of the “national essence of China” which Zhang manipulated for the same purpose.

Similar to Liang, Zhang drew a sharp distinction between Confucianism and religion based on his perception of their fundamental differences.

First, in contrast to Kang’s perception of the religious nature of traditional Chinese teachings and his interpretation of “*jiao*” as carrying both the meaning of “teaching” and “religion”, Zhang interpreted “*jiao*” as “education” without any religious meaning and implication, like Liang. This is indicated in the article “*Against establishing the Confucian religion 駁建立孔教議*” (1913) in which Zhang raised many examples to support his view that the various “teachings”(jiao) of China were not religions (*zongjiao*). For example, Zhang claimed that the “twelve teachings” (十二教) of Zhou were controlled by officials in charge of education and therefore belonged to the category of social education instead of religion. Zhang also pointed out the historical nature of Confucianism as its difference from religion. He thought the essence of Confucius’ teachings was in history (“孔氏之教本以歷史為宗”) while the *Six Classics* were all historical records (六经皆史). As for Buddhism, which had greatly influenced his thought, Zhang thought its essence was in wisdom while its supernatural concerns were not popular among Chinese intellectuals. Zhang also thought it was the nature of Chinese people to attend to political matters, daily needs and works while they were not concerned with things beyond this life and things which transcend experience(55).

54. Anthony Smith (Polity Press, 2001), P.18-9/ Peter Zarrow, *Anarchism and Chinese Political Culture* (Columbia University, 1990), P.38/ *The Life and Scholarship of Zhang Taiyan* (Sanlian, 1988), P.175, 183/ *The Intellectual Biography of Zhang Taiyan 章太炎学术年谱* (1996), P.91, 99/ Jiang Yihua (Shanghai Renmin, 1985), P.425
55. *Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan Volume 4 章太炎全集第4卷* (Shanghai Renmin, 1985), P.194-5, 371/ *Selected Works of Zhang Taiyan 章太炎选集* (1981), P.359/ Shimada Kenji (Stanford University, 1990), P.65

Second, in contrast to Kang's perception of the unity between the sphere of human and god (spiritual) in Confucianism and traditional Chinese teachings, Zhang perceived the dichotomy between them. In a letter "*Reply to Tiezhen 答鐵箏*" (1907), Zhang pointed out that the ethical teachings of China all stressed self-reliance instead of reliance on external power ("依自不依他"), while Chinese people disliked reliance on external power (Zhang attributed this psychology of Chinese people to Confucius' demystification of Heaven and negligence of god and deities). Chan (Zen 禪) became the most popular Chinese Buddhist sect because its stress on one's own mind instead of relying on god and deities matched with the characteristics of Chinese ethical teaching and the psychology of Chinese people. Zhang perceived that the whole Confucian tradition, including the teachings of Confucius, Mencius (孟子 390 B.C.-305 B.C.), Xunzi (荀子 298 B.C.-238 B.C.), Zhu Xi (朱熹 1130-1200) and Wang Yangming (王陽明 1473-1529), focused on one's mind instead of god and deities ("自貴其心, 不以鬼神為奧主") while none of the famous philosophers in ancient China (e.g. Confucius, Mencius, Laozi, Zhuangzi 莊子, Hanfei 韓非....etc.) were concerned with matters related to god, deities and spirits(56).

Zhang's perception of the autonomous nature of traditional Chinese ethical teachings and their independence from god and deities was similar to some western scholars' perception of morality's difference from religion, based on its independent and autonomous nature. For example, Oman has pointed out that moral personality and action mean absolute independence, moral responsibility requires absolute independence and the distinguishing characteristic of the moral person is autonomy, which contrasts with religion that requires absolute dependence on God. Yu Yingshi also perceived "internal transcendence" (內在超越), i.e., the belief in one's mind as the ultimate source of moral value, as a characteristic of Chinese culture, which contrasts with the "external transcendence" (god as the ultimate source of moral values) of western culture(57).

Moreover, while Kang perceived Heaven as the source of the religiousness of Confucianism, Zhang refuted the traditional notion of a mythical and transcendental Heaven with modern astronomy in the article "*On viewing the sky 視天論*" (1899). Zhang also refuted Kang's perception of Heaven as the origin of human beings and perceived it only as "way and nature" ("天之云者, 猶曰道曰自然而已"). He further denied the link between Heaven and the religiousness of Confucianism by claiming that Confucius and Confucians considered Heaven as non-mythical ("儒以天為不明")(58).

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56. *The Intellectual Biography of Zhang Taiyan 章太炎学术年谱* (Shanxi Classical, 1996), P.111/ *Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan Volume 4* (Shanghai Renmin, 1985), P. 369-374
  57. Michael Oakeshott, *Religion, Politics and the Moral Life* (Yale University Press, 1993), P.43/ Yu Yingshi (余英時), *Modern Interpretation of Chinese Intellectual Tradition 中國思想傳統的現代詮釋* (Jiangsu Renmin, 1989), P. 36-40
  58. *Selected Political Writings of Zhang Taiyan* (Zhonghua, 1977), P.120-1, 125-127

Third, since Zhang perceived Confucianism as a secular moral teaching independent of god and deities, he considered it distinctly different from religion which he perceived as a moral teaching mixed with mythical elements. Zhang considered religion only as a means to elevate people's moral standard; it would eventually be replaced by moral teaching after morality had been established. Such a view was indicated in Zhang's claim that a major criterion for evaluating a religion is its contribution to people's morality. It was also indicated in his idea of promoting morality through religion as a means to save the nation and race because moral decay was the underlying reason for the destruction of nation and race. Zhang believed that morality could not advance without religion and unity of a nation could not be achieved without morality(59).

Although many Western scholars have also pointed out the close link between religion and morality (e.g. the revelation of morality as the command of god and the perception of moral laws as absolute, eternal and unchanging given by transcendent God)(60), Zhang's view was different because he thought moral teaching was the only essence and function of religion, the mythical elements of religion were only for reinforcing its ethical teachings and religion would eventually be replaced by moral teaching. In my view, Zhang's view was a result of his critical attitude towards the notion of god, Christianity and mythical elements, with which religion was associated.

Zhang's critical attitude towards the Christian notion of god was indicated in the article "On no God 無神論" (1906) in which he pointed out the contradictions in the Christian notion of god. He argued that if all matters were created by a creator, god itself must also be created by a creator and there would be an infinite number of creators according to that logic. Zhang also pointed out the contradiction between the Christian belief that "god is almighty, good and knows everything" and the notion of devils. That is, if devils were created by god, that means god deliberately created evil beings for the temptation of humans, which is contradictory to god's good nature. He also questioned why god needs to use devils to test humans if he is almighty and knows everything(61).

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59. See Zhang's article "On the creation of religion 建立宗教論" (1906) in *Minbao Volume 9 民報第9號* (1957), P.9, Michael Gasster, *Chinese intellectuals and the Revolution of 1911: The birth of modern Chinese radicalism* (University of Washington, 1969), P.207 and Zhang's "Speech at the welcoming party of Chinese students in Tokyo 東京留學生歡迎會致辭" (1906) in *Selected Political Writings of Zhang Taiyan* (Zhonghua, 1977), P.272
60. R.M. Hare, *Essays on Religion and Education* (Clarendon Press, 1992), P.43/ Norman Bull, *Moral Education* (Routledge, 1969), P.89/ Michael Oakeshott, *Religion, Politics and the Moral Life* (Yale University Press, 1993), P.42
61. *Minbao Volume 8*(1957), P.1-12

Zhang's arguments were similar to those made by anti-Christian Chinese intellectuals since the 17<sup>th</sup> Century (In a collection of anti-Christian writings entitled "*An anthology of writings exposing heterodoxy 破邪記*" compiled in 1640, a writer questioned how god could permit Adam and Eve to commit a sin so contaminating that it was transmitted to all subsequent generations if he was really as good and powerful as the Catholics claimed). Zhang also criticised the Christian notion of soul in an article "*Refutation of the notion of spiritual self and constitutionalism 驳神我憲政说*" (1908) by questioning the Christian belief that soul could exist independently after the death of the physical body. Zhang also perceived the close link between Christianity and Western imperialist activities in China. In the speech he gave in Tokyo in 1906, Zhang claimed that many Chinese people who adopted Christianity were those who tried to make use of the power of Christian churches to bully their fellow countrymen. In an article "*Worrying about religion 憂教*" (1902), Zhang explicitly pointed out that Christianity was a vehicle for Western countries to advance in the East and take away land from China(62).

Zhang also criticised the notion of god in general. For example, he criticised the idea of selecting an object from the world as god, fabricating something as god and worshipping god as a real object.

Finally, Zhang was critical of all mythical elements. As mentioned before, Zhang refuted the notion of a mythical and transcendental Heaven. Zhang also argued that the reason why Confucius alone qualified as the sage *extraordinaire* past and present was that he was the first to forge a pathway to a world of reason from the ancient world of magic. That further supports Zhang's view that Confucianism was distinctly different from religion which he perceived as a moral teaching mixed with mythical elements(63).

Zhang's perception of traditional Chinese teachings as education instead of religion, his perception of Confucianism as a secular moral teaching with no connection with god, deities and mythical elements, his denial of the mythical and transcendental nature of Heaven and his view of religion as moral teaching combined with mythical elements thus formed the foundation of his sharp distinction between Confucianism and religion. It explains why he opposed any attempt to put the notion of "Confucianism" and "religion" together, as in Kang's idea of "Confucian religion". That can be traced to 1897 when Zhang worked at Kang's *Journal of Current Affairs* (*Shiwubao 時務報*)(64).

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62. See Paul A. Cohen, "The anti-Christian tradition in China", *Journal of Asian Studies*, Volume 20, Issue 2 (1961), P.171/ *Minbao Volume 21* (1957), P.41/ *Selected Political Writings of Zhang Taiyan* (1977), P.272-3/ *Qiu Shu (Book of raillery) 癸書* (Huaxia Publishing House, 2002), P.224

63. See "*On the creation of religion*" (1906) in *Minbao Volume 9* (1957), P.11, 22 and "*The true view on Confucianism 儒術真論*" (1899) in *Selected Political Writings of Zhang Taiyan* (1977), P.120-1

64. *The Intellectual Biography of Zhang Taiyan* (Shanxi Classical 1996), P.47

Zhang also opposed “Confucian religion” as state religion based on revolutionary and nationalist discourse, i.e. its negative impacts on the revolutionary movement and nation building of China.

First, since Zhang thought none of the teachings (*jiao*) of China belonged to the category of religion, he argued that there had never been a religion or state religion in China. Moreover, as mentioned before, Zhang thought Chinese people had no concern for religion. Therefore, Zhang considered establishing a state religion which all Chinese people must follow and putting it in the constitution a foolish idea(65).

Second, due to the anti-traditional nature of modern Chinese nationalism, one of the goals of Chinese revolutionaries in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century was to remove the restraints imposed by Confucian tradition on Chinese people. Therefore, Zhang opposed Kang’s attempt to impose Confucian doctrines on Chinese people as religious dogma(66).

Third, since Confucius had been associated with state ideology and imperial rule in Chinese history as the symbol of Confucianism, Zhang thought it necessary to relieve Chinese people from the constraints imposed by the reverence of Confucius in order to advocate revolutionary ideas among them. As will be discussed in Chapter 2, Zhang also tried to support his revolutionary discourse by undermining the image of Confucius. Therefore, he opposed “Confucian religion” which promoted the worship of Confucius and transformed him into a religious symbol.

Moreover, based on his negative view of the morality of Confucius and Confucian followers (e.g. his claim that Confucius had taken materials from Lao Zi by inappropriate means and his criticism of Confucian followers’ obsession with political career and worldly success), Zhang thought Confucianism was not the suitable state religion of China because the major function of state religion was to promote morality and elevate the moral standard of people(67).

Finally, Zhang continued to oppose Kang’s proposal to adopt “Confucian religion” as state religion in the early Republican Period based on the revolutionary discourse on anti-monarchism, anti-authoritarianism and republicanism and due to the inherent links between Confucian religion, Confucian Association, worship of Confucius, monarchists, monarchism as well as the attempt to restore monarchy, imperial rule, autocratic rule and Qing dynasty discussed before.

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65. *Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan Volume 4* (1985), P.194-198

66. See George Wei, *Chinese Nationalism in Perspective : Historical and Recent Cases* (Greenwood Press 2001), P.106 and Li Tse-hou (李泽厚), *The Life and Scholarship of Zhang Taiyan* (1988), P.198-199

67. See “*On various ancient schools of thought 論諸子學*” (1906) in *Selected Works of Zhang Taiyan* (1981), P.369-370. In the article, Zhang traced the origin of Taoism to officials in charge of historical records and claimed that the materials of the *Six Classics* were taken from Lao Zi by Confucius/ Jiang Yihua (Shanghai Renmin, 1985), P.170

We can find evidence which indicates that Zhang also believed in such associations. For example, when Zhang attended the “Society of National Learning” (國學會) in 1913, he claimed that there was an “other purpose” behind people who were promoting “Confucian religion” (Zhang wrote “*Against establishing the Confucian religion*” in the same year). Since Zhang was a major advocate of overthrowing the monarchy and its autocratic rule before the 1911 Revolution while he supported the republican form of government and opposed the restoration of monarchy in the early Republican era (Zhang severely attacked Yuan Shikai’s attempt to become an emperor in a letter to him in 1915), this explains why he continued to oppose adopting “Confucian religion” as the state religion of China in that period(68).

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68. *Selected Works of Zhang Taiyan* (Shanghai Renmin, 1981), P.582-583/ *The Intellectual Biography of Zhang Taiyan* (Shanxi Classical 1996), P.204

## **Chapter 2: Reappraisal of Confucius and reconstruction of his images**

Since Confucius has been closely identified with Confucianism as its founder, symbol and icon in Chinese history, Kang, Liang and Zhang's re-evaluation of Confucianism, their reflection on its nature and essence led to their reappraisal of Confucius and reflection on his identity. Consequently, their discourse on whether Confucianism was a religion and whether it had any religious nature and dimensions was closely linked with their discourse on whether Confucius was a religious figure (e.g. god, deity and religious master), whether he had any religious identity, and whether Confucius should be deified and transformed into a religious symbol. Moreover, since reconstruction of national tradition involves reinterpretation of the symbols that compose the distinctive heritage of a nation, Chinese intellectuals' reconstruction of the images of Confucius, who was a major national symbol of China, was also a crucial part of their reconstruction and new understanding of Chinese tradition.

In this chapter, I will argue that contemporary Chinese intellectuals and governments' reappraisal of Confucius, their reconstruction of his images and contest of variant representations (religious, human and historic) of Confucius served their attempts to manipulate the images of Confucius for various nationalist, political and cultural purposes in the modern context.

### **1. Kang Youwei's image of Confucius as a religious master and his attempt to deify Confucius**

As Anthony Smith has pointed out, historicist inventions of mythology and symbolism were crucial in nation formation and the spread of nationalism, while nationalists would forge symbols and myths to meet the needs of the modern masses<sup>(1)</sup>. Therefore, Kang's construction of the sacred, religious and mysterious images of Confucius, including that of religious master, demigod, deity, agent of Heaven and saviour of mankind, as well as his attempt to transform Confucius into a religious symbol and object of worship were closely linked with his attempt to manipulate the images of Confucius for constructing and justifying his reform ideologies and discourse as well as mobilising Chinese people for his reform movement.

As discussed in Chapter 1, Kang perceived the link between human and Heaven as the foundation of the religious origin and nature of Confucianism's "teaching of the human way". Therefore, in his attempt to deify Confucius and transform him into a religious symbol, Kang perceived Confucius's close link with Heaven as the foundation of his religious identity and status.

Kang claimed that since Heaven lamented the sufferings of people, Confucius was born into the world with the spiritual powers of the "Black Emperor" (黑帝). Confucius formulated his teachings for saving people from sufferings on behalf of Heaven while he received orders from Heaven to reform the drawbacks of existing systems and lay down doctrines for future generation. Therefore, Confucius' words and acts were Heaven's words and acts.

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1. Anthony Smith (Polity Press, 2001), P.80-81

In the article “*Dong’s study of Spring and Autumn Annals 董氏春秋學*” (1893), under the subtitle “*Spring and Autumn reform 春秋改制*”, Kang claimed that Confucius was the “mouth of Heaven” (天口). That is, since Heaven cannot speak and act, it lets Confucius speak and act for it. Therefore, Confucius’ systems and doctrines were those of Heaven based on its calculation. Confucius stressed benevolence because he received orders from Heaven and his teaching was originated in Heaven, which was benevolent (“孔子本天,以天爲仁人,受命於天,取仁於天”/ “天,仁也”)(2).

Kang’s perception of the mythical origin of Confucius, his close link with Heaven, his role as the agent of Heaven and his mission of saving people from sufferings on behalf of Heaven thus form the basis of a series of sacred images Kang associated with Confucius as a religious figure and symbol, i.e. demigod, deity, sacred king (聖王) and saviour of mankind.

Moreover, since Kang classified Confucianism as a religion equivalent to the “teaching of god”, he perceived Confucius as a founder of a religious tradition. In his 1898 memorial to the emperor “*Please honour Confucianism as the state religion, set up the ministry of religion, make Confucius’ year of birth as the year of counting and abolish indecent worship 請尊孔聖爲國教,立教部教會,以孔子紀年而廢淫祀折*”, Kang explicitly identified Confucius as the religious master (*jiaozhu 教主*) of China(3).

Why did Kang deify Confucius and stress his religious identity based on his close link with Heaven?

First, Kang’s perception of the sacredness and religious identity of Confucius based on his close link with Heaven can be understood from a religious interpretation of the Confucian notion of “sage” (聖人).

Rodney Taylor has pointed out that the sage penetrates the way of Heaven and discloses it to humankind while his primary motivation is to bring the way of humankind into accord with the way of Heaven. Taylor has suggested that Confucius advocated a return to the moral virtue of the ancient sage kings because he believed this was the way of Heaven. It was on the basis of such a belief that Confucius perceived the religious dynamic in the ancient political order and attempted to reconnect Chinese people to that religious system. Moreover, since the saint, as the holy person of a given tradition, appears to share a common role and characteristics with the Confucian sage, Taylor has suggested that the sage is the full embodiment of sacredness and the holy person of the Confucian tradition as the epitome of its religious dimension(4).

2. *Complete Works of Kang Youwei (康有为全集) Vol.2* (Shanghai Ancient Books, 1990), P.774-775, 802/ Fang Delin, *The Crisis and Transformation of Confucianism: Kang Youwei and Contemporary Confucianism 儒学的危机与嬗变: 康有为与近代儒学* (Wenjin, 1992) P.179/ Shimada Kenji (1990), P.99
3. *Selected Political and Historical Essays of Kang Youwei* (Zhongshan University, 1988), P.253-254
4. Rodney L. Taylor, *The Religious Dimension of Confucianism* (State University of New York, 1990), P. 8, 11, 47, 49-51

According to Taylor's religious interpretation of the Confucian notion of sage, a sage acquired his sacredness and religious character through acting as the intermediary between human and Heaven, linking the ways of human with the ways of Heaven and reconnecting human beings to the religious dynamics in the socio-political order by restoring ways of virtue to them.

As discussed in Chapter 1, Kang thought Confucius formulated the "teaching of the human way", which was originated in and based on the ways of Heaven, to teach people the proper conduct, behaviours and relations for the maintenance of social order and the well-being of human beings. This indicates that Kang perceived Confucius as a sage who acted as the intermediary between human and Heaven by linking the ways of human with the ways of Heaven. I suggest it was on such a basis that Kang stressed Confucius' religious identity and constructed a series of sacred images associated with him.

Second, as Shimada Kenji has suggested, Kang's various mysterious, sacred and religious images of Confucius were influenced by the image of a mysterious, prophetic and religious Confucius "discovered" by the scholars of the New Text School (to which Kang belonged) in their investigation of the Confucian classics during the Qing Period(5).

Third, as Li Shen has suggested, Kang's view of the close link between Confucius and Heaven was consistent with Confucius' perception of himself (e.g. Confucius' claim that Heaven had given virtue to him and his interpretation of many events in his life as the will of Heaven)(6).

I agree with Li's view because Confucius had explicitly stated the link between himself and Heaven in statements like "Heaven begat the virtue that is in me" and "Since Heaven is not yet ready to destroy this cause of truth, what can the men of Kuang do to me?" ("天之未丧斯文也,匡人其如予何")(7).

Fourth, Kang's deification of Confucius was a crucial step in his transformation of Confucianism into an organised religion. As Fang Delin has suggested, by stressing the close link between Confucius and Heaven while using the religious rite of worshipping Confucius together with Heaven as a concrete indication of such a close link, Kang was able to reinforce the dignity and authority of Confucius as the founder of Confucianism(8). Since Kang classified Confucianism as a religion, this could also assert Confucius' status as the founder of religion. By stressing that the words and doctrines of Confucius were those of Heaven, Kang was also able to establish the religious authority of the teachings of Confucius and transform them into the religious dogmas of "Confucian religion".

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5. See Shimada Kenji (Stanford University, 1990), P.93

6. See Li Shen (Shanghai Renmin, 2000), P.1029

7. See Yang Bojun (楊伯峻), *Translation and Commentary of Analects* 論語譯注 (Zhonghua, 1984), P.88 and Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton University, 1952), P.54

8. See Fang Delin (Wenjin, 1992), P.179-180

As discussed in Chapter 1, Kang wanted to transform Confucianism into “Confucian Religion” based on the organisation and practices of Christianity in order to function as its counterpart as well as to prove to the Christian missionaries that it was the indigenous “religion” equivalent to Christianity. Therefore, by constructing an image of Confucius as a saviour of mankind and agent of Heaven, who was sent by Heaven to the world to save people from sufferings, Kang could create a religious image and status of Confucius equivalent to that of Jesus in Christianity.

Moreover, while the emperor had traditionally been a focus of worship of Chinese people as the “Son of Heaven” (*tianzi* 天子) who ruled China with the Mandate of Heaven (*tianming* 天命), the cult of emperor was on the decline in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century with the demise of the monarchy. By stressing the close link between Confucius and Heaven as well as his sacred role as the agent of Heaven, Kang attempted to establish Confucius as the new focus of worship of Chinese people. This was consistent with Kang’s idea of using the worship of Confucius together with Heaven in “Confucian religion” as a means to unite Chinese people. By applying Durkheim’s definition of religion as “a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things which unite people into one single moral community”, we can interpret Kang’s deification of Confucius as his attempt to transform Confucius into the “sacred thing” of “Confucian religion” in order to unite Chinese people into a unified nation.

Nevertheless, there are problems with Kang’s deification of Confucius and his attempt to transform Confucius into a religious symbol and object of worship.

Although there had been cults of Confucius throughout Chinese history, Confucius was only revered as a “sacred teacher of antiquity” (至聖先師) and “sage” (聖人) while there had never been any attempt to worship Confucius as a religious master, god or deity by the state, intellectuals and ordinary people. Therefore, Kang’s religious and mysterious images of Confucius deviated not only from the historical Confucius but also from the image of Confucius held by the Chinese state, intellectuals and ordinary people in history. That explains why few people during and after Kang accepted the religious and mysterious images of Confucius constructed by him(9).

There was also a limit to Kang’s attempt to deify and mystify Confucius. This was indicated in his memorial to the emperor in 1898 in which Kang praised Confucius as the only religious master in the world who did not rely on supernatural ways to make people follow his teachings. Kang also stressed Confucius’ humanness and suggested that he was a “genuine religious master of the civilised world” (真文明世之教主)(10).

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9. See Fang Delin (Wenjin, 1992), P.180

10. *Selected Political and Historical Essays of Kang Youwei* (1988), P.254/  
Ōnogawa Hidemi (小野川秀美), *A Study of 1911 Revolution 辛亥革命の研究*  
(Chikuma, 1978), P.10/ Shimada Kenji (Stanford, 1990), P.99

Finally, Kang's sacred, religious and mysterious images of Confucius were linked with his image of Confucius as institutional reformer to justify his reform discourse, ideology and movement.

The image of Confucius as an institutional reformer was indicated in Kang's book "*A Study of the Institutional Reforms of Confucius 孔子改制考*" (1898) published right before the 1898 Reforms. In the book, Kang refuted the traditional image of Confucius as a conservative and traditionalist who tried to revive the way of ancient sage kings (e.g. Yao and Shun). Instead, Kang put forward a new image of Confucius as an institutional reformer who had received an order from Heaven to reform in order to correct the drawbacks of the Zhou (周) system and to establish new system for later generations(11).

There are several ways the image of Confucius as an institutional reformer could serve Kang's reform discourse, ideology and movement.

First, by combining the sacred, religious and mysterious images of Confucius with the image of Confucius as a reformer, Kang attempted to construct a myth that Confucius was a sacred religious figure sent by Heaven to undertake reforms for people. Such a myth was consistent with Kang's perception of Confucius as the intermediary between human and Heaven who linked the human way with the ways of Heaven in order to restore moral virtue and well being to humankind. Kang's perception of the link between Confucius' religious identity, his sacredness and his role as reformer was also indicated in his claim that Confucius' identity as religious master and sacred sage king (神明聖王) was built on his writing of the *Six Classics*, which Kang believed were for reform purposes(12).

Moreover, by synthesizing Confucius as a symbol of reform with Confucius as a religious symbol and object of worship in "Confucian religion", Kang was again able to combine his reform movement with his religious movement.

Based on this myth, Kang attempted to make a simile between himself and Confucius by claiming that he was also undertaking reforms on behalf of Heaven while his words and acts were also those of Heaven (Kang's titles of "Sage Kang 康聖人" and "Sage Nanhai 南海聖人", his image as a sage among his disciples and Kang's identification of himself as the true follower of Confucius indicate such a simile). That could add a sacred and messianic meaning to his reform movement.

Second, as Arita Kazuo has suggested, Kang tried to make Confucius the spiritual core and symbol of his reforms. Since Confucius still enjoyed a high estimation among Chinese people (especially the intellectuals) at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, that could give Kang's reforms a high estimation among Chinese people(13). Also, by asserting Confucius' image as a reformer, Kang could refute the traditional image of Confucius as a conservative and traditionalist, which was unfavourable to his attempt to advocate institutional reforms.

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11. See "*A Study of the Institutional Reforms of Confucius 孔子改制考*" in *Complete Works of Kang Youwei Vol.2* (1990), P.775

12. *Selected Political and Historical Essays of Kang Youwei* (1988), P.180

Third, based on the image of Confucius as an institutional reformer, Kang claimed that the *Six Classics* were written by Confucius for reform purposes while the “*Spring and Autumn Annals* 春秋” (the history of the Spring and Autumn Period) was exclusively written for institutional reforms. Based on that claim, Kang reinterpreted Confucius’ praise of the way of Yao (堯), Shun (舜) and King Wen (文王) in the *Six Classics* as his tactic of advocating institutional reform through reference to a legendary period of prosperity in antiquity (托古改制). For example, Kang claimed that the narratives of the rules of Yao, Shun and King Wen in the *Six Classics* were invented by Confucius to illustrate the ways of a democratic emperor(14).

With the image of Confucius as an institutional reformer and the new interpretation of his writings, Kang was able to avoid the conservatives’ accusation of his breaking away from the traditions laid down by sages and ancestors, which was considered heterodox and unacceptable in imperial China, by claiming that he was merely following the tradition of institutional reform laid down by Confucius (In “*A study of the philosophers founding teachings for reforms at the same time* 诸子并立创教改制考”, Kang claimed that there was a trend of commoners advocating reforms at the time of Confucius. Kang’s reinterpretation of the Confucian notion of “Three Ages” and “Great Unity” as ideas of reform also reinforced the image of Confucius as a reformer). Moreover, by depicting Confucius as an institutional reformer, Kang could argue that any true Confucian (like himself) should also be an institutional reformer and that undertaking institutional reforms in China conformed with the way of Confucius(15).

By asserting Confucius’ image as the creator of Confucian Classics and founder of Confucian doctrines, Kang could also refute the Ancient Text (古文) School’s claim that the *Six Classics* were the works of ancient sages like the Duke of Zhou (周公) while Confucius merely compiled and narrated the classics. Kang thought the Ancient Text School’s claim had distorted and downgraded the image of Confucius to a transmitter of classics and traditional notions, which shifted the supreme personality of Confucianism to the Duke of Zhou while Confucius was seen only as the propounder of his way. Consequently, Confucius was regarded as a “teacher of antiquity” (先師) instead of a “religious master and sage king who reformed institutions and established doctrines (改制立法之教主聖王) after Han(16).

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13. Arita Kazuo (有田和夫), *Study of the Ideological Structure of Late Qing* 清末意識構造の研究 (Kyuko Shoin, 1984), P.36
  14. See *Selected Political and Historical Essays of Kang Youwei* (1988), P.179-185/ *Complete Works of Kang Youwei Vol.2* (1990), P.773/ Arita Kazuo (1984), P.39
  15. Ma Hongling (马洪林), *The Biography of Great Confucians: Kang Youwei* 大儒列传: 康有为 (Jilin Wenshi 1997), P.11-12/ Jiang Yihua, *Enlightenment Without Rationality* 理性缺位的启蒙 (Shanghai Sanlian, 2000), P.121/ Joe Chou Huang, *The Political Theories of Kang Liang School and Their Application to the Reform Movement in China, 1895-1911* (Southern Illinois 1963), P.50
  16. *Selected Political and Historical Essays of Kang Youwei* (1988), P.161 & 180/ Jiang Yihua (Shanghai Renmin, 1985), P.442/ Shimada Kenji(1990), P.87
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Since Kang tried to transform Confucius into the symbol of his reforms by constructing an image of Confucius as a religious master and sage king who undertook reforms on behalf of Heaven, it was important for him to refute the Ancient Text School's claims about Confucius.

Moreover, it served Kang's attempt to weaken the authority of the Ancient Text School. After the destruction of the Confucian classics by the First Emperor of Qin (秦始皇 259 B.C.-210 B.C.), "New Text classics" (今文經) were written in the early Western Han Period (西漢 202 B.C.-23 A.D.) based on the memories of Confucian scholars while "Ancient Text classics" (古文經) were "discovered" in the late Western Han Period. Ever since then, the followers of the New Text School had been accusing the Ancient Text classics of being forgeries while the followers of the Ancient Text School had been accusing the New Text classics of being inaccurate and containing superstitious elements. Since Kang was a follower of the New Text School, he believed that the Ancient Text Classics were forgeries and that the doctrines of the New Text School came from Confucius(17).

Kang claimed that Liu Xin (劉歆 46 B.C.-23 A.D.) had deliberately fabricated the Ancient text classics in the late Western Han Period to obscure Confucius' "subtle words and profound meaning" (微言大義) in the classics in order to assist Wang Man (王莽 45 B.C.-23 A.D.)'s takeover of Han's rule (Wang Man was a relative of the Han's court who had taken over its rule and Liu Xin was his official). In his book "*A Study of the Forgeries of the Xin Dynasty 新學偽經考*" (1891), Kang claimed that Liu made use of the historical fact of the First Emperor of Qin's burning of Confucian classics and execution of Confucian scholars as an excuse to fabricate the Ancient Text classics and question the accuracy of the New Text classics. Based on analysis of historical events and records, Kang refuted the claim that Confucian scholars could not remember the correct content of the *Six Classics* and no copy of the *Six Classics* could be found after the fall of Qin. Kang pointed out that there were only a few years' lapse between the burning of the classics and the fall of Qin dynasty, there were collections of Confucian classics by Qin government officials which were later appropriated by Han while only some Confucian scholars were executed in the Qin Period(18).

Since the Ancient Text School was the orthodoxy in late 19<sup>th</sup> century China (Ancient Text classics were considered orthodox and standard Confucian texts by the School of Investigation in the Qing Period), the weakening of the authority of the Ancient Text School helped to relieve Chinese people from the ideological constraints of Confucian orthodoxy and to deconstruct the past oriented, conservative and pro-establishment traditional Confucianism which was unfavourable to reform. This paved the way for Kang's construction of his reform discourse and ideologies by reinterpreting Confucian notions and constructing a new Confucianism (As will be discussed in Chapter 3, Kang reformulated the Gongyang notion of "Three Ages" of New Text School as an ideology of reforms while he blamed Liu Xin's obscuring Confucius' "subtle words and profound meaning" with the Ancient text classics as the reason for China's remaining in the lowest stage of the "Three Ages").

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17. Kung-Chuan Hsiao, *A Modern China and a New World: Kang Yu-wei, Reformer and Utopian, 1858-1927* (University of Washington, 1975), P.48, 66

Finally, Kang's images of Confucius as an institutional reformer, founder of Confucian doctrines and creator of Confucian classics had led to his images of Confucius as an "uncrowned king" (素王) and "king of culture" (文王).

Kang considered as a "king" (王) someone whom everybody follows ("天下歸往謂之王"). Since everybody follows the ways, teachings and systems laid down by Confucius, Confucius was an "uncrowned king". Kang believed that the influence of Confucius as an "uncrowned king" was even greater than real kings since all the doctrines and systems of China followed Confucius and the impact of Confucius' teaching had lasted for many generations(19).

Kang further asserted the greatness in Confucius' identity as an "uncrowned king" by pointing out that although Confucius had the capability to rule the country, he did not become a king but attempted to reform the systems for future generations by advocating the ideas of institutional reforms in his writings (e.g. the *Spring and Autumn Annals*) as a commoner(20).

Since Kang's image of Confucius as an "uncrowned king" was based on his influence on Chinese culture, Kang also referred to Confucius as a "king of culture" in his writings ("文王者,孔子也"). Kang's perception of Confucius' crucial role in Chinese culture was indicated in his citation of the phrase "Isn't the culture with me (Confucius) after the death of King Wen?" ("文王既沒,文不在茲") from the *Analects*. Such a perception was consistent with Kang's view of the central role of Confucianism in Chinese culture. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, Kang also tried to link Confucius' influence on Chinese culture with his idea that level of culture was a major criterion for differentiating different stages of historical evolution(21).

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18. *Selected Political and Historical Essays of Kang Youwei* (1988), P.65-70/ Arita Kazuo (1984), P.37/ Li Zehou (李泽厚), *Study of the Thought of Kang Youwei and Tan Sitong 康有为谭嗣同思想研究* (Shanghai Renmin, 1958), P.142-143
  19. *Selected Political and Historical Essays of Kang Youwei* (1988), P.161
  20. Ma Hongling, *The Biography of Great Confucians: Kang Youwei* (1997), P.8
  21. *Complete Works of Kang Youwei Vol.2* (1990), P.775/ Yang Bojun, *Translation and Commentary of Analects* (Zhonghua, 1984), P.88
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## 2. Liang Qichao's images of Confucius as a great human and his opposition to the deification of Confucius

Since Liang was intellectually under Kang's influence before his exile to Japan in 1898, his images of Confucius before then were very similar to Kang's. For example, in his article "*Introduction to a study of the forgeries of the Xin dynasty* 新学偽經考叙" (1897), Liang stated that Confucius was as sacred as Heaven and earth ("孔子神聖與天地參") while he was regarded as a king by scholars in the Western Han Period. Influenced by Kang, Liang thought that because of Liu Xin's forgeries of the Ancient Texts Classics and his claim that the *Spring and Autumn Annals* was only a historical record, Confucius was regarded only as a historian by scholars since the Eastern Han (東漢) Period. Moreover, since Confucians after Song (宋) emphasized moral cultivation, Confucius' ways of running the state in the *Six Classics* were neglected and he was only regarded as a moral teacher by scholars(23).

Nevertheless, Liang started to oppose Kang's deification and mystification of Confucius after 1898.

Liang's refutation of the religious identity and deification of Confucius was based on the same premise as his distinction between Confucianism and religion, i.e., the dichotomy between the sphere of human (this world) and the sphere of god (spiritual/afterlife). Therefore, while Kang perceived the sacredness and religious identity of Confucius based on his close link with Heaven, Liang denied any link between Confucius and god (deity/supernatural being). While Kang stressed Confucius' identity as religious master, Liang stressed the differences between Confucius and a religious master. Instead, Liang asserted the "humanness" of Confucius and his image as a "great human".

First, Liang pointed out the importance and contribution of Confucius. Like Kang, Liang perceived the crucial role of Confucius and his teaching in Chinese culture. In the article "*Biography of great people in the world: Confucius* 世界偉人傳: 孔子" (1920), Liang suggested that China would not have been the same in the last two thousand years without Confucius since Confucius' teaching had a great impact on Chinese people and culture. In the article "*What are the actual benefits of Confucian doctrines to today's Chinese people* 孔子教義實際裨益於今日國民者何在" (1915), Liang stated that Confucius represented Chinese culture and his teachings helped to bind Chinese people together(24)

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23. *Collection of Yinbingshi Vol.2* 飲冰室文集之二 (1941), P.61-62

24. *Special Collection of Yinbingshi Vol. 36* 飲冰室專集三十六 (1941), P.65/  
*Collection of Yinbingshi Vol.33* 飲冰室文集三十三 (1941), P.60

In my view, Liang's stress on the importance and contribution of Confucius to China in these two articles reveals his perception of the important role of Confucius' teaching in modern China, which was a reaction to radical Chinese intellectuals' claim that the way of Confucius was incompatible with modern life in the 1910's. For example, in "*What are the actual benefits of Confucian doctrines to today's Chinese people*" (1915), Liang stressed the importance of Confucius' teaching in cultivating the moral character(人格) of the citizens of modern China. Based on the example of England, Liang believed that cultivation of citizens' moral character could strengthen a nation since individuals were the foundation of a nation and cultivation of individuals' moral character would enhance the quality of a nation. Therefore, Liang argued that Confucius' teaching would contribute to modern Chinese people and strengthen China while the future social and education policies of China should also be based on Confucian doctrines in order to make them popular and effective(25).

Moreover, Liang stressed the significance of Confucius' teachings to the entire modern world. Liang argued that while things are different between present and past, East and West, human psychology and instincts are always similar. Since Confucius had a deep insight into these issues, his moral philosophy was applicable to all places at all times. (Liang thought none of the great educators from the East and West in the past or present had analysed human character to the extent Confucius did). Therefore, the importance of Confucius' "teaching of the human way" would increase as modern societies became more complex while his moral philosophy would occupy an important position in the moral education of the modern world. Liang's belief that Confucius' teachings were universally applicable and should be made universal was already indicated in one of the school regulations of the Shiwu Academy (时務學堂) where he taught in 1897. It asked the students to reveal the modern universal significance of Confucian doctrines and systems by verifying them with modern ideas and matters as well as propagating the teachings of Confucius to the entire world. Liang also cited the phrases "His fame overspreads the Middle Kingdom and extends to all barbarous tribes" and "All who have blood and breath honour and love him" from the "*Doctrine of the Mean*" to support his view that the teachings of Confucius were not merely for the governing of one state but for the governance of the entire realm ("孔子之教,非徒治一國,乃以治天下")(26).

Liang's stress on the universality of Confucius' teachings and their modern significance served to transform Confucianism into a modern universal ideology, assert Chinese cultural nationalism and promote Chinese culture to the West in different historical periods.

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25. See Chen Duxiu, "*The way of Confucius and modern life 孔子之道與現代生活*" (1916) in *New Youth Vol. 2 No.3/ Collection of Yinbingshi Vol. 33* (1941), P.65-67/ *Selected Works of Liang Qichao* (Shanghai Renmin, 1984), P. 311

26. *Collection of Yinbingshi Vol. 33* (1941), P.60, 65/ See "*The school regulations of Hunan Shiwu Academy 湖南时務學堂學約*" (1897) and "*Preserving the teaching is not the way to honour Confucius*" (1902) in *Selected Works of Liang Qichao* (1984), P. 58, 311/ Shimada Kenji (1990), P.104, 106

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Liang's stress on the modern universal significance of Confucius' teaching and his urge to propagate them to the entire world in 1897 were part of his and Kang's attempt to transform Confucianism into a modern universal ideology at that time. In the 1910's, this served to promote Chinese cultural nationalism by asserting the innate superiority of Chinese culture, which he thought Confucius represented and greatly contributed to. It was similar to Kang's attempt to use Confucian religion as a means to promote Chinese cultural nationalism in the same period (Liang was one of the persons who petitioned the Chinese parliament to adopt Confucian religion as state religion in 1913).

In 1920, it served as Liang's means to promote Chinese culture to the West. Based on the view that the devastation of Europe during the First World War had exposed the weaknesses of modern Western culture, some Western scholars held a pessimistic view about the future of Western culture and suggested that Eastern culture could be used to revive it. Liang was influenced by such a view, which was reinforced by his observation of the social problems of Europe (e.g. conflicts between capitalist and working class as well as social inequality) during his trip there between 1919 and 1920. Consequently, Liang formulated an idea of promoting Chinese culture as a means to supplement Western culture in order to form the foundation of a new world civilisation. Liang's combination of the image of Confucius as a symbol of Chinese culture and the image of Confucius as a great person of the world whose teaching was universally applicable served to support such an idea(27).

Second, Liang stressed the greatness of Confucius as an educator, scholar and politician by pointing out that Confucius was more than just an educator, scholar and politician. Liang argued that while the ideas and methods of an educator were limited to a certain society in a certain period, Confucius' education was applicable to all societies at all times. Confucius was also the best public teacher of Chinese people, one who had been revered as "the model teacher for ten thousand generations" (萬世师表). Confucius was more than a politician because his ideas of politics were applicable not only to China in his time but also to China for two thousand years after him as well as to China in the future. Confucius was more than a scholar because Confucius did not only acquire knowledge but he was also the origin of knowledge(28).

Third, Liang stressed the greatness of Confucius as an "ordinary human". In the article "*Confucius 孔子*" (1920), Liang stressed that Confucius was an ordinary human whose words and deeds were all within the scope of ordinary human lives which everybody can imitate. Liang thought that this was a major characteristic which made Confucius different from religious masters like Jesus and Mohammad.

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27. Han Hua (*Modern Chinese History Studies*, 2002), P.193/ See "*Reflections on the trip to Europe 歐游心影錄*" (1920) in *Selected Works of Liang Qichao* (1984), P.718-721, 725, 731-33/ Li Longmu, *Intellectual History of the May Fourth Period 五四时期思想史论* (Fudan University, 1990), P.375-378
28. See "*Biography of great people in the world: Confucius*" in *Special Collection of Yinbingshi Vol. 36* (1941), P.66
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Liang also praised Confucius' life-long devotion to learning and his accumulation of knowledge through hard work. Moreover, Liang considered Confucius a person with compassion whose acts were driven by his consideration for other fellow human beings. Influenced by the idea of liberalism and his view that Confucianism was an open system with a liberal spirit, Liang also claimed that Confucius was a person who respected freedom of thought very much while there was not a single word against other people or teachings in his writings(29).

Fourth, based on his human representation of Confucius, Liang refuted the image of Confucius as a religious master. In "*Preserving the teaching is not the way to honour Confucius*" (1902), Liang raised many examples of religious masters in Chinese history like Zhang Daoling (張道陵 34-156), who founded the famous Chinese Taoist sect "The Way of the Celestial Master 天師道" (Zhang combined the role of sage ruler and religious leader by establishing in the Eastern Han Period an independent state in Sichuan 四川 based on Taoist ideology). Liang explicitly stated that Confucius did not belong to that category(30). Since Liang refuted the religious identity of Confucius based on the distinction between Confucianism and religion, I suggest that Liang's view that Confucius did not belong to the category of religious master was based on his distinction between Confucianism and a religious sect like "The Way of the Celestial Master".

Liang also strongly opposed Kang's attempt to make Confucius a counterpart of foreign religious masters (e.g. Jesus) because he thought Confucius was very different from them. As mentioned before, Liang thought Confucius was different from Jesus because Confucius was an ordinary human whose words and deeds were within the scope of ordinary human lives. Unlike Jesus, Confucius had never made use of supernatural power and miracles as means to attract followers and strengthen their faith in his doctrines. Moreover, Confucius had never claimed himself to be a deity or "son of god". Therefore, Liang considered Kang's attempt to twist the real face of Confucius for the sake of constructing an image of him as a religious master in the imitation of Jesus senseless and useless, and not the right way to honour Confucius(31).

Moreover, Liang thought the notion of "religious master" was not enough to describe Confucius because Confucius was *more* than a religious master. That is, while the influence of a religious master was limited to his followers, Confucius had influenced all Chinese people, including those who had never read his writings(32).

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29. Ibid., P.56, 58-62

30. *Selected Works of Liang Qichao* (1984), P.306/ Isabelle Robinet, *Taoism: Growth of a Religion* (Stanford University, 1997), P.55

31. *Collection of Yinbingshi Vol.33* (1941), P.61-62/ *Selected Works of Liang Qichao* (1984), P.306

32. *Special Collection of Yinbingshi Vol.36*(1941), P.65

Finally, based on his perception of the dichotomy between the sphere of human and the sphere of god (deity/ spirit), Liang opposed Kang's deification of Confucius, his image of Confucius as a deity or demigod and his perception of Confucius' link with Heaven as the source of his sacredness and religious identity. Liang explicitly stated that Confucius was a human and he denied Confucius's link with Heaven, god, deity and spirit (“孔子,人也,先聖也,先師也,非天也,非鬼也,非神也”)(33).

In my view, Liang's position was also based on his perception of the negative impact of deifying Confucius on his image and status. As Arnold Toynbee has suggested, man is not God and cannot make himself God. Therefore, philosophers' attempts to attain a godlike self-sufficiency are not attainable either individually or collectively. Toynbee also claimed that Chinese philosophers were able to avoid the spiritual pitfalls of their Indian and Greek counterparts by “keeping their feet on the ground”(34). That explains why Liang stressed the humanness of Confucius as the foundation of his greatness and denied his religious identity.

Moreover, as Shimada Kenji has suggested, Liang's contact with Western scientific theories while he was in Japan contributed to his opposition to the supernatural elements in Kang's images of Confucius(35).

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33. *Selected Works of Liang Qichao* (1984), P.306

34. See Arnold Toynbee, *An Historian's Approach to Religion* (Oxford, 1979), P.66-67

35. See Shimada Kenji (Stanford University, 1990), P.107

### 3. Zhang Taiyan's image of Confucius as a great historic figure and his evaluation of Confucius' contribution to Chinese history

In contrast to Kang's religious representation and Liang's human representation of Confucius, Zhang made a historic representation of Confucius by constructing the images of Confucius as a great historic figure of China.

First, Zhang perceived Confucius as a fine historian (“仲尼, 良史也”). In the article “*Correcting Confucius 訂孔*” (1902), Zhang compared Confucius to other great historians in Chinese history like Si Maqian (司馬遷 135 B.C.-93 B.C.), who wrote the famous history book “*Shiji 史記*” (*Historical Records*)(36).

Zhang's image of Confucius as a fine historian was influenced by his reinterpretation of Confucianism and Confucian texts from a historical angle. As discussed in Chapter 1, Zhang perceived history as the core of Confucius' teachings while the *Six Classics* were all historical records. Based on such a view, Zhang thought Confucius had contributed to the tradition of history writing in China by writing the *Spring and Autumn Annals* since it was the first chronological history with detailed records of events in China. Because of Confucius' contribution, Chinese people were able to know the past well. Consequently, even though China was frequently conquered by foreign tribes in history, it was always able to recover its independence(37).

Nevertheless, while Zhang stressed Confucius' contribution to history writing in China, his view that the *Six Classics* were all historical records indicated that he thought Confucius only compiled and narrated the *Six Classics* as a historian. That refuted Kang's image of Confucius as the creator of Confucian classics and his claim that Confucius had expressed his ideas of reform and established the system for later generations through the *Spring and Autumn Annals*(38).

In my view, there are academic and political reasons behind this. As discussed before, by asserting the image of Confucius as the creator of Confucian Classics, Kang tried to refute the Ancient Text School's claim that the *Six Classics* were the works of ancient sages while Confucius was only a compiler and narrator of the classics, in order to weaken the authority of Ancient Text School. Therefore, as a follower of the Ancient Text School, Zhang tried to use the image of Confucius as a fine historian who had compiled and narrated the *Six Classics* as historical records to defend the Ancient Text School's position. This could also refute Kang's accusation that the Ancient Text School had deliberately distorted and downgraded the image of Confucius.

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36. *Selected Political Writings of Zhang Taiyan* (Zhonghua, 1977), P.183

37. *Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan Volume 4* (1985), P.196, 371

38. Jiang Yihua, *The Study of the Thought of Zhang Taiyan* (Shanghai Renmin, 1985), P.445-446

Also, while Kang claimed that Liu Xin had forged the Ancient Text classics and downgraded the image of Confucius, Zhang refuted that by praising Liu Xin as a great historian comparable to Confucius (“孔子死,名實足以侂者,漢之劉歆”)(39).

Moreover, from the point of view of a historian, Zhang thought Kang’s claim had deviated from historical facts and this would have a negative impact on the image of Confucius. Zhang thought that since Confucius had already made a substantial contribution to China and the Chinese people by compiling and narrating the *Six Classics*, there was no need to exaggerate his greatness as the creator of the *Six Classics* while ignoring the contribution of other ancient sages (e.g. the Duke of Zhou)(40).

Politically, since Zhang belonged to the revolutionary movement after 1900, his refutation of Kang’s claim that Confucius had expressed his ideas of reform through the *Spring and Autumn Annals* could weaken both Kang’s reform discourse and his attempt to use Confucius as a symbol of reform.

Second, Zhang perceived Confucius as a great philosopher. Zhang thought Confucius had expressed deep philosophical thoughts through his words in the *Analecets* (*lunyu* 論語) and the *Book of Changes* (*yijing* 易經) which had greatly influenced Chinese people for more than two thousand years.

However, due to his view that Confucianism was only one of the schools of thought in ancient China, Zhang only placed Confucius on par with other ancient Chinese philosophers. That is, he considered Confucius no more than one of the great philosophers in ancient China.

Third, Zhang perceived Confucius as a great educator and scholar who had contributed to China by making the knowledge of ancient China accessible to common people. Since all the knowledge was controlled by officials in ancient China and it was very difficult for commoners to access knowledge (e.g. knowledge of past events), Confucius’ narration and compilation of the *Six Classics* had helped common people gain access to knowledge. Confucius had also inspired other scholars to follow his example of spreading knowledge among common people. That is why Zhang considered Confucius the “father of learning” of China.

Moreover, Zhang thought Confucius’ spreading of knowledge to common people had a great and long lasting impact on Chinese society. In the feudal society of ancient China, power was concentrated in the hands of a few aristocrats who had received education and had access to knowledge. However, with the spread of knowledge to common people, common people were also able to occupy high official positions. In Zhang’s view, that contributed to the decline of the aristocracy and the feudal social system of ancient China. In the long run, Zhang thought it also helped to reduce social hierarchy and increase the social mobility of Chinese society as well as establish the tradition of selecting officials based on education in China(41).

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39. *Selected Political Writings of Zhang Taiyan* (1977), P.180

40. Jiang Yihua, *A Critical Biography of Zhang Binglin* 章炳麟评传 (Nanjing University, 2002), P.328-329

41. *Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan Volume 4* (1985), P.197

Zhang's images of Confucius as a great historian, philosopher, educator and scholar as well as his high appraisal of Confucius' contribution to Chinese history became the basis of his perception of Confucius as a great man of the past in China, i.e., part of the "national essence of China". Since national identity is constructed by identifying individuals with the distinctive heritage of nations and its cultural elements, which include the collective memories of great persons, Zhang's construction of the image of Confucius as a great man of the past in China was a crucial process in his construction of the national identity of modern China.

Nevertheless, despite his image of Confucius as a great historic figure of China, Zhang did make negative remarks about Confucius in his writings. For example, in "*Correcting Confucius*" (1902), Zhang explicitly stated that Confucius was inferior to Mencius (孟子) and Xunzi (荀子), the two main philosophers of Confucianism besides Confucius, in morality ("孟荀道术皆躡绝孔氏"). As discussed before, Zhang criticised Confucius for taking materials from Lao Zi by inappropriate means in "*On various ancient schools of thought*" (1906) (Based on that, Zhang claimed that Confucius' knowledge came from Lao Zi). Zhang also made negative remarks about Confucian followers (e.g. their obsession with political career and worldly success) in the same article. In his speech at the welcoming party of Chinese students in Tokyo in 1906, Zhang claimed that Confucius lacked courage since he never attempted to unite with the common people to overthrow the aristocrats although he tried to compete with them. Also, although Confucius wrote words against the aristocrats in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, these were never put into action(42).

In my view, this was an attempt by Zhang to lower Chinese people's estimation of Confucianism in order to weaken the ideological foundation of the monarchy and imperial rule, as a means to support his revolutionary discourse. Therefore, these remarks did not really reflect a negative image of Confucius on the part of Zhang. The fact that Zhang stopped and even regretted these negative remarks on Confucius in his later years (the 1920's) further indicates this point. As Jiang Yihua has pointed out, since Zhang's intellectual activities were so closely tied with his political activities, although he made negative remarks on Confucius when he was advocating political revolution in China, he stopped and regretted these remarks when he was out of the centre of politics and became politically conservative(43).

Finally, similar to Liang, Zhang opposed Kang's deification of Confucius, his image of Confucius as a religious master and deity, his association of mythical elements with Confucius and his perception of the religious identity of Confucius based on his link with Heaven

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42. *Selected Political Writings of Zhang Taiyan* (1977), P.180, 272/ *Selected Works of Zhang Taiyan* (1981), P.369-370/ Shimada Kenji (Stanford, 1990), P.115/

Jiang Yihua (Shanghai Renmin, 1985), P.445-6

43. Jiang Yihua (Shanghai Renmin, 1985), P.650-651

First, based on his perception of the dichotomy between the sphere of human and the sphere of god (deity/ spirit) as well as his historic representation of Confucius, Zhang argued that the transformation of Confucius into a religious master would distort the true image of Confucius and his real status in history. Zhang also pointed out that Confucius was traditionally revered by teachers and students in China as a great teacher and a “model teacher for ten thousand generations”, just as Lu Ban (鲁班) was revered by carpenters in China as a model carpenter. Therefore, if Confucius was worshipped as a religious master as Kang suggested, Lu Ban should also be worshipped as a religious master(44).

Second, while Kang perceived Confucius’ close link with Heaven as the source of his divinity and religious identity, as discussed in Chapter 1, Zhang refuted the notion of a mythical Heaven and the notion of Heaven as the origin of things. Zhang perceived Heaven only as “way and nature” and he thought Confucius himself considered Heaven as non-mythical (“按仲尼所以凌駕千聖者，獨在以天爲不明及無鬼神二事”). Such a view was consistent with Zhang’s attempt to remove the constraints of Confucian doctrines on Chinese people. As Jiang Yihua has suggested, by refuting the divinity of Confucius and stressing his identity as a human, Zhang was able to break through the traditional intellectual constraints imposed by the words and doctrines of Confucius(45).

Third, based on Zhang’s perception of the religion-secular dichotomy, Kang’s religious representation of Confucius contradicts Zhang’s perception of the secular nature of Chinese culture and Confucius’ role in secularising Chinese culture. Kang’s perception of the religious identity of Confucius, deification of Confucius and association of Confucius with supernatural and mythical matters contradicts with Zhang’s view that Confucius had contributed to secularizing and humanising Chinese culture by shifting its focus from the matters of gods and spirits to human affairs. Such a view was consistent with his argument that Confucius initiated the shift of the meaning of “*ru*” from a religious to a secular one, which was a metaphor of the transformation of Chinese culture from a religious into a secular one discussed before. It was also consistent with Zhang’s praise of Confucius’ contribution to revealing the true condition of the world by neglecting the issues of Heaven, god and spirits(46)

Moreover, the images of Confucius as demigod and deity and the mythical elements associated with Confucius also contradict Zhang’s critical attitude towards mythical elements, the notion of god and his attempt to relieve Chinese people from the constraints of the mystical elements in tradition, as discussed before.

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44. See “*Against establishing the Confucian religion*” (1913) in *Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan Volume 4* (1985), P.195-8/ Jiang Yihua (Shanghai Renmin, 1985), P.591, 651

45. See “*The true view on Confucianism*” (1899) in *Selected Political Writings of Zhang Taiyan* P.120-1, 127/ Jiang Yihua, *A Critical Biography of Zhang Binglin* (2002), P.354

46. *Selected Political Writings of Zhang Taiyan* (1977), P.120-1/ Jiang Yihua, *The Study of the Thought of Zhang Taiyan* (1985), P.448 and *A Critical Biography of Zhang Binglin* (2002), P.321-323

Fourth, as a follower of the Ancient Text School, Zhang opposed Kang's mythical and religious images of Confucius since these were based on the image of Confucius as a mysterious, prophetic and religious figure developed by New Text School scholars in the Qing Period. Also, influenced by the Ancient Text School's approach of finding out the real meaning of Confucian texts by investigating their words (訓詁), Zhang stressed the principle of "seeking the truth" (求是) in scholarship. Therefore, he opposed Kang's idea of "using scholarship for practical application" (致用), as revealed in Kang's manipulation of the content of Confucian texts in order to create the images of Confucius as a religious master and institutional reformer for achieving his various practical purposes(47).

Finally, based on his anti-Qing revolutionary discourse, Zhang opposed Kang's deification and transformation of Confucius into a religious symbol because it was closely linked with Kang's attempt to transform Confucius into a symbol of reform, to justify his reform discourse and to transform Confucianism into "Confucian religion" for strengthening the Qing dynasty. Similarly, Zhang continued to oppose Kang's deification of Confucius in the early Republican Period because, as discussed in Chapter 1, the "Confucian religion", of which the worship of Confucius as a religious master was a major element, was closely associated with Kang and the monarchists' attempt to revive the monarchy and imperial rule in that period.

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47. Shimada Kenji (Stanford University, 1990), P.120, P.115/ Chen Pingyuan (陈平原), *The Establishment of Modern Chinese Scholarship: With Focus on Zhang Taiyan and Hu Shi* 中国现代学术之建立: 以章太炎, 胡适之为中心 (Beijing University, 1998), P.34-39

#### 4. Other images of Confucius in Contemporary China

Various images of Confucius were constructed by contemporary Chinese intellectuals and governments during and after the time of Kang, Liang and Zhang. By comparing these images with those of Kang, Liang and Zhang, we can discover the changing appraisal of Confucius in contemporary China as well as understand how the image of Confucius continued to be manipulated for different political and cultural purposes.

First of all, there was an increase in the reverence of Confucius by the Chinese government in the last years of Qing. This was due to its attempt to reinforce traditional Confucian doctrines after the abolition of the Civil Service Examination in 1905, using the reverence of Confucius as a means to strengthen imperial rule. The "Imperial Regulations for Schools" of 1904 required students' daily prayer to the wooden altar of Confucius while sacrifices were offered to Confucius in Spring and Autumn. The "Imperial Educational Guidelines" promulgated by the Ministry of Education in 1906 further stated that loyalty to one's sovereign and reverence for Confucius were intrinsic to Chinese education.

We can find similarities between the ways the late Qing government revered Confucius and the ways Kang and Liang constructed the images of Confucius. For example, similar to Kang's assertion of the sacredness of Confucius and his identity as a "sacred sage king", the Qing government described Confucius as "the most holy former master" and "the sage" in the 1904 school regulations. In a memorial of 1907, the Ministry of Education proposed to elevate the status of sacrifices offered to Confucius at the Confucian temples to that of national sacrifices, so that ceremonies at the Confucian temples would be like those of Heaven and Earth, which was very similar to Kang's idea of worshipping Confucius together with Heaven. The 1906 "Imperial Educational Guidelines" viewed Confucius as "a sage esteemed by all the people in the world" also in a way very similar to Liang's image of Confucius as a great man of the world whose teaching had universal significance for the entire modern world(48).

Nevertheless, in the same period, there were also attacks on Confucius by Chinese revolutionaries attempting to undermine the image of Confucianism as a means to promote political revolution in China and overthrow the Qing dynasty. For example, in an issue of "*New Century 新世紀*" (a periodical published by Chinese anarchists in Paris) in 1908, an article claimed that since the Chinese government had used the cult of Confucius to reinforce its autocratic rule, Chinese people must carry out a "Confucian Revolution" in order to remove the "Confucian poison" before political revolution could be carried out. There is reason to suggest that these attacks on Confucius were influenced or inspired by Zhang's negative remarks on Confucius in his writings during this period, since Zhang was closely associated with Chinese anarchists in Japan like Liu Shiwei (劉師培 1884-1919) and Zhang Ji (張繼 1882-1947)(49).

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48. Shimada Kenji (1990), P.135-136/ Glen Peterson, *Education, Culture and Identity in Twentieth Century China* (University of Michigan, 2001), P.199

49. Shimada Kenji (1990), P.137-139/ Peter Zarrow, *Anarchism and Chinese Political Culture* (Columbia, 1990), P.46-47

These attacks on Confucius were more direct, explicit and anti-Confucian than Zhang's. This is because, as discussed before, despite Zhang's attempt to undermine the image of Confucius to justify his revolutionary discourse, he still appraised Confucius' contribution to Chinese history highly, while perceiving Confucius as an important element of "the national essence of China" (However, the attacks on Confucius were still limited in scale in this period. In only one article in any issue of "New Century" was Confucius mentioned by name and attacked)(50).

At the same time, there were Japanese intellectuals who made high appraisals of Confucius in this period (the late Meiji Period). An example was Kanie Yoshimaru (蟹江義丸 1872-1904) who wrote the book "*A Study of Confucius 孔子研究*" in 1905. Sueoka Hiroshi (末岡宏) has suggested that the images of Confucius in Kanie's book influenced those in Liang's writings(51).

I agree with Sueoka's view because we can find many similarities between the images of Confucius in "*A Study of Confucius*" and those of Liang. For example, in the introduction to the book, Japanese philosopher Inoue Tetsujiro (井上哲次郎 1855-1944) depicted Confucius as a great philosopher with great personality who could only be matched by Buddha and Jesus in human history. He also stressed that although Confucius was a Chinese, he was a spiritual master revered by all people in the world. Inoue's appraisal of Confucius was very similar to Liang's image of Confucius as a "great human" and "great man of the world" whose "fame overspreads the Middle Kingdom and extends to all barbarous tribes" while "all who have blood and breath honour and love him". Both Inoue and Liang tried to construct an image of Confucius as a universal philosopher whose teaching was applicable to people of the entire world. Inoue's image of Confucius as a model of educator unequalled in the world was similar to Liang's image of Confucius as the best public teacher of Chinese people, whose method of education was applicable to all societies at all times(52).

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50. See Shimada Kenji (Stanford, 1990), P.137, 140

51. See Hazama Naoki (狭間直樹), *Liang Qichao: Influences by Contemporary Western Thought and Meiji Japan 梁啓超: 西洋近代思想受容と明治日本* (Misuzu, 1999), P.181-183

52. Kanie Yoshimaru (蟹江義丸), *A Study of Confucius 孔子研究* (Tokyo Kinkodo, 1905), P.1-3 / *Collection of Yinbingshi Vol.33* (1941), P.65 / *Special Collection of Yinbingshi Vol.36* (1941), P.65-66

There are also similarities between Kanie and Liang in their appraisal of Confucius' personality. For example, both gave a high appraisal of Confucius' attitude towards learning. As mentioned before, Liang praised Confucius' life-long devotion to learning and his accumulation of knowledge through hard work. Similarly, in the section "Confucius' personality: his life of learning 孔子の性格: 知的生活" of his book, Kanie praised Confucius for his strong desire to learn from his youth until his old age (e.g. Confucius' desire to learn the way of changes at the age of 50). Kanie also pointed out Confucius' claim that his knowledge was not inborn but was acquired through love of learning ("我非生而知之者, 好古敏以求之者也") while even Yao and Shun were not sages with in-born knowledge to indicate Confucius' emphasis on acquiring knowledge on one's own initiative. Moreover, both Liang and Kanie highly praised Confucius' compassion. While Liang considered Confucius a person with compassion whose acts were driven by his compassion towards other people, Kanie praised Confucius for his deep compassion towards his friends and disciples in the section "Confucius' personality: his emotional life 孔子の性格: 情的生活"(53).

Moreover, Kanie was similar to Liang and Zhang in stressing the humanness of Confucius and depicting him as a great human instead of a deity. As Sueoka Hiroshi has suggested, Kanie was influenced by Inoue Tetsujiro's image of Buddha as a human being in his book "*Biography of Shakyamuni 释迦牟尼伝*" (1902), which was in turn influenced by the trend to depict Jesus as a human in Europe at that time(54).

However, why did Inoue Tetsujiro and Kanie Yoshimaru give such a high appraisal of Confucius?

In the case of Inoue Tetsujiro, I suggest it is due to his high regard of Confucian doctrines. For example, Inoue highly regarded the Japanese "Imperial Rescript on Education" (*kyoiku chokugo* 教育敕語) promulgated in 1890, which stressed Confucian values like loyalty and filial piety. Inoue thought the Rescript on Education constituted a "state religion" for modern Japan and used it as the basis for attacking Christianity during the Meiji Period. Inoue also praised the Neo-Confucian Wang Yangming (Ōyomei 王陽明)'s notion of "the unity of knowledge and action" (*zhixingheyi* 知行合一). Some Japanese intellectuals in the late Meiji Period also considered Inoue's depiction of Confucius as a model of Japanese national morality in "*A Study of Confucius*" as his attempt to advance statism (国家主義) in Japan (Inoue was an advocate of statism during the Meiji Period)(55).

As for Kanie Yoshimaru, the introduction and biography in "*A Study of Confucius*" indicate that he had pursued the mission of spreading the ways of ancient sages since he was young. Moreover, Kanie was influenced by Inoue Tetsujiro's view of Confucius when he was under Inoue's supervision of his research(56).

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53. *Special Collection of Yinbingshi* 36 (1941), P.60-61/ Kanie Yoshimaru (1905), P.210-224
  54. Hazama Naoki (1999), P.182-183
  55. Sharon H. Nolte, "National Morality and Universal Ethics: Onishi Hajime and the Imperial Rescript on Education", *Monumenta Nipponica*, Volume 38, Issue 3 (1983), P.285/ Hazama Naoki (1999), P.180
  56. Kanie Yoshimaru (1905), P.1-3

Since “*A Study of Confucius*” was first published in 1905, when Liang was heavily exposed to the influences of Japanese intellectuals, while his various writings on Confucius were written in the 1910’s and 1920’s, I think it is reasonable to suggest that the similarities between Liang’s images of Confucius in his writings and those of Inoue Tetsujiro and Kanie Yoshimaru were due to their influence.

The criticism of Confucius by radical Chinese intellectuals intensified in the 1910’s when they severely attacked traditional customs, rites and practices as well as authoritarianism, monarchism and imperial rule, with which they thought Confucius’ teachings were closely associated (this will be further discussed in Chapter 4).

For example, in an article “*Evaluation of Confucius 孔子平議*” (1916) published in “*New Youth 新青年*”, a leading journal for attacking traditional thoughts and values as well as advocating new ideas in China in the 1910’s, Yi Baisha (易白沙 1886-1921) criticised Confucius for contributing to the tradition of authoritarianism in China. Yi argued that while Mohism stressed that the emperor was restrained by Heaven (which would reward and punish him based on his acts) and Legalism stressed that the emperor was restrained by laws, Confucius did not mention any restraints on the authority of the emperor and he stressed that the emperor and Heaven were one (君與天為一體). Yi also raised Confucius’ inhibiting his disciples from challenging him (e.g. Confucius’ scolding of his disciples Zaiwo 宰我 and Zilu 子路 for challenging him) and his killing of Shao Zhengmao (少正卯) for competing with his teaching as evidence of Confucius’ authoritarianism.

Yi also pointed out the ambiguity and inconsistency in Confucius’ teaching. For example, while Confucius refused to answer questions concerning god and deity, he mentioned sacrifices to god and deity. Moreover, Yi thought the Confucian notion of “dying for the cause of benevolence” (殺身成仁) was only an empty slogan. Therefore, compared with religionists’ death for faith and Mohists’ death for the cause, Yi considered Confucius too pragmatic(57).

Finally, in response to Kang’s “Confucian Religion Movement”, Yi opposed the deification of Confucius and the attempt to use the cult of Confucius as a means to elevate people’s moral standard. Yi argued that people’s morality should depend on themselves instead of Confucius. Moreover, he thought the more extravagant the rites offered to Confucius, the more people’s customs and morals would be corrupted. Like Zhang, Yi was against the mystical and sacred elements associated with Confucius as well as the exaggeration of his ability, e.g. the claim that Confucius had foreseen modern civilisation or that he had invented the ancient civilisation and language of China(58).

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57. *New Youth (新青年) Volume 1 No.6*

58. *Ibid.*

Another Chinese intellectual who criticised Confucius during this period was Li Dazhao, another leading intellectual during the New Culture and May Fourth Movements. Like Yi, Li stressed Confucius' link with authoritarianism. In a 1917 article entitled "*Confucius and Constitution 孔子与宪法*", Li stated that Confucius was the symbol of the authoritarian rule of emperors in Chinese history. Based on this, Li stressed the incompatibility between Confucius and a modern constitution which guaranteed people's freedom, and he opposed putting "the way of Confucius" in the constitution(59).

Nevertheless, we should note that Li only criticised Confucius as a symbol of authoritarianism and authoritarian rule, not Confucius himself. In his article "*Natural ethical view and Confucius 自然的伦理观与孔子*" (1917), Li stated that what he attacked was Confucius as a symbol of authoritarian rule constructed by Chinese emperors in history and the spirit of authoritarian rule it represented, rather than Confucius as a historical figure. Li thought Confucius could have devised a new teaching suitable for modern society if he had lived in the modern world(60).

If we compare Yi and Li's images of Confucius with those of Kang, Liang and Zhang, we find that there are two distinct differences between them.

First, radical Chinese intellectuals in the 1910's stressed Confucius as a symbol of authoritarianism and imperial rule. For example, Yi Baisha criticised Confucius' contribution to the tradition of authoritarianism in China while Li Dazhao attacked Confucius as a symbol of authoritarian rule constructed by emperors. However, we cannot find any direct association between Confucius and authoritarianism in Kang, Liang and Zhang's writings. Such an association was also contrary to Liang's view that Confucianism is an open system of thought possessing the spirit of liberalism which does not inhibit followers' scepticism or restrict their freedom of thought

Although Zhang had made negative remarks on Confucius in his writings as a means to undermine authoritarianism, monarchy and imperial rule before the 1911 Revolution, he did not directly and explicitly point out the link between Confucius and authoritarian rule. Moreover, while Yi Baisha raised Confucius' killing of Shao Zhengmao as evidence of his authoritarianism, Zhang perceived the same incident as evidence of their competition for teaching and disciples(61).

I suggest that the radical Chinese intellectuals' view was a result of the association between the cult of Confucius and the attempt to restore autocratic and imperial rule in that period (e.g. the case of Yuan Shikai and Kang Youwei).

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59. *Complete Works of Li Dazhao 李大钊全集* (Hubei Jiaoyu, 1999), P.448-450, 454

60. *Ibid.* P.454

61. *Selected Works of Liang Qichao* (1984), P. 312-3/ See Zhang's article "*Competition for teaching 争教*" (1902) in *Qiu Shu 廋书* (Huaxia, 2002), P.222

Second, they pointed out the inherent weaknesses in Confucius' teaching (e.g. Yi's criticism of the ambiguity and inconsistency in Confucius' teaching) which could not be found in Kang, Liang and Zhang's writings. I suggest that it was a result of radical Chinese intellectuals' negative view of traditional teachings, morals and rites, which were closely linked with Confucius' teaching, in this period.

These two distinct differences indicate that radical Chinese intellectuals' images and appraisal of Confucius in the 1910's represent a different phase of evaluating Confucius from that of Kang, Liang and Zhang. As Kam Louie has pointed out, whereas the late Qing reformers wanted to revitalize Confucius, the intellectuals of May Fourth wanted to destroy the image of Confucius as a sage(62).

Nevertheless, there were conservative Chinese intellectuals in the Republican Period who constructed images of Confucius similar to those of Kang, Liang and Zhang. For example, the New Confucian thinker Tang Junyi (唐君毅 1909-1978) pointed out the greatness of Confucius' personality by comparing Confucius with great historic figures in Chinese and world history. He also expressed the hope that Confucius could one day become the religious master of the whole world. These images are similar to Kang's image of Confucius as a religious master, Liang's image of Confucius as a great human of the world and Zhang's image of Confucius as a great historic figure in Chinese history. Moreover, Tang tried to manipulate Confucius as a national cultural symbol to assert the superiority of Confucianism and Chinese culture for promoting Chinese cultural nationalism, like Kang and Liang. (As will be discussed in Chapter 4, New Confucian thinkers stressed on the strength of Chinese culture which they thought could supplement the weaknesses of Western culture to assert Chinese cultural nationalism)(63).

Moreover, there was a movement of questioning ancient history among Chinese intellectuals in the 1920's. These "Doubters of Antiquity" (*yigupai* 疑古派) like Gu Jiegang (顧頡剛 1895-1980) tried to clear away all the legends and glorifications associated with Confucius that had been invented in history and to reduce Confucius to what he really was (e.g. an educator, historian and keeper of traditions). This was similar to Zhang's attempt to evaluate Confucius' contribution to Chinese history as a historian, philosopher and educator cleared of the images associated with him in history and the mythical elements associated with him by Kang. However, while Zhang highly praised Confucius' contribution to China as well as its distinctive rites and customs, Gu thought Confucius was only a keeper of ancient culture who was unable to adapt to the modern age. As Brunhild Staiger has suggested, the "Doubters of Antiquity" contributed to the historicification of Confucius, which turned Confucius into an object of historical research with no significance for the present and future(64).

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62. See Kam Louie, *Critiques of Confucius in Contemporary China* (The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 1980), P.7

63. Feng Zusheng (封祖盛), *Contemporary New Confucianism 当代新儒家* (Xinhua, 1989), P.120-121

The images of Confucius underwent substantial changes after the founding of the People's Republic in 1949. First, as the main stream of Chinese traditional culture, the Chinese government considered Confucianism "old thought and culture" as well as "feudal remains" of which it was harshly critical. Therefore, when the "four olds" (四旧), which included old thought and culture, were under severe attack during the Cultural Revolution (文化大革命 1966-1976), Confucius was condemned.

Second, influenced by the Marxist theory of demarcating periods of social development, the Chinese government held the view that China had transformed from slavery into a feudal society in the historical period in which Confucius lived. By applying Marx's class analytical method in historical studies, the Chinese government placed Confucius somewhere between the declining aristocratic slave-owning class and the newly born feudal landlord class. Therefore, when the attacks on Confucius intensified in the 1970's under the "Anti-Lin Anti-Confucius Campaign" (批林批孔运动), Confucius was attacked as "the thinker who stubbornly upheld the slave system". For example, in a book *"Confucius: Sage of the Reactionary Classes"* (1974), a Mainland Chinese scholar Yang Jungko claimed that Confucius had used the notion of "rectification of names" (正名) in the *Spring and Autumn Annals* to resist social change and avert the doom of the slave owners' aristocratic rule. He also interpreted the Confucian notion of "benevolence" (仁) as an ideological concept of the slave-owning class. That is, by advocating benevolence, which implies "restraining oneself and returning to the rites" (克己复礼), aristocrats tried to curb people's desires and put limits on their actions in order to restore the class distinction and relationship between slave-owners and slaves. Even Confucius' killing of Shao Zhengmao was interpreted by Yang as Confucius' attempt to oppose reform and uphold the old social order(65).

Nevertheless, there were also positive appraisals and images of Confucius in Mainland China before the Cultural Revolution. That is because, although Confucianism was considered "old thought and culture" as well as "feudal remains", the Chinese government took the view that ancient Chinese culture should not be totally rejected but should be accepted discriminately by eliminating the "feudalistic waste" with the materialist critical spirit and preserving those elements which were useful to building a socialist society, i.e., the policy of "critical inheritance". Thus, the famous Chinese historian Fan Wenlan (范文澜 1893-1969) claimed that, although Confucius' teachings represented the ideological consciousness of the newly rising landlords and advocated rule by feudalism, his great contribution to ancient Chinese culture would not vanish while his thought embodied some characteristics which are progressive. At the same time, Guo Moruo (郭沫若 1892-1977), a leading scholar in Mao's era, considered Confucius a revolutionary and progressive because he formulated the notion of "benevolence" and, therefore, was an exponent of the will of the people(66).

64. See Brunhild Staiger, "The image of Confucius in China" in Silke Krieger, *Confucianism and the Modernisation of China* (Mainz, 1991), P.119-120

65. *The Political Intrigue of the Chinese Communists' anti-Confucius Campaign on China Mainland* (The Anti-Communist League, 1974), P.4, 6-7, 19/ Yang Jungkuo, *Confucius: "Sage" of the Reactionary Classes* (Foreign Language Press, 1974), P.20, 22-28

Even Chinese communist leader Mao Zedong (毛泽东 1893-1976) expressed a positive view of Confucius before the Cultural Revolution. For example, in his talks at the second session of the 8<sup>th</sup> Chinese Communist Party National Congress in 1958, Mao raised Confucius as an example of an ancient Chinese scholar who was less educated in the beginning but became a well-learned man later. Also, in his “Spring Festival” talks in 1964, Mao praised Confucius as someone who came from the masses and understood their sufferings(67).

Mao’s positive view of Confucius can be traced to his trip to Confucius’ birthplace Qu Fu (曲阜) in 1919 when he visited Confucius’ tomb and temple. Mao even recalled this visit to American reporter Edgar Snow in the 1930’s when he was already the head of the Chinese communist party. As Caimu Cui has suggested, despite his image as a successor of Marxism and Leninism, Mao was actually more a traditionalist than a Marxist-Leninist. His thought and behaviour were greatly influenced by his traditional frame of reference. Moreover, Mao learned Confucian classics from an early age and his early formal education was mostly Confucian in content while his interest in Chinese traditional culture, of which Confucianism was an important component, lasted throughout his life(68).

This indicates that there were both positive and negative appraisals of Confucius and a lot of arguments among Mainland Chinese scholars on the historically and politically correct image of Confucius before the Cultural Revolution. The appraisal and image of Confucius became predominantly negative between 1966 and 1976 because of the complete rejection of Confucianism and the use of the criticism of Confucius as means of political struggle in that period.

However, since the images and appraisal of Confucius in the first 30 years of the People’s Republic were so heavily influenced by political and ideological factors, this indicates another very different phase of evaluating Confucius in contemporary China. As the book “*The Political Intrigue of the Chinese Communists’ anti-Confucius Campaign on China Mainland*” (1974) has pointed out, the Chinese communist party’s campaigns to slander the ancients were always preceded by political or power struggles in the party and they always tried to make academic study serve politics(69).

I agree with this view because the severe attacks on Confucius during the Cultural Revolution were closely linked with the power struggle between Mao Zedong and Liu Shaoqi (刘少奇 1898-1969). Mao, who accused Liu of attempting to revive capitalism in China, thought that old thought and culture were being used by Liu as a means to restore capitalism. On the other hand, the attacks on Confucius during the “Anti-Lin Anti-Confucius Campaign” were closely linked with the power struggle between the “Gang of Four” (四人帮) and Zhou Enlai (周恩来 1898-1976) in the 1970’s(70).

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66. *The Political Intrigue of the Chinese Communists’ anti-Confucius Campaign on China Mainland* (1974), P.14-17, 20/ Silke Krieger (Mainz, 1991), P.235

67. Ibid. P.9-10/ Silke Krieger (Mainz, 1991), P.123

68. Ibid, P.12-13 / See Caimu Cui, *Mao Zedong’s Traditionalism* (University of Tennessee, 1997), P. iii, iv, 26, 30

69. Ibid. P.5

70. Kam Louie (The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 1980), P.145

I think this explains why we cannot find any similarities between the images of Confucius constructed during the first 30 years of the People's Republic and those developed by Kang, Liang or Zhang. Moreover, we cannot find any evidence which suggests that they had applied Marxist notions (e.g. demarcation of the periods of social development, class analysis, class struggle and historical materialism) in their evaluations of Confucius. Although Zhang was influenced by Japanese socialist thinker Kotoku Shusui when he was in Japan, and although Liang mentioned Marxism and advocated socialism in his later writings, we cannot find any evidence in their writings which indicates that they applied Marxist or socialist theories in their evaluation of Confucius and his historical status in China. Jiang Yihua has also pointed out that Zhang opposed the use of Marxist notions to interpret Chinese society in his later years(71).

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71. See Liang Qichao, "Reflections on the trip to Europe 歐游心影錄" (1920) in *Selected Works of Liang Qichao* (1984) P.729-730 and "Evaluation of the Anti-Religion Alliance 評非宗教同盟" (1922) in *Collections of Yinbingshi Vol.38* (1941), P.19/ Li Longmu (Fudan University, 1990), P.367, 371/ Jiang Yihua (Shanghai Renmin, 1985), P.655

## Chapter 3: Reinterpretation of Confucian notions

Chinese intellectuals reinterpreted Confucian notions in response to the challenge of modern western political and social ideas, in search of new meanings and applications of Confucian notions in the changing political and social context of China in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, in order to advocate their political ideas as well as justify their discourse on reform and revolution. Since reinterpretation of Confucian notions was used as a political and ideological tool, arguments about the interpretation of Confucian notions were closely linked with the political and ideological disputes between Chinese intellectuals in this period.

In this chapter, I will argue that Kang, Liang and Zhang's arguments and interpretations about the Confucian notion of "Three Ages" were closely knitted with and served their discourse on the appropriate political system (constitutional monarchy versus republic) of China as well as their discourse on culture, race and nation in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. I will also argue that Chinese intellectuals' synthesis of Confucian notions with modern western ideas (e.g. evolution, constitutional monarchy, equality, democracy, people's rights and socialism) contributed to Chinese people's reception of these ideas while expanding the scope and application of Confucianism in contemporary China.

### 1. Kang Youwei's reinterpretation of the Gongyang notion of "Three Ages" to justify his political ideas

The Confucian notion of "Three Ages" (*san shi* 三世), i.e. "Age of Disorder" (据乱世), "Age of Approaching Peace" (升平世) and "Age of Universal Peace" (太平世), was originally formulated by Confucian scholars (e.g. Dong Zhongshu and He Xiu 何休) of the Gongyang (公羊) commentary (a commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals* used by the New Text School to which Kang belonged) in the Han Period. Kang reinterpreted the notion as a theory of gradual progressive historical evolution from the "Age of Disorder" to the "Age of Approaching Peace" and the "Age of Universal Peace". Kang's reinterpretation was consolidated in 1898 and the notion of "Three Ages" became a major topic in his later writings(1).

According to Kang's interpretation, the "Three Ages" represent three stages of historical evolution which are differentiated according to several criteria. The first criterion was level of culture. In Kang's view, a more advanced stage of historical evolution was always associated with a more advanced level of culture. In "*Dong's study of the Spring and Autumn Annals*" (1893), Kang claimed that culture and education (文教) were undeveloped in the "Age of Disorder", that there would gradually be more culture and education in the "Age of Approaching Peace" and that culture and education would be fully developed in the "Age of Universal Peace"(2).

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1. Po Yu-man, *An Analytical Study of Kang Youwei's Views on the Spring and Autumn Annals* (University of Hong Kong, 1973), P.207-211

The second criterion was degree of equality. That is, the higher the stage of historical evolution, the greater the degree of equality would be. Therefore, absolute equality among people would be achieved at the highest stage of historical evolution, i.e. the "Age of Universal Peace". To support his view, Kang claimed that the teaching of Confucius focused on equality due to Confucius' role as the agent of Heaven who spoke and acted on its behalf. Based on his view that Heaven was the origin of everything, Kang argued that everything is equal from the point of view of Heaven ("天之視人, 人人平等"). Therefore, the doctrines and systems of Confucius, which Kang perceived as those of Heaven, are also based on equality(3).

The third criterion was level of morality. That is, people's morality would gradually progress in the process of historical evolution. While people only loved themselves and their neighbours in the "Age of disorder", they would love their native places and nations in the "Age of approaching peace" while they would love all people and living things in the "Age of Universal Peace". Therefore, while rites were necessary to maintain social order in the "Age of disorder", rites were not necessary in the "Age of Universal Peace" when benevolence would be realised(4).

Why did Kang differentiate the "Three Ages" based on the level of culture, equality and morality? In my view, Kang's use of level of culture as a major criterion for differentiating the stages of historical evolution was due to his perception of the significance of culture to nation and race. This was indicated in his idea of linking the preservation of teaching (Confucianism) with the preservation of China and its people during the reform movement. It was also indicated in his deep sense of crisis in relation to the decline of Chinese culture in the early Republican Period, which he thought was a threat to the continued existence of the Chinese race. As will be discussed later, Kang had a view that the distinction between China and "barbaric areas" was based on level of culture instead of geography.

Moreover, there were New Text School Confucian scholars before Kang who had interpreted the "Three Ages" as representing progressive level of cultural development. For example, Gong Zhizhen (龔自珍 1792-1841), an early 19<sup>th</sup> century New Text School Confucian scholar, claimed that rites (e.g. those offered to Heaven) would become more and more developed as history evolved from the "Age of Disorder" to the "Age of Approaching Peace" and the "Age of Universal Peace". I think such a view had influenced Kang's use of level of culture to differentiate the "Three Ages". Late Qing reformers (including Kang)'s strong reverence of Gong Zhizhen also suggested that his view had influenced Kang's reinterpretation of the "Three Ages"(5).

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2. Ibid., P.218/ Takeuchi Hiroyuki (竹内弘行), *On China's Confucian Modernization 中国の儒教的近代化論* (Kenbun, 1995), P.79

3. Po Yu-man (University of Hong Kong, 1973), P.213-217

4. Fang Delin (Wenjin, 1992), P.106-107, 131/ Zhang Hao (Shibao wenhua chuban shiye, 1981), P.549-551, 556

5. *Complete Works of Kang Youwei Vol.2* P.775/ Po Yu-man (University of Hong Kong, 1973), P.218/ Li Shen (Shanghai Renmin, 2000), P.948-9/ See Takeuchi Hiroyuki (Kenbun, 1995), P.98

Kang's stress on degree of equality was influenced by several factors. Based on his view that Heaven was the origin of everything, Kang thought everybody should be equal, because everybody is the "son of Heaven". Kang was also influenced by the notion of equality in Buddhism and Christianity. (Kang's influence by Buddhism and Christianity was indicated in his influence by the Buddhist notion of suffering and his perception of the similarity between the Christian notion of love and the Confucian notion of benevolence)(6).

Moreover, as will be discussed later, Kang was greatly influenced by the notions of Social Darwinism, social evolution and "survival of the fittest". Therefore, he perceived it the responsibility of the sage to correct the innate inequality of the world and formulated the idea that the higher the stage of historical evolution, the greater the degree of equality should be. The character "ping 平" in "shengping shi 升平世" (Age of Approaching Peace) and "taiping shi 太平世" (Age of Universal Peace), which carries the meaning of "equality" (as in the word "pingdeng 平等"), also indicates Kang's identification of equality with the higher stage of historical evolution(7).

Finally, Kang's stress on level of morality was due to his emphasis on the notion of benevolence (*ren* 仁). This was indicated in his perception of benevolence as the foundation of all that is good and true as well as the fundamental principle on which the world, the states and moral institutions are based. Since Kang equated benevolence with loving people ("仁者爱人") and considered it the highest peak of moral development, which culminates in the ideal world of Great Unity (the equivalent of the "Age of Universal Peace"), this explains why he perceived the expansion of the scope of love from oneself and one's neighbours to one's native places and nations to all people and living things as the indication of progress of morality and a higher stage of historical evolution(8).

There are several characteristics in Kang's differentiation of the "Three Ages". First, since Kang used level of equality and culture as the criteria for differentiating the "Three Ages", this indicates that the notion of "Three Ages" is relative in nature. That is, whether a certain place is in the age of "Disorder", "Approaching Peace" or "Universal Peace" depends on its level of equality and culture relative to other places. Therefore, the age of "Disorder", "Approaching Peace" and "Universal Peace" can coexist in the same world (e.g. Kang thought America was in the age of "Universal Peace", Europe was in the age of "Approaching Peace" and Africa was in the age of "Disorder" at his time) and even the same country. (As will be discussed below, Kang thought the age of "Disorder", "Approaching Peace" and "Universal Peace" existed in different regions of China).

6. Wing-tsit Chan, *Neo-Confucianism, etc: Essays by Wing-tsit Chan* (Oriental Society, 1969), P.254/ Kung-Chuan Hsiao (Washington, 1975), P.111
7. Po Yu-man (University of Hong Kong, 1973), P.213
8. Wing-tsit Chan (Oriental Society, 1969), P.252-4, 268/ *Collection of Kang Youwei's Essays Vol.7* (1925), P.29

Second, since level of culture and education are major criteria for differentiating stages of historical evolution, elevating them was crucial in the process of historical evolution. Therefore, Kang formulated a view that evolution is not automatic but requires positive efforts while the process of evolution must be gradual and takes time. As will be discussed later, such a view was the basis of Kang's conviction of gradual political reforms and his opposition to revolution(9).

Finally, the notion of "change" was stressed in Kang's differentiation of the "Three Ages". Zhang Hao has suggested that it was due to Kang's influence by the notion of change in the *"Book of Change"* and his conviction that change is the "way of Heaven". I agree with that because in his article *"Change makes things work and last long 變則通通則久論"* (1895), Kang pointed out the inevitability and importance of change based on the formation of natural phenomena according to the changes in Heaven ("天惟能變通而後萬物成焉") as well as the notion of "change" in the *"Book of Change"*. Moreover, since change was both inevitable and important, failure to change would bring harm. Based on that view, Kang believed that political change according to circumstances was the key to the survival of a nation(10).

However, I do not agree with Zhang Hao's view that the influence of the western notion of evolution on Kang was minimal. Considering Kang's stress on the notion of progressive evolution and his idea that China needed to make changes according to changing circumstances in order to survive in the world of competition, I think we cannot ignore his influence by the notion of evolution, which was very popular in China at that time. As Wang Shi has pointed out, Kang and other reformers in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century were greatly influenced by the notion of Social Darwinism, social progress, social evolution and "survival of the fittest" introduced in the book *"On Evolution 天演論"* (1895), which was a translation of Thomas Huxley's *"Evolution and Ethics"* by Yan Fu (嚴復 1854-1921). Chang Qie has also suggested that the strong sense of insecurity revealed in Kang's writings in this period was a result of his influence by the idea of "survival of fittest" in Yan's book. According to that idea, only "the fittest" would survive after a process of competition and natural selection. Since nations and races were in competition, only powerful and superior races and nations would survive while weak and inferior ones would perish. Therefore, China was facing a crisis of survival since the western powers which were invading China were the powerful and superior races. I agree with this because in his various writings before 1898, Kang stressed the urgent need to reform China in order to defend it from the western powers and survive in the world of competition(11).

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9. Po Yu-man (University of Hong Kong, 1973), P. 219-221, 225-226

10. See Zhang Hao (張灝), *On Contemporary Chinese Intellectual Figures: Late Qing Thought 近代中國思想人物: 晚清思想* (Shibao wenhua chuban shiye, 1981), P.538-543/ *Selected Political and Historical Essays of Kang Youwei* (1988), P.102-3

There are other evidences which indicate Kang's influence by the notion of Social Darwinism and social evolution. For example, Liang Qichao had enthusiastically recommended Yan's translation of Huxley to Kang while Liang indicated the impact of "On Evolution" on Kang in a letter to Yan Fu in 1896. Ma Hong-ling has also suggested that Kang might have absorbed the notion of social evolution through reading Japanese books translated by his daughter in this period(12).

Moreover, both Ito Shuichi (伊藤秀一) and Chang Qie have pointed out that the western notion of evolution and progressive development had entered China long before Yan's translation of "Evolution and Ethics". Their view matched with Ma Hongling's finding that Darwinism and the notion of evolution could be found in a western geographical work translated by a Chinese translation bureau in 1873. Takeuchi, Chang and Ma have all suggested that Kang had learned these western notions from reading western books in his early years, which contributed to his formulation of the idea of progressive historical evolution(13).

I agree with their view because according to the autobiography of Kang, Kang had bought and read many translated western books on western learning in 1879 and 1882. We can also find a list of the names of books on western learning in Kang's lecture notes (桂学答问) published in 1894(14).

Based on his criteria of differentiating the "Three Ages", Kang categorised China of his time (the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century) as in the "Age of Disorder", i.e. the lowest stage of historical evolution.

Why was China still in the "Age of Disorder" even though the teaching of Confucius, which Kang believed focus on culture (Kang perceived Confucius as a "king of culture"), had been adopted as the state ideology of China since the Han Period while the notion of "Three Ages" had existed since ancient times?

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11. See Wang Shi (王拭), *The Biography of Yan Fu 严复传* (Shanghai Renmin, 1957), P.33, 35, 37/ Benjamin Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yan Fu and the West* (Harvard University, 1964), P.98-100/ Chang Qie (昌切), *The Main Pattern of Thought in the Late Qing and Early Republican Period 清末民初的思想主脉* (1999), P.80
  12. See Y.C. Wang, *Chinese Intellectuals and the West* (The University of North Carolina, 1966), P.213 and Ma Hongling (Jilin Wenshi, 1997), P.182-3
  13. See Takeuchi Hiroyuki (Kenbun, 1995), P.84/ Chang Qie (Dongfang, 1999), P.73-4/ Ma Hongling (Jilin Wenshi, 1997), P.182
  14. See *Autobiography of Kang Youwei 康南海自編年譜* (Zhonghua, 1992), P.9-10/ *Complete Works of Kang Youwei Volume 2* (Shanghai Ancient Books, 1990), P.63

In the article “*Self introduction to the study of the subtle words and profound meaning of the Spring and Autumn Annals* 春秋筆削微言大意考自序” (1901), Kang pointed out the reasons which prevented China from evolving into the “Age of Approaching Peace” and “Age of Universal Peace”. First, Kang blamed the influence of Han Fei’s (韓非 280 B.C.-234 B.C.) ideas of emphasis on law, punishment and the superiority of emperor over officials (君尊臣卑) on Chinese rulers in history (Han was a major thinker of the School of Legalism). Second, Kang thought that since Ancient Text classics were adopted as the official Confucian texts, while the Gongyang commentary which contained the notion of “Three Ages” had lost its official status since the Jin Period (晉 265-420), the “Three Ages” had become unknown to Chinese people. Third, Kang thought there were “subtle words” (微言) of Confucius in the *Spring and Autumn Annals* which were transmitted orally (口說) through generations of masters like the Han New Text School Confucian scholar Dong Zhongshu, since they contained ideas against the emperors and aristocrats which could not be put into writing. However, such an oral tradition of “subtle words” was discontinued after the New Text School lost its official status in China.

Based on the above reasons, Kang argued that China had been inappropriately ruled according to the way of the “Age of Disorder” (i.e. absolute monarchy and autocratic rule) which had prevented it from evolving into higher stages of historical evolution. Therefore, Kang suggested that China should evolve to the “Age of Approaching Peace” as soon as possible<sup>15</sup>. Since the “Age of Approaching Peace” was associated with constitutional monarchy and joint rule of emperor and people, this justified Kang’s idea to transform the political system of China from absolute monarchy into constitutional monarchy.

Fang Delin has pointed out that Kang’s reinterpretation of the notion of “Three Ages” as an idea of progressive historical evolution and his application of it to the situation of China was a breakthrough in the tradition of Confucian historiography. That is, although the notion of “Three Ages” had existed since ancient China, it had never been interpreted as a theory of progressive historical evolution before. For example, Qing Confucian scholars previous to Kang like Liu Fenglu (劉逢祿 1776-1829), Gong Zhizhen and Wei Yuan (魏源 1794-1856) had all interpreted the notion of “Three Ages” as a theory of a historical cycle. On the other hand, according to the historiography of “*Li Yun* 禮運” (part of the *Book of Rites* from which Kang derived the notion of “Great Unity 大同”), history had developed in a regressive direction from the time of Yao and Shun (Age of Universal Peace) to the time of Confucius (Age of Disorder)<sup>16</sup>.

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15. *Collection of Kang Youwei’s Essays Vol.8* (1925), P.1-5/ Zhang Hao (Shi bao wenhua chuban shiye, 1981), P.560

16. See Fang Delin (Wenjin, 1992), P.93, 95/ Ma Hongling (Jilin Wenshi, 1997), P.189

In the article “*The biography of Master Kang Nanhai 南海康先生傳*” (1901), Liang Qichao also pointed out that Kang’s notion of “Three Ages” was an evolutionary philosophy (进化派哲学), i.e., the idea that the world would continuously evolve in a forward direction without moving backward, which was fundamentally different from traditional Chinese intellectuals’ view that history evolved cyclically or in a regressive direction(17).

Why did Kang make this breakthrough in Confucian historiography by reinterpreting the notion of “Three Ages” as an idea of progressive historical evolution?

First, I suggest that it was part of Kang’s strategy of transforming Confucianism from a past oriented and backward looking into a reformative, progressive and forward looking ideology. By reinterpreting the notion of “Three Ages” as a theory of progressive historical evolution, Kang could refute the traditional view that Confucianism was oriented toward the past (e.g. the traditional Confucian belief that an ideal age of Yao and Shun existed in antiquity). He could convince Chinese people that the teaching of Confucius was progressive, forward looking and reformative while the notion of “Three Ages” embodied Confucius’ ideal of reform(18).

From this perspective, Kang’s reinterpretation of the notion of “Three Ages” served a function in re-orienting Confucianism similar to his construction of the image of Confucius as an institutional reformer who wrote the “*Spring and Autumn Annals*” to spread the idea of institutional reform(19).

Second, as Fang Delin has suggested, due to the lack of fundamental change in the social and economic system of China since ancient times, Chinese history was full of cycles of peace and disorder as well as unity and disintegration. That is the social and historical root of traditional Confucian scholars’ historiography of historical development as cycle of peace and disorder, unity and disintegration. However, with the emergence of a modern economic production system, technology and lifestyle in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which represented a breakthrough from traditional China, Kang perceived the end of the historical cycle and formulated an idea of progressive historical evolution(20).

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17. *Collection of Yinbingshi Volume 6* (1941), P.72

18. Zhang Hao (Shibao wenhua chuban shiye, 1981), P.579/ See Joseph R. Levenson, “The Breakdown of Confucianism: Liang Chi-chao Before Exile 1873-1898”, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Volume 11, Issue 4, Oct 1950, P.472

19. *Complete Works of Kang Youwei Vol.2* (1990), P.773

20. See Fang Delin (Wenjin, 1992), P.94

I agree with Fang's view because modernity entails a ruthless break with preceding historical conditions. Moreover, the project of modernity since the enlightenment, including the development of objective science, rational forms of social organisation and modes of thought, embraced the idea of progress and sought a break with history and tradition(21). Since the challenge of modernity was a major cause behind Kang's reinterpretation of Confucian notions, it is reasonable to suggest that he sought a breakthrough from traditional Confucian historiography and formulated a view of historical development as a process of gradual progress in response to modernity.

Finally, I suggest that Kang tried to use the idea of progressive historical evolution to show that an ideal "world of great unity 大同世界" as described in his "*Book of Great Unity 大同書*" (1902), i.e., a unified world without boundaries (e.g. those of nation states, races, families, classes...etc), was both theoretically justifiable and practically attainable as the highest stage of historical evolution.

Liang Qichao has suggested that Kang's idea of progressive historical evolution was linked with his ideas of fraternity, social reform and reducing people's sufferings as embodied in the "world of great unity". Fan Wenlan has also suggested that the Gongyang notion of "Three Ages" was one of the components of Kang's idea of the "world of great unity". Other components include the Confucian notion of "Great Unity 大同" in the *Book of Rites* which describes a harmonious ideal community which is said to have existed, the Buddhist notion of compassion and the Christian notion of fraternity and equality, as well as socialism(22).

The link between Kang's reinterpretation of "Three Ages" and his idea of the "world of great unity" was also indicated in the 1902 version of "Three Ages" (the year "*Book of Great Unity*" was first published) in which the "Age of Universal Peace" contained elements very similar to the "world of great unity" (e.g. a world without class and family in which everybody is equal)(23).

Since the notion of "Three Ages" played a crucial role in justifying Kang's idea of reforming China and transforming its political system from absolute monarchy into constitutional monarchy, Kang revised his interpretation of the "Three Ages" after the failure of the 1898 Reforms by suggesting that the "Three Ages" can be subdivided into more ages. That is, there are ages of "Disorder", "Approaching Peace" and "Universal Peace" within each of the "Three Ages". According to that logic, there can be 9, 81 or even more "ages" in total while each small age only represents a very small pace of evolution.

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21. David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Blackwell, 1990), P.12

22. See Zhang Hao (Shibao wenhua chuban shiye, 1981), P.537, 567, 572/ Li Shen (Shanghai Renmin, 2000), P.1026/ See "*The biography of Master Kang Nanhai*" (1901) in *Collection of Yinbingshi Volume 6* (1941), P.75/ Ma Hongling (Jilin Wenshi, 1997), P.184-5

Kang's subdivision of "Three Ages" into further ages implied the slowdown of the pace of progress as well as the postponement of the realisation of "Universal Peace" and the "world of great unity". That, as Chang Qie has pointed out, substantially undermined the original spirit of Kang's reform, which aimed at transforming China into a powerful modern nation within a short period of time(24).

Nevertheless, as Zhang Hao has suggested, by subdividing "Three Ages" into further ages, Kang also broadened the application of the notion. That is, the notion became applicable to China and the whole world in the past, present and future since China and the whole world could be subdivided into many different ages at any point of time. For example, in Kang's view, while China at his time in general was in the "Age of Disorder", the areas inhabited by minorities like the Miao (苗), Yao (瑶) and Li (黎) were in the "Age of Disorder" within the "Age of Disorder" whereas the regions inhabited by Mongolians and Tibetans were in the "Age of Approaching Peace" and those inhabited by Han (漢) people were in the "Age of Universal Peace" within the "Age of Disorder"(25).

In my view, Kang's subdivision of the "Three Ages" into more ages was consistent with his view of the importance of progressive evolution, that the process of evolution must be gradual and the importance of acting according to circumstances. Kang had illustrated this view in the article "*Introduction to the notes of Li Yun 禮運注敘*" (1887) where he claimed that it would be against the teaching of Confucius if China stuck to the old way and did not evolve, while the process of evolution must be gradual. Kang used the parable of the need to give medicine to a person when he is sick while nutritious food must be withheld from him whereas it would be harmful if the same medicine is given to the person after he has recovered while nutritious food continues to be withheld from him, to illustrate the importance of gradual evolution and the harm of sticking to the old ways without moving to a more advanced stage of evolution(26).

Therefore, Kang argued that it would be harmful for a place to cling to the system of the "Age of Disorder" if it had already entered the "Age of Approaching Peace" and that it would be harmful to implement the system of the "Age of Universal Peace" in a place which was still in the "Age of Disorder" with a low level of culture.

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23. Yi Xinding (易新鼎), *Liang Qichao and Chinese Intellectual History 梁启超与中国学术思想史* (Zhongzhou classics, 1992), P.197

24. See Chang Qie (Dongfang, 1999), P.90/ Po Yu-man (University of Hong Kong, 1973), P.222-223

25. See Zhang Hao (Shibao wenhua chuban shiye, 1981), P.558/ Po Yu-man (University of Hong Kong, 1973), P.225

26. *Collection of Kang Youwei's Essays Vol.8* (1925), P.9

Based on this argument and his categorisation of China as between the “Age of Disorder” and “Age of Approaching Peace”, Kang tried to convince Chinese people that the political system of China should be changed from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy (the political system of the “Age of Approaching Peace”) as soon as possible, while it would be harmful to implement a republic (the political system of the “Age of Universal Peace”) in China at that time(27).

Based on this view, Kang opposed the revolutionaries (e.g. Sun Yatsen and Zhang Taiyan)’s attempt to overthrow the monarchy and establish a republic in China. Kang elaborated his view in an article “*Republican form of government cannot be implemented in China* 共和政體不能行於中國論” (1905) in which he suggested that the republican form of government was not suitable for a big country like China. Kang pointed to the chaos aroused in France and Latin American countries after adopting a republican form of government to support his view that a republic would lead to chaos. Kang argued that constitutional monarchy was preferable to a republic because while a constitutional monarch had no real power, his existence could reduce the chance of political conflicts and chaos(28).

After the founding of the Republic of China in 1912, Kang clung on to this view and believed that the problems and chaos of China in the early Republican era were due to its adoption of the political system (republic) of a stage of historical evolution (the “Age of Universal Peace”) which it had not yet reached. Kang thought that the historical development of China had deviated from the pattern prescribed in the notion of “Three Ages” (from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy to republic). Based on this belief, Kang tried to put the historical development of China back onto the right course by shifting its political system from republic to constitutional monarchy, and became involved in the attempt to restore the Qing Dynasty(29).

Nevertheless, if Kang associated a republic with the highest stage of the “Three Ages”, this indicates that he considered a republic as the ideal or highest form of political system. Would that contradict Kang’s stress on the advantages of constitutional monarchy over republic while claiming that republic was not suitable for China?

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27. Ibid., P.102, 135

28. *Collection of Kang Youwei's Essays Vol. 2* (1925), P.7-8

29. See Kang’s “*A letter to Xu Shichang*” (1917) and “*Reflections on the republic*” (1917) in *Political Writings of Kang Youwei* (Zhonghua, 1981), P. 992-995, 1018-1051/ Zhang Hao (Shibao wenhua chuban shiye, 1981), P.547-8/ Wang Rongzhu (汪榮祖), *Comparison of Kang Youwei and Zhang Taiyan* 康章合論 (Lianjing, 1988), P.40

First, in his writings on the advantages of constitutional monarchy over republic, Kang kept undermining the differences between the two political systems, based on the argument that a constitutional monarch did not have real power (Kang compared constitutional monarchs to idols in a temple). On the other hand, Kang stressed that constitutional monarchs served an important function as the symbol of nation and object of reverence for citizens, which could create unity and stability for the nation while preventing chaos resulting from struggles for the highest authority. (Kang referred to constitutional monarchies in Europe to support his point). I think this explains why Kang formulated the view that while a republic was the ideal form of political system, it was important for China, which had a several thousand year history of autocratic rule, to adopt a constitutional monarchy before it moved to a republic(30).

Second, Kang believed that directly moving from absolute monarchy to republic through revolution (as the Chinese revolutionaries advocated) would lead to chaos. Such a view was indicated in Kang's article "*Introduction to the account of the French Revolution 進呈法國革命記序*" (1898) in which he claimed that the scale of atrocities and chaos in the revolutions of contemporary history, beginning with the French Revolution, were unprecedented in human history. Kang thought the chaos in the French Revolution could have been avoided if Louis XVI had adopted constitutional monarchy earlier(31).

Finally, a republic was the political system of the "Age of Universal Peace" which in turn was closely linked with Kang's idea of the "world of great unity" According to Kang, there would be no nation and monarch in the "world of great unity" and the government would be democratic and elected. We should note that although the draft of "*Book of Great Unity*" was completed in 1902, Kang did not allow it to be published and he did not use it for teaching during his lifetime because he thought China was still in the Age of disorder and the notion of "Great Unity" would lead to chaos ("今方爲據亂之世,只能言小康,不能言大同")(32). This indicates that Kang considered the republican form of government and the notion of "Great Unity" to be ideals which China was not ready for and which would lead to chaos if they were implemented in China at that time.

Based on the above findings, I suggest that there is no contradiction between Kang's association of republic with the highest stage of the "Three Ages" and his stress on the advantages of constitutional monarchy over republic while claiming that republic was not suitable for China

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30. *Collection of Kang Youwei's Essays Vol.2* (1925), P.10-13

31. *Political Writings of Kang Youwei* (Zhonghua, 1981), P.308-310

32. See Kang's "*Book of Great Unity 大同書*" (1902) in *Political Writings of Kang Youwei* (Zhonghua, 1981), P.516-519 and Fang Delin (Wenjin, 1992), P.251-2

Kang's classification of different regions of China into different ages based on their level of culture indicates that he considered level of culture as the major distinction between Chinese and barbarians. Such a view was influenced by Dong Zhongshu's idea that level of culture as revealed in ritual culture (禮法文化) was the base of differentiating Chinese and barbarians (who were identified based on their negligence of ritual culture) as well as Confucius' distinction between Chinese and barbarians (夷狄) based on whether their rites matched with those of China(33).

Based on this view, Kang tried to justify his reform discourse of adopting western systems (e.g. constitutional monarchy) and learning from the West. Kang tried to refute the traditional Gongyang view (e.g. that of He Xiu) that the distinction between Chinese and barbarians was based on ethnicity, a view which contributed to traditional Chinese xenophobia and the notion of "expelling barbarians" (攘夷). By stressing that the distinction between Chinese and barbarians was determined by level of culture instead of ethnicity, Kang could refute the conservatives' major argument against adopting western systems, i.e., that Western people were barbarians and the traditional Confucian notion (e.g. in Mencius 孟子) stated that only Chinese could change barbarians whereas barbarians could not change Chinese ("吾聞用夏變夷者, 未聞變於夷者也")(34).

By redrawing the boundaries between Chinese and barbarians, Kang could argue that Western people were not barbarians since they were culturally advanced and in a high stage of historical evolution due to their achievement in science and political systems (Kang's association of western political systems with the cultural achievement of the West was indicated in his association of the higher stages of historical evolution, i.e., "Age of Approaching Peace" and "Age of Universal Peace", with constitutional monarchy and republic). On this basis, Kang could refute the argument that China should not learn from the West because Western people were barbarians. Kang could also indicate to the opponents of his reforms that Chinese would become barbarians if China failed to reform itself and catch up with the West(35).

Based on the same argument, Kang and his followers (e.g. Liang Qichao) could also refute the claim of revolutionaries (e.g. Zhang Taiyan) that the Qing dynasty should be overthrown since the Manchu were a non-Chinese barbarian race. That could block the revolutionaries' attempt to justify their revolution with a racial discourse. In his article "*Study on the difficulty of differentiating races since there are alien races in the Han race while Yellow Emperor was also the ancestor to the Manchu race 民族難定漢族中亦多異族而滿族亦祖黃帝考*" (1911), Kang attempted to blur the distinction between the Han and Manchu races. Kang used historical evidence to claim that the ancestors of the Han race (e.g. the Yellow Emperor 黃帝) were originally from Central Asia while Han people had mixed extensively with other races in history(36).

33. *Collection of Kang Youwei's Essays Vol. 2* (1925), P.13/ Takeuchi Hiroyuki (Kenbun, 1995), P.91- 93

34. *Translation and Commentary of Mencius 孟子譯注* (Zhonghua, 1984), P.125

35. Fang Delin (Wenjin, 1992), P.100/ Takeuchi Hiroyuki (1995), P.97, 100

36. *Collection of Kang Youwei's Essays Vol. 2* (1925), P.13/ See Frank Dikotter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (Hurst & Company, 1992)

Besides the "Three Ages", Kang also reinterpreted other Confucian notions to justify his political ideas. For example, influenced by Mencius' notion of "Primacy of the people 民本論", by the early Qing Confucian thinker Huang Zongxi (黃宗羲 1610-1695)'s attack on the supreme authority of the emperor, and by the French thinker Rousseau's idea of protecting people's interests and rights through a 'social contract', Kang stressed the rights of people (民權) in the relation between ruler and people. Kang reinterpreted Mencius' account of the historical events of Tang and Wu overthrowing tyrants (湯放桀, 武王伐紂) and Confucius' idea that Tang and Wu's revolutions against tyrants were in accordance with the will of Heaven and human ("湯武革命順天而應人") to support his view that rulers were agents of the people whose duty was to serve and nourish them with benevolence and righteousness while a ruler should be removed if he did not perform well or had misbehaved(37).

Moreover, Kang tried to convince Chinese people that all the principles behind Western political systems could be found in Confucianism. For example, Kang claimed that the idea of the division of power into executive, legislative and judicial branches could be found in the Confucian classics. Similarly, Kang tried to show that the idea of the emperor as a symbolic head of a constitutional monarchy was implied in Confucius' writings, while Mencius already had the Western idea of democracy(38).

There are three reasons why Kang wanted to convince Chinese people that western political ideas originated in the Confucian classics.

First, since the influence of Confucianism on Chinese people (especially the scholar officials) remained strong in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, anyone who wished to gain a hearing for his new ideas was still obliged to express them within the context of Confucianism. Therefore, Kang realised that Chinese people's resistance to new and alien western political ideas (e.g. democracy, constitutional monarchy, division of power, social contract and people's rights) could be reduced by illustrating them with familiar Confucian notions based on the framework of a Confucian system of thought. Similar to his construction of the image of Confucius as an institutional reformer, Kang tried to avoid the conservatives' accusation that he was breaking away from the traditions laid down by sages and ancestors by claiming that he was merely adopting principles which could be found in Confucian classics(39).

From this perspective, Kang's attempt to advocate modern Western political ideas to Chinese people by reinterpreting Confucian notions was quite similar to the Jesuits' attempt to preach Christian notions to Chinese people in the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century by reinterpreting Confucian texts and doctrines in order to convince them that Confucian and Christian notions were similar. Like Kang, the Jesuits stressed the similarity between the Confucian notion of "benevolence" and the Christian notion of "love". Both Kang and the Jesuits were constrained by the existing Confucian orthodoxy in China which made the reinterpretation of Confucian notions a necessary step to propagate their new ideas to Chinese people.

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37. Fang Delin (Wenjin, 1992), P.109-112/ Yang Bojun, *Translation and Commentary of Mencius* (Zhonghua, 1984), P.42

38. Ibid., P.128/ Takeuchi Hiroyuki (Kenbun, 1995), P.80

39. Kung-Chuan Hsiao (University of Washington, 1975), P.95/ Fang Delin (Wenjin, 1992), P.114-116/ Ma Hongling (Jilin Wenshi, 1997), P.25

Second, as Ma Hongling has suggested, Kang's attempt to associate western ideas with traditional Confucian notions according to the need of his time was consistent with Confucianism's tradition of incorporating alien elements in its system of thought according to the need of the time(40). I agree with Ma's view because from the perspective of the history of Confucianism, the thought of Yinyang and five elements (陰陽五行), Buddhism and Taoism had been incorporated into the system of thought of Confucianism through association with Confucian notions.

Finally, as discussed in Chapter 1, Kang proposed to adopt Confucian religion as the state religion of China in order to clarify its moral standards and solve its moral problems in the early Republican Period. At this time, many radical Chinese intellectuals were severely criticising traditional morals and advocating modern western moral ideas. Consequently, Kang reinterpreted traditional Confucian moral virtues in order to convince Chinese people that they were similar to modern western moral ideas. For example, in "*Suggestion for making Confucianism a guojiao to match with Heaven*" (1913), Kang argued that the traditional Confucian moral virtue of "benevolence" was equivalent to the modern western idea of "humanity". He argued that the notion of "human" represented by the character "人" (*ren*) was embodied in the notion of "benevolence" represented by the character "仁" (*ren*) in Confucian classics such as *Mencius* and *Doctrines of the Mean*. Since the modern western idea of "humanity", which in Chinese was represented by the character compound "人道" (*rendao*), could be literally translated as "human way", Kang argued that the idea of "humanity" (which in English connotes "being humane" or "kindheartedness") was already contained in the Confucian notion of "benevolence"(41).

Similarly, Kang tried to show that modern western moral ideas of fraternity, equality and freedom could be found in the Confucian classics. Kang cited the phrase "benevolence is to love people ("仁者爱人") from the *Analects* to show that "benevolence" is equivalent to "love". Similarly, Kang cited the phrase "I do not want other people to impose their will on me and I do not want to impose my will on other people" ("我不欲人之加诸我也.吾亦欲無加诸人") from the *Analects* to argue that modern western moral ideas of fraternity, equality and freedom were not new moral ideas but were moral ideas contained in Confucian classics(42).

By showing that highly esteemed modern western moral ideas like humanity, fraternity, equality and freedom were already embodied in Confucian classics and notions, Kang could enhance the status and image of Confucianism and traditional moral virtues among Chinese people. Kang tried to indicate that while radical Chinese intellectuals thought new morals (modern western moral ideas) could not be found in China, they were in fact very similar to old morals (traditional Confucian moral virtues)(43). I suggest that this was part of Kang's scheme (like the "Confucian Religion Movement") to assert the superiority of Confucianism and traditional Chinese morals, resist Western cultural influences and promote Chinese cultural nationalism in the 1910's

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40. See Ma Hongling (Jilin Wenshi, 1997), P.29

41. *Collection of Kang Youwei's Essays Vol.7* (1925), P.29

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid., See "*Suggestion for making Confucianism a guojiao to match with Heaven*"

## 2. Liang Qichao's reinterpretation of the notion of "Three Ages" and "Primacy of the people"

Since Liang was intellectually influenced by Kang before 1898, he was also influenced by Kang's reinterpretation of the "Three Ages". However, Liang made his own interpretation and application of the "Three Ages".

First, in Liang's view, the "Age of disorder" was characterised by the rule of many rulers, the "Age of approaching peace" was characterised by the rule of one ruler and the "Age of universal peace" was characterised by the rule of the people(44).

Second, Liang associated the three ages with different characters of human beings. That is, the character of the people of the "Age of disorder" is evil, that of the "Age of approaching peace" is both good and evil, and that of the "Age of universal peace" is good. Based on this view, Liang suggested that power is needed to win in the "Age of disorder", both wisdom and power are needed to win in the "Age of approaching peace" while only wisdom is needed to win in the "Age of universal peace".

Joseph Levenson has suggested that since the idea of progressive historical evolution embodied in the notion of "Three Ages" was linked with the western idea of progress, Liang's view was based on the concept of human perfectibility which was fundamental to the western idea of progress. That is, if human nature did not progress as other things (e.g. technology) did, it would only magnify human beings' ability to hurt each other and destroy the world.

I agree with Levenson's view because Liang was greatly influenced by Mencius who suggested that there are origins of goodness (善端) in human nature while human nature can be perfected through moral cultivation(45).

Third, Liang applied the notion of "Three Ages" in advocating social reforms in China. For example, based on his belief that one triumphed by force in the "Age of disorder" while the source of success will pass from force to wisdom in the "Age of universal peace", Liang attacked the traditional practice of foot-binding as oppression by force, which he thought was the characteristic of the "Age of disorder".

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44. Takeuchi Hiroyuki (Kenbun, 1995), P.81, 184

45. See Joseph Levenson, "The Breakdown of Confucianism: Liang Chi-chao Before Exile 1873-1898" (*Journal of the History of Ideas*, 1950), P.473/ Yang Bojun, *Translation and Commentary of Mencius* (Zhonghua, 1984), P.79-80

Finally, Liang associated the three ages with types of economic activities. For example, he suggested that the practice of speculation (buying at low price in one place and selling at high price in another) only exists in the first two ages but not in the “Age of universal peace” because the national barriers which foster speculation would disappear in that age(46).

Although Liang made a different interpretation and application of the “Three Ages”, both Liang and Kang considered the rule of the people as the characteristic of the highest stage of historical evolution. Takeuchi Hiroyuki has suggested that this is because both Liang and Kang were influenced by the ideas of liberty and people’s rights (自由民權思想) in Japan during the Meiji Period.

I agree with Takeuchi’s view because Japanese thinker Nakae Chomin, based on his view that people possessed the sovereignty of the nation (主權在民), asserted the rights of people (民權) during the liberty and people’s rights movement (自由民權運動) in the Meiji Period. Nakae was the one who translated and introduced Rousseau’s “*Social Contract*” in Japan while, as mentioned before, both Kang and Liang had been influenced by Rousseau’s notion of Social Contract(47). Moreover, as will be discussed later, Liang, like Kang, stressed the rights of people due to the influence of Mencius’ notion of “Primacy of the people”.

Moreover, Liang’s idea that human nature progresses as history evolves to a higher stage, while wisdom is the source of success in the “Age of universal peace” is consistent with Kang’s view that a more advanced stage of historical evolution is always associated with a higher level of culture and morality. Liang’s idea that the practice of speculation will not exist in the “Age of universal peace” because national barriers will have disappeared is also consistent with Kang’s idea that there would be no nation state in the “world of great unity”.

Nevertheless, like his evaluation of Confucianism and appraisal of Confucius, Liang’s interpretation of the “Three Ages” began to deviate from Kang’s after his exile to Japan in 1898. As Takeuchi Hiroyuki has pointed out, Liang had already indicated doubts about Kang’s interpretation of the “Three Ages” before 1898. After his extensive exposure to translated western works in Japan, Liang became more influenced by the western notion of evolution. This was reflected in his idea of renewing Chinese people’s national character in order to survive in the world of competition among races in this period. Consequently, compared with Kang, Liang was more influenced by the notion of evolution in his interpretation of “Three Ages” and “Great Unity”(48).

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46. See Joseph Levenson (*Journal of the History of Ideas*, 1950), P.474

47. See Takeuchi Hiroyuki (Kenbun Shuppan, 1995), P.82, 186-7/ Itoya Toshio (糸屋寿雄), *The Study of Kotoku Shusui 幸徳秋水研究* (Nihon Tosho Centre, 1987), P.83-91/ *Culture: China and the World Vol.5* (Sanlian, 1988), P.191-2

48. See Takeuchi Hiroyuki (Kenbun Shuppan, 1995), P.192, 197, 219

Moreover, since Liang's political stance shifted more towards revolution and republic after his contact with Chinese revolutionaries in Japan, he began to disagree with Kang's view that since China was still between the "Age of Disorder" and "Age of Approaching Peace", a republic was not the suitable political system for China and that it would be harmful to implement a republic in China at that time.

Based on the same reasoning, Liang did not accept Kang's view that China should shift from republic to constitutional monarchy, because it had not yet reached the "Age of Universal Peace" in the early Republican Period. He argued that since a republican form of government had already been firmly established in China, this indicated that China was already in the "Age of Universal Peace" and there was no reason for China to shift to constitutional monarchy. Liang also refuted Kang's association of the problems and chaos of China at that time with its adoption of a republican form of government, and he strongly criticised Kang's involvement in the restoration of the Qing dynasty in July 1917(49).

Besides the notion of the "Three Ages", Liang also reinterpreted Mencius' notion of "Primacy of the people" (民本論), i.e. the notion that people are more important than the state and ruler, as indicated in Mencius' saying that "People are the most important element in a state. The spirits of land and grain are secondary. The sovereign is the least" (民为貴, 社稷次之, 君为輕). Liang reinterpreted the notion of "Primacy of the people" as the equivalent of the western idea of "government of the people" and "political authority of the people". Liang quoted a passage from *Mencius* which advised rulers to follow the wishes of people as evidence of Mencius' support for democratic government. Liang tried to convince Chinese people that the modern western idea of democracy was already contained in the thought of Mencius(50).

Liang's reinterpretation of Mencius' notion of "Primacy of the people" to advocate the western idea of democracy was based on his identification of Mencius' thought with the teaching of "Great Unity 大同", i.e., a branch of Confucius' teaching which Liang thought was closely related to the idea of democracy and equality but had been deliberately neglected in history.

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49. See Liang's "Telegraph in opposition of restoration of monarchy 反對復辟電" (1917) in *Selected Works of Liang Qichao* (Shanghai Renmin, 1984), P.715-717/ Zhang Hao (Shibao wenhua chuban shiye, 1981), P.547

50. Yang Bojun, *Translation and Commentary of Mencius* (Zhonghua, 1984), P.328 Philip Huang (University of Washington, 1972), P.20-21

In Liang's view, Confucius' teaching can be divided into "Great Unity 大同" and "Little prosperity 小康". The teaching of "Great Unity", which contained ideas resembling modern western ideas of equality and democracy (天下為公, 選賢與能), was succeeded by Mencius who believed that there were origins of goodness in human nature and who stressed benevolence. Therefore, Mencius' thought contained notions like "Primacy of the people" which stressed people's rights and resembled the idea of democracy. On the other hand, the teaching of "Little prosperity", which contained ideas of authoritarianism, was succeeded by Xunzi who believed that human nature was evil and stressed rites (隆禮). However, since Chinese rulers had made use of Xunzi's teaching of "Little prosperity" to reinforce authoritarian rule in history, Mencius' teaching of "Great Unity" had been deliberately neglected(51).

I suggest that based on such a view, Liang attempted to advocate the idea of democracy and people's rights through reinterpreting Mencius' notion of "Primacy of the people" on the pretext of restoring the true face of Confucius' teaching.

However, Philip Huang has pointed out that there are essential differences between Mencius' notion of "Primacy of the people" and the western idea of democracy. For example, "Primacy of the people" was primarily concerned with the rulers protecting and caring for the people, which was similar to parents protecting and caring for their children. In other words, Mencius' political ideal was the benevolent exercise of autocratic rule where the ruler took the initiative while people waited for the benevolence of the ruler. However, that is quite different from the modern idea of democracy in which people have to take the initiative in establishing democratic institutions, participating in politics and asserting their rights. Liu Shuxian (劉述先 1934-) has also pointed out that there is no contradiction between the notion of "Primacy of the people" and rule by an absolute monarch(52).

I agree with Huang's view that the notion of "Primacy of the people" was the benevolent exercise of autocratic rule, because this is consistent with the notion of "benevolent rule by the sage king" advocated by both Confucius and Mencius. Yi Xinding has also suggested that Mencius' notion of "Primacy of the people" was based on "benevolence and righteousness"(53). Therefore, although the notion of "Primacy of the people" does put the emphasis on people (e.g. their interests and status), it is still a notion within the framework of autocratic rule, with no suggestion of people directly participating in politics as in a modern liberal democracy.

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51. See "On the general trend of change in Chinese scholarship and thought" (1902) in *Collection of Yinbingshi Vol.7* (1941), P.46, "On China' religious reform" (1899) in *Collections of Yinbingshi Vol.3* (1941), P.56-58 and Zhu Weizheng, *Liang Qichao's Two Works on Qing Intellectual History* (Fudan University Press, 1985), P.68

52. See Philip Huang (University of Washington, 1972), P.21 & 60 and Liu Shuxian, "From Primacy of People to Democracy 從民本到民主" in *Confucianism and Modernisation 儒家思想与现代化* (Chinese broadcasting, 1992), P.19

53. Fung Yu-lan (Princeton University, 1952), P.74/ Yi Xinding (Zhongzhou classics, 1992), P.29

We can also verify whether “Primacy of the people” contains modern western idea of democracy by taking into account other political thoughts of Mencius. According to Mencius’ notion of the “Mandate of Heaven” (天命), a ruler was given the mandate to rule by Heaven but if the ruler fails to maintain his moral virtues and to act according to Heaven’s will, he will lose his mandate to rule and it is legitimate for people to overthrow him. Also, according to Mencius’ perception of the ideal relation between ruler and subjects, this should be a relation based on mutual respect and dependence. That is, if a ruler looks upon his subjects as brothers, the subjects should revere and support him, whereas if a ruler looks upon his subjects as animals, the subjects should see him as an enemy (“君之視臣如手足,則臣視君如腹心;君之視臣如土芥,則臣視君如寇讎”(54).

These various political ideas of Mencius indicate that Mencius tried to assert people’s interests and status, which he thought were above the ruler and nation, as well as a more equal relation between people and ruler. This can be interpreted as Mencius’ outcry against autocratic rulers’ abuse of people in his time. However, despite Mencius’ emphasis on common people’s interests and status, which to a certain extent resembles the spirit of modern liberal democracy, we cannot find any proposals for the establishment of liberal democratic institutions (e.g. representative government) in his political ideas. This also suggests that Mencius’ notion of “Primacy of the people” was based on the principle of autocratic rule instead of liberal democracy. It indicates a weakness in Liang’s reinterpretation of the Confucian notion of “Primacy of the people” as the equivalent of the modern western idea of democracy.

Finally, Liang tried to show that the modern western idea of socialism was similar to notions in Confucian classics and ancient Chinese systems. In 1904, by reinterpreting a writing of Song Confucian scholar Su Xun (蘇洵) as similar in content to a declaration of the First International in 1866, Liang suggested that the idea of the landlord exploiting tenant farmers by taking their residual values already existed in ancient China. On this basis, Liang argued that the ancient Chinese system of “equalising the land (井田制度)” was based on the same ideology as the modern socialist system. In 1920, Liang further argued that the spirit of socialism was not foreign but could be found in ancient China, by citing Confucius’ phrase “equality without poverty, harmony without scarcity (均無貧, 和無寡)” and Mencius’ phrase “stable income, stable mind (恆產恆心)” as evidence of the essence of modern socialism(55).

In my view, in the first case (1904), by stressing that the ideas of socialism and a socialist system could be found in ancient China, Liang sought to reduce Chinese people’s resistance to socialism, which was a new and alien idea to them at that time. In the second case (1920), when socialism was by now a popular idea in China, stressing that the essence of socialism was contained in Confucian notions could serve Liang’s attempt to reassert the value of Confucianism and promote cultural nationalism in China.

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54. Yang Bojun, *Translation and Commentary of Mencius* (Zhonghua, 1984), P.186/ Lin Qiyen (林启彦), *The Academic and Intellectual History of China* 中国学术思想史 (Hong Kong Educational Publishing, 1990), P.21

### 3. Zhang Taiyan's criticism of Kang Youwei's reinterpretation of "Three Ages"

Since Zhang was part of Kang and Liang's reform movement from 1895 to 1900, he also tried to reinterpret Confucian notions to support the ideas of political reforms in this period. For example, Zhang claimed that the idea of democracy could be found in the "*Book of History* 尚書" while the idea of parliament could be found in "*Zhou Rites* 周禮". In order to support Kang's ideas of reform, Zhang even adopted ideas from the New Text School even though he belonged to the Ancient Text School. Moreover, Zhang's writings in this period indicate that, like Kang and Liang, he was greatly influenced by the notion of evolution introduced by Yan Fu(56).

However, as Zhang Chaozun has suggested, Zhang had already shown differences from Kang before 1900. For example, an anti-Manchu attitude could be found in his writings during this period even though the Manchu emperor was the focus of Kang's political reform. Zhang also criticized Kang's view of Ancient Text classics as forgeries during this period(57).

Zhang's interpretation of Confucian notions further deviated from Kang's after his political standpoint shifted to pro-revolution and republic after 1900.

There are several sources of Zhang's idea of revolution and republic.

First, as discussed before, Zhang had an anti-Manchu attitude from his early years, while the immediate cause behind his shift to the revolutionary movement was his disillusionment with the Qing dynasty. As will be discussed later, anti-Manchu racial discourse was frequently used by Zhang to justify his revolutionary cause.

Second, Zhang was influenced by anarchism, which he absorbed through the Japanese socialist anarchist Kotoku Shusui (幸徳秋水 1871-1911). Kotoku became an anarchist after he was released from prison in 1905 and he was influenced by Russian anarchists during his stay in the U.S. between 1905 and 1906. He was invited to speak at the Society for the study of Socialism by Chinese revolutionaries in 1907(58).

55. See "*Chinese socialism 中國之社會主義*" (1904) and "*Reflections on the trip to Europe*" (1920) in *Selected Works of Liang Qichao* (1984), P.203-205, 729

56. Wang Rongzhu (Lianjing, 1988), P.49

57. See Zhang Chaozun (张昭军), *A Study of the Confucian Thought of Zhang Taiyan 儒学近代之境: 章太炎儒学思想研究* (Social Science materials, 2002), P.39, 43, 279, 281 and Zhang Taiyan's "*Correcting the wrong idea of guest emperor 客帝匡繆*" (1900) in *Qiu Shu 廬書* (Huaxia, 2002), P.7

58. Peter Zarrow (Columbia University, 1990), P.47, 54/ Nishio Yotaro (西尾陽太郎), *Kotoku Shusui 幸徳秋水* (Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1959), P.135-137, 148-9

The influence of anarchism on Zhang's idea of revolution was indicated in his negative remarks on government and nation in his various writings. In the article "*On five negations 五無論*" (1908), one of the five things he negated was government (the others were tribes, humans, living beings and world). First, Zhang thought that since the existence of government was a major cause of conflicts, the elimination of governments would lead to peace. Second, Zhang thought that since government was originally established out of bad intentions (e.g. taking away land and interests from people, as in the conquest for power and imperialism), elimination of government would reduce fighting among people. Finally, Zhang argued that since human nature is evil, government officials and those who make rites and laws are also evil(59).

Moreover, Zhang perceived the nation as an artificial creation with functions but no self-nature. Zhang elaborated this point in his article "*On nation 國家論*" (1908) with the idea that while its components really exist, the combination of components does not really exist. Based on this view, he argued that while the components of a nation (i.e. people) really exist, the nation does not really exist and has no self-nature. Therefore, Zhang claimed that nations are created out of necessity instead of something natural, and love of a nation is like love of an illusion because while love of one's race is grown out of natural feelings, love of one's nation is not(60).

We can find similarities between Zhang's negative remarks on government and nation and the Russian anarchist Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921)'s claim that government was immoral and that the existence of the state was a denial of man's natural ability to cooperate spontaneously. Michael Gasster has suggested that the ideas of Kropotkin were one of the bases of Chinese anarchists' beliefs(61). This further indicates that Zhang's ideas of revolution were influenced by anarchism.

Nevertheless, although Zhang was critical of government and nation, he supported the establishment of a republican form of government in China. As mentioned before, Zhang believed that the nation is necessary even though it does not have self-nature. Similarly, Zhang thought government is necessary despite his negative view of government; that is, he considered government a "necessary evil". Such a view was indicated in Zhang's claim that while Chinese scholars traditionally despised government, they still supported the rules, systems and hierarchies set up by government because they were necessary. Zhang argued that since the nation is necessary for a race, while government is necessary for a nation, the republican form of government should be adopted in China since it is the form of government which causes the least negative effects(62).

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59. *Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan Vol.4* (1985), P.432, 438-9

60. *Ibid.*, P.430-1, 457-459, 463/ Zhang's negation of humans, living beings and world as well as his belief that nation does not really exist and has no self-nature was also influenced by the Buddhist notion of emptiness (空)

61. See Michael Gasster (University of Washington, 1969), P.161, 163

62. *Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan Vol.4* (1985), P.430, 460

Finally, since Zhang was a part of Sun Yatsen (孫中山 1866-1925)'s revolutionary movement aiming at overthrowing the Qing dynasty with a political revolution and establishing a Chinese republic and one of its major propagandists, (Zhang became the editor of the journal *Minbao* of the revolutionary alliance *Tongmenhui* in 1906 at the invitation of Sun), he was influenced by Sun Yatsen's ideas of revolution and republic.

There are many different sources of Sun's ideas of revolution and republicanism. First, Sun was influenced by the political ideas and system of America and France, which were the two major western powers adopting the republican form of government in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. As Audrey Wells has suggested, Sun's "Three People's Principles 三民主義" (the Principles of Nationalism, Democracy and Livelihood) indicates the influence both of American President Abraham Lincoln's slogan "of the people, by the people and for the people" as well as the French Revolution's slogan "liberty, equality and fraternity". Sun also praised America as the motherland of republic in an article "*China should establish a republic 中國應建設共和國*" (1905). Moreover, in a speech on the first anniversary of *Minbao* in 1906, Sun claimed that since an autocratic monarchy which was unbearable to people who loved freedom and equality had existed in China for several thousand years, a democratic constitutional government should be established in China such as that which had been set up in France(63).

Since Sun believed that a republic was the most suitable political system for China, he refuted reformers (e.g. Kang)'s view that the political system of China should be changed from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy and that a republic was not suitable for China. Sun used the metaphor of using the most modern engines instead of outmoded engines for constructing railways to refute Kang's stress on gradual progress. Sun argued that China should immediately adopt a republican form of government, which he believed was the most advanced and civilised political system of the time. To refute Kang's argument that China was not ready for a republic because of its low level of culture, Sun claimed that Chinese people's level of culture was higher than other nations(64).

Second, Sun's witness of the social problems (e.g. the inequality of wealth) in Europe during his stay in England between 1896 and 1897 made him realize that a social revolution must be carried out in China simultaneously with a political revolution. There is also evidence which suggests that Sun had exchanged ideas with European socialists (e.g. the French socialists Charles Longuet and Paul Lafargue) during his stay in England. The influences of socialism on Sun's revolutionary ideas were also manifested in the social program of the "equalisation of land rights" (平均地權) proclaimed by the *Tongmenhui* in Japan in 1905(65).

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63. See Audrey Wells, *The Political Thought of Sun Yatsen: Development and Impact* (Palgrave, 2001), P.34-35/ *Complete Works of Sun Yatsen Vol.3 國父全集* (Zhongyang Wenwu, 1957), P.5

64. See "*China should establish a republic*" in *Complete Works of Sun Yatsen* (1957), P.4-5

65. Audrey Wells (Palgrave, 2001) P.12, 22, 26, 29-30/ *Minbao Volume 1 (民報第1號)*, P.2

However, Sun's rejection of the idea of class conflict and his desire to reach social goals through more cooperative and harmonious methods than those advocated by Marxists indicates that his idea of revolution was not derived from Marx(66).

Third, as a devout Christian, Sun believed that his revolutionary activities were divinely inspired, i.e. God had sent him to free China from bondage and aggression. Sun's influence by the Taiping Rebellion (太平天國 1850-1864), which was based on an unconventional form of Christianity, also made him believe that it was possible to be both a Christian and a revolutionary (Sun thought Jesus was also a revolutionary). Sun was also greatly influenced by Christian modernist missionaries who in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century preached that China needed a new social order either through peaceful or violent means(67).

Finally, Sun used the Confucian notion of "Mandate of Heaven", i.e., the notion that a ruler's mandate to rule is derived from Heaven and would be taken away if the ruler has lost his moral virtues and ability to govern people, to justify his overthrowing of the Qing dynasty, by claiming that it had lost its Mandate of Heaven(68).

I suggest that due to his influence by the various ideas of revolution and republicanism discussed above, Zhang began to criticize Kang's attempt to advocate constitutional monarchy as well as to oppose revolution and republic with the notion of "Three Ages".

First, Zhang attacked the foundation on which the "Three Ages" as a theory of historical evolution was based (i.e. the gradual evolution from the Age of "disorder" to "approaching peace" and "universal peace") by claiming that all three ages belonged to one generation, according to the Gongyang commentary. Based on this view, Zhang argued that the whole concept of "Three Ages" as an idea of progressive historical evolution suggested by Kang could not be established since substantial changes could not possibly take place within one generation.

Second, Zhang attacked Kang from a historical perspective. Since Zhang considered the *Six Classics*, including the *Spring and Autumn Annals* from which the notion of "Three Ages" was derived, as historical records, he considered that for Kang to focus on the Gongyang notion of "Three Ages" while ignoring the function of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* as a historical work was a deviation from the teaching of Confucius. Zhang also refuted Kang's view that there were orally transmitted "subtle words" of Confucius in the *Spring and Autumn Annals* by proving that these "subtle words" were fabricated by Han Confucians(69).

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66. Ibid, P.117

67. Ibid, P.104-109, 111

68. Ibid, P.118

69. Zhang Chaozun (Social Science materials, 2002), P.284-286/ *Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan Volume 4* (1985), P.371

Moreover, as a historian, Zhang criticised Kang's attempt to explain the complicated process of historical development using a simple theory of one-way progressive historical evolution in his interpretation of the "Three ages". Zhang also criticised what he saw as Kang's attempt to distort historical facts in order to match them with his historiography (As discussed in Chapter 2, Zhang opposed Kang's idea of "using scholarship for practical application")(70).

Third, since after 1900 Zhang advocated an anti-Manchu revolution based on a racial discourse, he criticised Kang's attempt to blur the distinction between Chinese and Manchu via the notion of the "Three Ages" (i.e., Kang's idea that the distinction between Chinese and barbarians was based on level of culture instead of ethnicity), by asserting the ethnic distinction between the Han and Manchu races. He argued that Chinese could not be ruled by other races due to their distinct ancestral origin. Zhang also tried to justify his anti-Manchu revolutionary discourse by highlighting the Manchu government's discrimination against Han officials, its persecution of Han intellectuals and Han people's historical distaste of the Manchu as an alien race(71).

Zhang's racial discourse can be traced to his youth, when he was influenced by the anti-Manchu ideas of Ming loyalists of the early Qing Period like Gu Yanwu (顧巖武 1613-1682) and Wang Fuzhi (王夫之 1619-1692). For example, Zhang's assertion of the distinction between Han and Manchu and the distinct ancestral origin of Chinese people was influenced by Wang Fuzhi's idea that Chinese and barbarians could not be blurred due to their differences since they were born in different places(72).

Nevertheless, despite his Han nationalist and anti-Manchu attitude, Zhang collaborated with revolutionaries from other Asian countries (e.g. India, Korea and Vietnam) when he was in Japan. Moreover, in a statement to Manchu students in Japan after the 1911 Revolution broke out, Zhang stated that the revolution was not against them and that their rights in the new Chinese nation would be protected.

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70. Tang Wenquan (唐文权), *A Study of the Thought of Zhang Taiyan 章太炎思想研究* (Central China, 1986), P.342/ Chen Pingyuan (Beijing University, 1998), P.34-39

71. Zhang Chaozun (Social Science materials, 2002), P.288/ See Zhang's speech for Chinese students in Tokyo (1906) in *Selected Political Writings of Zhang Taiyan* (Zhonghua, 1977), P.276/ See "The origin of men 原人" and "Refutation of Kang Youwei's essay on revolution 駁康有為論革命書" in *Qiu Shu* (2002), P.71-73, 298-308

72. Frank Dikotter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*(Hurst, 1992), P.27

This indicates that Zhang was not a narrow racist and his anti-Manchu racial discourse was only a part of his revolutionary propaganda against the Qing dynasty. I suggest that it was also closely linked with the Chinese revolutionaries' attempt to construct a Chinese national identity and promote Han Chinese nationalism based on the notion that Chinese people were a single, pure race with common blood, customs and mythological ancestors (e.g. the Yellow Emperor). That is because the myth of a common single ethnic origin can extend the individual's gene pool beyond immediate kinship ties to wider ethnic kin. This can contribute to people's belief in the primordality of nation and the primordial nature of their collective cultural identities, which help to promote nationalism and national unity(73).

Fourth, based on his notion of the "national essence of China" (the distinct language, literature, historic figures, institutions and philosophies of China), Zhang criticised Kang's attempt to blur the differences between Chinese and Western culture with his interpretation of "Three Ages". By asserting the distinctiveness of Chinese culture, Zhang refuted Kang's argument that the West was culturally more advanced and in a higher stage of historical evolution. He also refuted Kang's assumption that all people would go through the same pattern of historical evolution.

As Wang Rongzhu has pointed out, Zhang's refutation of Kang was not based on ethnocentrism or cultural arrogance. Instead, it was based on his view of cultural pluralism, i.e., that each culture has developed its distinct character through its distinct historical development process. It was also due to Zhang's sense of crisis over the loss of the distinctiveness of Chinese culture in face of the challenge of Western culture. This explains why Zhang claimed that Chinese and Western culture should respect each other's differences and treat each other equally, while he opposed Western culture's domination of other cultures(74).

I agree with Wang's view because as discussed in Chapter 1, Zhang indicated the distinctiveness of Chinese culture in contrast with Western culture when he perceived the distinction between traditional Chinese teachings and the Western notion of religion. Moreover, as will be discussed in Chapter 4, Zhang refuted the radical Chinese intellectuals' idea of transplanting modern Western culture in China on the basis of cultural pluralism and the distinctiveness of Chinese and Western culture.

Finally, since the western notion of social evolution was an underlying principle of the idea of historical evolution in the "Three Ages", Zhang criticized it based on his negative view of the notion of social evolution.

There is evidence which suggests that although Zhang criticised Kang's idea of a one-way progressive historical evolution, he was not against the notion of social evolution in general.

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73. Michael Gasster (University of Washington, 1969), P.191/ Wang Rongzhu (Lianjing, 1988), P.95/ Frank Dikotter (Hurst, 1992), P.124-5/ Anthony Smith (Polity Press, 2001), P.51-54/ Anthony Smith, *Ethnicity and Nationalism* (E.J. Brill, 1992), P.105/ Jiang Yihua (Nanjing University, 2002), P.72-73

74. Wang Rongzhu (Lianjing, 1988), P.54-56, 61-62

Thus in Zhang's article "*Differentiating the notion of evolution 俱分進化論*" (1906) he argued that evolution could move in both a good and a bad direction. Zhang raised several examples to support his argument and these examples involved human and social matters. For example, he pointed out that as human society became more sophisticated and technology more advanced, the more human conflicts there would be and the more human beings would hurt each other(75).

Moreover, Jiang Yihua has pointed out that Zhang read many Western books containing notions of cosmological and biological evolution when he attended the Confucian institute "*Gujingjingsha*", and he applied these notions when interpreting Chinese classics in his writings. Zhang was also influenced by Herbert Spencer's writings on the theory of evolution, which he translated in 1898. Such influence was reflected in Zhang's idea of evolution as the general principle of cosmological, biological and human matters in his writings between 1898 and 1899. Chang Qie has also pointed out that Zhang was influenced by Nietzsche's notion of "superman", which in turn was derived from the notion of social evolution(76).

Nevertheless, as Wang Fansen has pointed out, Zhang started to criticise the notion of evolution after 1906. I agree with Wang's view because in the speech Zhang gave for Chinese students in Tokyo in 1906, he criticised the association of "Three Ages" with the notion of evolution, describing evolution as "the most shallow idea of Europe". In the article "*On four puzzles 四惑論*" (1909), Zhang argued that since the total amount of things in the world is always the same, progress in one area must be offset by reversal in another area and therefore, there is no real evolution(77).

Also, as Frank Dikotter has suggested, Zhang's influence by Yogacara Buddhism (唯識宗/ Weishi/ Consciousness Only) made him question the objective reality of Western values such as progress and social evolution, as reflected in his view that evolution could move in both a good and a bad direction capable of both advance and reversal, as discussed above(78). Since Zhang was influenced by Yogacara Buddhism during his imprisonment from 1903 to 1906, this may explain why he started to criticise the notion of evolution from 1906 onwards.

Based on the above findings, I suggest that although Zhang did not object to the notion of evolution and its application in human and social dimensions, his negative view and criticism of the notion of evolution after 1906 was one reason why he refuted Kang's idea of historical evolution.

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75. *Minbao Volume 7 (民報第 7 號)*, P.3

76. See Jiang Yihua (Shanghai Sanlian, 2000), P.167-169, 175-177 and Chang Qie (Dongfang, 1999), P.84-88

77. See Wang Fansen (Shibao wenhua chuban shiye, 1985), P.36-7/ *Selected Political Writings of Zhang Taiyan (1977)*, P.276/ *Minbao Volume 22 (民報第 22 號)*, P.1

78. See Frank Dikotter (Hurst, 1992), P.120-122

Moreover, we should note that although Kang's idea of progressive historical evolution was influenced by the notion of social evolution and social progress introduced by Yan Fu in his book "*On Evolution*", Yan himself refuted Kang and Liang's idea that China was at the point of adopting constitutional monarchy. Yan argued that while the West had had a tradition of democracy since ancient times, China had never had any tradition of democracy before and it would take a long time before China could adopt a Western political system such as constitutional monarchy. Yan also argued that with China's low level of culture, imitation of advanced western countries' political system would only lead to chaos. (In response to Yan's argument, Liang raised Meiji Japan as an example of success in transforming a nation from absolute rule into constitutional monarchy within a short period of time)(79).

Nevertheless, although Zhang criticized Kang's reinterpretation of "Three Ages", he himself reinterpreted Confucian classics to challenge traditional notions and introduce modern western ideas. For example, Zhang reinterpreted an account of a prince's assassination of his king, recorded in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, as an indictment of the king's mistreatment of his subjects. Zhang's interpretation fundamentally challenged the traditional notion that Confucius wrote the *Spring and Autumn Annals* to uphold the status and authority of the rulers, rectify names and assert the distinction between people with different status, as well as to terrify those who tried to rebel against their rulers. He also argued that it introduced the modern western idea of the rights of people and anti-authoritarianism(80).

This indicates that although Zhang criticized Kang's reinterpretation of the "Three Ages", he was not against reinterpreting Confucian notions in order to advocate modern western ideas, and he also took part in the process as a means of meeting the challenges of western ideas and the changes taking place in China at that time.

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79. Takeuchi Hiroyuki (Kenbun Shuppan, 1995), P.42-43

80. Tang Wenquan (Central China, 1986), P.338, 344

## Chapter 4: Impact of reconstruction of Confucianism

Kang, Liang and Zhang's reconstruction of Confucianism in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century had a significant impact on the cultural and intellectual development of China in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this chapter, I will argue that it directly and indirectly influenced and inspired the New Culture Movement, the May Fourth Movement, the New Confucianism and the discourse on Confucianism's relation with modernisation and economic development, as well as revitalising Confucianism as a national ethical system and the content of moral education in modern society.

### 1. Impact on the New Culture Movement and May Fourth Movement

The New Culture Movement (新文化運動) from the mid 1910's to early 1920's and the May Fourth Movement (五四運動) in 1919 attacked traditional values, thoughts, customs, morals and rites associated with Confucianism. There are several ways these two movements were influenced by and linked with Kang, Liang and Zhang's reconstruction of Confucianism.

First, as discussed in Chapter 1, Kang questioned the authenticity of the Ancient Text classics and claimed that they were forgeries, while Zhang criticized Confucius and Confucian followers and recast the status of Confucianism as one of the ancient philosophical schools. Although Kang and Zhang originally carried out these acts to serve their reform and revolutionary discourse, without the intention of undermining Confucianism, they nevertheless contributed to weakening the authority of Confucianism among Chinese intellectuals(1).

As Wang Rongzhu has pointed out, although there were Chinese intellectuals before Kang and Zhang like Wei Yuan and Feng Guifen (馮桂芬 1809-1874) who attempted to deviate from tradition, their challenge to Confucian orthodoxy was indirect and minimal. However, the drastic changes in China in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century created both the need and conditions for Kang and Zhang directly to challenge Confucian orthodoxy. At the same time, the traditional Confucian training and background of Kang and Zhang, as well as their familiarity with Confucian classics, enabled them to carry out such a task. Kang and Zhang laid the precedent and foundation for the direct and large scale attack on Confucianism and challenge to its authority during the New Culture and May 4<sup>th</sup> Movements(2).

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1. Wang Rongzhu (Lianjing, 1988), P. 89
  2. Ibid. P.71-73

Shimada Kenji has suggested that the critique of Confucianism during the May Fourth Movement drew its inspiration in part from Zhang's study of non-Confucian ancient Chinese philosophical schools (*zhuzi* studies). I agree with Shimada's view because Zhang's study of non-Confucian ancient Chinese philosophical schools led him to recast the status of Confucianism as only one of the schools of thought in ancient China as well as to make negative remarks about Confucianism and Confucian followers. Ōnogawa Hidemi has also suggested that Zhang's criticism of Confucianism influenced the movement against traditional rites (礼教) in the two movements(3).

Kang's questioning of the authenticity of the Ancient Text classics also contributed to weakening Chinese intellectuals' tradition of believing in ancient works, which in turn led to the trend of questioning the authenticity of ancient works among Chinese intellectuals after the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement. Such a trend had led to a movement of questioning ancient history by Chinese intellectuals in the 1920's (e.g. "Doubters of Antiquity" like Gu Jiegang), which undermined the authority of ancient kings and the historical foundation on which China's moral tradition (*daotung* 道统) was based(4). It contributed to weakening Chinese people's tradition of looking to the past with reverence, as well as shifting their attention to the present and future, and this matched with the New Culture and May Fourth Movements' objectives in criticising and rejecting China's past.

Second, as discussed in Chapter 3, Kang's reinterpretation of the "Three Ages" as a theory of progressive historical evolution represented a breakthrough in Chinese historiography. Takeuchi Hiroyuki has suggested that it represents a shift in historical consciousness which challenged the traditional belief that Confucius could not be matched by people after him(5). In my view, it also contributed to shifting Chinese people's focus from the past to the future, to their belief in progress, to their break with history and tradition and to their acceptance of the notion of modernity. These changes contributed to the critique and rejection of China's past and tradition during the New Culture and May Fourth Movement.

3. See Shimada Kenji (Stanford, 1990), P.15 and Oonogawa Hidemi (Chikuma Shobo, 1978), P.27
4. See Ma Hongling (Jilin Wenshi, 1997), P.17/ Zhang Hao, "Confucianism and the Intellectual Crisis of Modern China 儒家与当代中国的思想危机" in Feng Zusheng (封祖盛), *Contemporary New Confucianism 当代新儒家* (Xinhua, 1989), P.98/ Chow Tse-tsung, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (Harvard, 1960), P.196/ Wang Rongzhu (Lianjing, 1988), P.116
5. Takeuchi Hiroyuki (Kenbun Shuppan, 1995), P.209

Third, Kang laid the precedent of directly challenging, criticising and re-examining traditional social norms and relations of China (which are based on Confucian ethical principles) for intellectuals during the New Culture and May Fourth Movement. In his book “*Complete work on principles of truth and universal laws 實理公法全書*” (1887), Kang challenged the traditional notion that a person belonged to his parents all his life since his body and spirit were created by his parents. Kang claimed that parents were only a medium of creating a person’s physical body whereas the spirits of parents and children were different. Based on that, Kang argued that parents should not demand submission from their children and children should have full autonomy after they grew up. Kang also challenged the Confucian notion of a husband’s domination of his wife and the traditional practice of parents arranging marriages for their children(6).

Since Kang’s direct challenge, criticism and re-examination of traditional social norms and relations was unprecedented, it had a groundbreaking impact on later Chinese intellectuals. For example, Tan Sitong (譚嗣同 1865-1898), one of Kang’s disciples and a member of his reform movement, explicitly and directly criticised traditional family relations in his writing. In “*An Exposition of Benevolence 仁學*” (1897), Tan criticised the traditional Confucian notion of “Three Bonds” (*sangang* 三綱), i.e., ruler’s domination of officials, father’s domination of son and husband’s domination of wife, as oppression, a means by those above to control those below and the origin of sufferings. As will be discussed later, many radical Chinese intellectuals (e.g. Chen Duxiu, Wu Yu and Fu Sinian) also severely attacked the traditional Chinese family system, relations and the notion of “Three Bonds” during the New Culture and May Fourth Movements(7).

Fourth, Kang’s attack on Confucian orthodoxy and his idea of “the world of Great Unity” contributed to the spread of communism in China, which was one of the immediate consequences of the New Culture and May Fourth Movements. As Li Longmu has pointed out, the May Fourth Movement convinced many progressive Chinese intellectuals that Marxism was the right way to solve the problems of China since they thought Confucianism, traditional thought and culture were not suitable for modern China and there were many problems with adopting western liberal democracy in China. Zhang Hao also points out that the rebellious, anti-establishment and anti-tradition mentality of Chinese intellectuals during and after the May Fourth Movement made Marxism appealing to them. Moreover, Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao, the two major leaders of the New Culture and May Fourth Movement, later became the two main founders and early leaders of the Chinese Communist Party(8).

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6. *The Inner and Outer Books of Philosopher Kang 康子內外篇* (Zhonghua, 1982), P.40-42

7. Xu Yijun (徐义君), *The Thought of Tan Sitong 譚嗣同思想* (Hunan Renmin, 1981), P.18/ *Complete Works of Tan Sitong 譚嗣同全集* (1954), P.14

8. Li Longmu (1990), P.385/ Feng Zusheng (1989), P.85, 88, 114 / Chow Tse-tsung (Harvard, 1960), P.45

As Kung-Chuan Hsiao has suggested, Kang's attack on the Ancient Text Classics and Neo-Confucianism created culturally subversive effects which helped to clear the way for the advent of communist ideology and organisation in China. The ideas of primitive communism contained in the "world of great unity" (e.g. the idea of a world without the boundaries of nation, race and class while everybody is equal) also inspired early communist leaders like Mao Zedong. Chinese communists also used Kang's ideas in the "*Book of Great Unity*" to promote communist ideals(9).

Fourth, Kang's proposal to adopt "Confucian religion" as the state religion of China, putting it and the "way of Confucius" in the Chinese constitution, had triggered Chinese intellectuals' response to the discourse on the nature of Confucianism, whether it was a religion, whether it had any religious nature, whether it should be adopted as the state religion, the impact of Confucian religion on China, and the dichotomy between religion and secular in this period.

Chen Duxiu, the major leader of the New Culture and May Fourth Movements, was the key Chinese intellectual who opposed "Confucian religion" in this period. Chen was similar to Liang and Zhang in his perception of the nature of Confucianism and his view of the negative impact of Confucian religion on China. Like Liang and Zhang, Chen stressed the fundamental differences between Confucianism and religion based on the dichotomy between the sphere of human and god (deities/ spirits). Like Liang, Chen perceived the negative impact of a state religion on the nation in areas such as inhibition of freedom of religious belief, thought and scholarship as well as religious conflicts and social divisions. Like Zhang, Chen thought that Chinese people were not concerned with religion and that Confucianism was only one of the ancient philosophical schools of China while the low moral quality of Confucian followers made Confucianism unsuitable to be a state religion and a means to improve customs and morality. Like Liang and Zhang, Chen also refuted the religious identity of Confucius(10).

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9. Ma Hongling (1997), P.186/ Kung-Chuan Hsiao (University of Washington, 1975), P.131/ Audrey Wells (2001), P.116

10. See "*Refuting Kang Youwei's letter to the president and prime minister 駁康有為致總統總理書*" (1916)/ "*Constitution and Confucian Religion 憲法與孔教*" (1916) and "*Again on the problem of Confucian Religion 再論孔教問題*" (1917) in *New Youth Volume 2 No.2, No.3, No.5*

Cai Yuanpei, another liberal Chinese intellectual in this period, attacked Confucian religion on a similar basis. Like Liang, Zhang and Chen, Cai attacked the idea of Confucianism as a religion, of adopting it as state religion and of worshipping Confucius as religious master, based on the dichotomy between Confucius and religion as well as state and religion. Cai believed that Confucius, state and religion were three distinct notions which should not be mixed. Cai pointed out that Confucius distanced himself from religious issues (“敬鬼神而遠之”, “子不語怪力亂神”), Confucius did not set up rites and worship as other religious masters did, and Confucianism did not have the content and form of religion. Cai thought that one should not identify state and religion since state belongs to the sphere of physical (this world) and religion belongs to spiritual (god/ afterlife). Moreover, in his role as education minister in the early Republican Period, Cai opposed the study of Confucian classics in school since he thought education policy should adhere to the universal principles of freedom of speech and thought. Cai also considered the cult of Confucius contradictory to the principle of freedom of belief(11).

Since the Confucian Religion Movement served Chinese cultural conservatives' attempt to preserve traditional teaching, morals and practices in the early Republican Period, it also triggered the radical Chinese intellectuals' attack on Confucian religion based on its link with them. For example, Chen argued that traditional moral codes, modes of thinking and customs and rites which were closely linked with Confucianism were irrelevant to modern life. Chen criticised the attempt to impose the moral codes, customs and rites of the time of Confucius (which he perceived as a feudal society) on modern people since it was theoretically impossible to adhere to the same school of thought after the social environment and life style had changed. Chen pointed out that the traditional Chinese family system and hierarchical family relations based on Confucian ethical principles like the “Three Bonds” and “Filial Piety” (*xiao* 孝) were incompatible with a modern political and economic system based on individual political belief and financial independence. Chen also thought that “Confucian religion” and “the way of Confucius”, which stressed hierarchy, authority and status, were contradictory to modern western ideas of equality and human rights, on which modern western-style systems were built.

Besides Chen, Wu Yu (吳虞 1872-1949) also attacked traditional Chinese family and clan system as the “basis of despotism”, which he thought had their root cause in Confucianism. Fu Sinian (傅斯年 1896-1950) also considered the traditional Chinese family system the “source of all evil”. Also, as Zhang Hao has pointed out, the fact that many supporters of “Confucian religion” in the early Republican Period were incompetent and immoral traditional bureaucrats further convinced radical Chinese intellectuals that traditional things were bad and must be removed before new, good western things could be introduced(12).

11. See “Mr. Cai Yuanpei's speech at the Society of Freedom of belief 蔡元培先生在信教自由會之演說” (1916) in *New Youth Volume 2 No.5* and Li Shen (Shanghai Renmin, 2000), P.1075-76
12. See “*Constitution and Confucian Religion*” (1916) and “*The way of Confucius and modern life 孔子之道與現代生活*” (1916) in *New Youth Volume 2 No. 3, 4/ Feng Zusheng (1989), P.85/ Silke Krieger, *Confucianism and the Modernisation of China* (Mainz, 1991), P.119*

As discussed in Chapter 3, Kang attempted to reinterpret traditional Confucian moral virtues in order to show that they were similar to modern western moral ideas (e.g. humanity, fraternity, equality and freedom) and that these ideas could be found in the Confucian classics. I suggest that this was Kang's attempt to defend traditional morals in face of radical Chinese intellectuals' arguments that traditional moral codes were incompatible with modern life whereas modern western moral ideas were thought within the New Culture Movement to be superior to traditional Confucian moral codes .

Since Confucian religion was also closely linked with monarchists' attempts to restore monarchy and autocratic and imperial rule in China, it also provoked radical Chinese intellectuals' attack on its link with them. As discussed in Chapter 1, Chen Duxiu pointed out that there was an inseparable link between Confucianism and imperial rule due to the role of the emperor in implementing the way of Confucius in politics, and the function of the imperial system as the institutional manifestation of Confucian doctrines. Chen also indicated the inherent link between Kang's attempt to adopt Confucian religion as state religion and his attempt to reinstate the emperor, and restore the monarchy and the Qing dynasty(13).

While Kang attempted to give Confucianism an official, legal and constitutional status in the new Chinese republic by putting "Confucian religion" and "the way of Confucius is the foundation of moral cultivation in national education" ("国民教育以孔子之道为修身大本") in the Chinese constitution, some radical Chinese intellectuals opposed Confucian religion from a constitutional and legal perspective. For example, Chen thought that since a constitution was a legal document which guaranteed the rights of people, it should neither include clauses which gave preference to a particular school of thought nor specify a certain "way" as the foundation of education. There was also no precedent in the constitution of any nation which included a clause authoritatively determining a nation's "foundation of education". Chen also thought that the way of Confucius, which stressed hierarchy and authoritarianism, was contradictory to the European legal spirit which stressed equality and human rights. (The Chinese constitution promulgated in 1917 was based on European model)(14).

Li Dazhao also pointed out the problem of putting "the way of Confucius", which he considered an ambiguous phrase without clear definition, into a constitution in which all words should have a clear and precise meaning. Li also thought it inappropriate and contradictory to put Confucius, the symbol of authoritarianism in Chinese history whom certain Chinese people revered as a sage, into a constitution for all modern Chinese citizens which was supposed to guarantee their liberty(15).

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13. See "Refuting Kang Youwei's letter to the president and prime minister" (1916) and "Restoring the monarchy and Honouring Confucius 復辟與尊孔" (1917) in *New Youth* Vol. 2 No.2 and Vol. 3 No.6

14. See "Constitution and Confucian Religion" in *New Youth* Vol.2 No.3

15. See "Confucius and Constitution" (1917) in *Complete Works of Li Dazhao* (Hubei Jiaoyu , 1999), P.449

Based on the above findings, I suggest that the controversy over Confucian religion among Chinese intellectuals in this period was the manifestation of the struggle between on the one hand the trend of cultural conservatism, authoritarianism, monarchism and reasserting Confucianism and on the other hand the trend of anti-traditionalism, anti-authoritarianism, anti-monarchism and advocating modern western ideas (e.g. liberty, equality and democracy) in China in the 1910's.

Fifth, while Kang, Liang and Zhang's reconstruction of Confucianism initiated intellectual and cultural changes which laid the foundation of the New Culture and May Fourth Movements, as Li Longmu has argued, the two movements took place precisely because this reconstruction of Confucianism had failed to bring sufficient changes to China or to solve the problems of China as had been intended(16).

I agree with Li's view because the intellectual and cultural changes brought by Kang, Liang and Zhang's reconstruction of Confucianism were limited. For example, while Kang's reinterpretation of the Confucian notion of "Three Ages" promoted the ideas of constitutional monarchy, democracy and equality, his promotion of Confucian religion and the worship of Confucius as a religious master reinforced authoritarianism and autocratic rule. While Kang contributed to removing Confucian orthodoxy's intellectual constraints on Chinese people by claiming that the Ancient Text classics were forgeries and stating that doctrines should be evaluated based on their value and truth instead of the person (e.g. Confucius) who created them, he also contributed to imposing new intellectual constraints on Chinese people by transforming Confucian doctrines into religious dogma and promoting Confucian religion as the state religion of China(17).

Similarly, while Zhang contributed to weakening authoritarianism and autocratic rule by criticising Confucius and Confucianism and opposing Confucian religion, he did not clearly advocate democracy and liberty in his writings. As Li Longmu has pointed out, Chinese revolutionaries' links with the landlord class put a limit on their attempts to attack tradition and promote western liberal democratic ideas(18). Moreover, since Zhang's criticism of Confucius and Confucianism before the 1911 Revolution were so closely linked with his attempt to overthrow the Qing dynasty during that period, they were often regarded by Chinese intellectuals after 1911 simply as part of his revolutionary propaganda.

Kang, Liang and Zhang's desire to challenge fundamental Confucian principles and values and weaken the foundation of Confucianism was also limited by their background as traditional Confucian scholars who attempted to preserve and strengthen Confucianism by reconstructing it from within, based on its own foundation.

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16. See Li Longmu (1990), P.45

17. See *The Inner and Outer books of Philosopher Kang* (1982), P.43-44

18. See Li Longmu (1990), P.45

Kang, Liang and Zhang's awareness of the weaknesses of Western culture also put a limit on their intention to transform Confucianism in terms of western ideas. For example, in an article he wrote after a trip to Europe during his exile, Kang remarked that the problems of western countries were no less than China's and he thought traditional Confucian moral virtues (e.g. benevolence, filial piety and loyalty) were superior to western moral values. As discussed in Chapter 2, Liang was also deeply aware of the problems and weaknesses of modern Western culture after a trip to Europe between 1919 and 1920. Zhang, as discussed in Chapter 3, pointed out in "*Differentiating the notion of evolution*" (1906) that Western economic and scientific development could cause damage to human society and morals. Zhang was further convinced of this view by the large scale devastation of Europe during the First World War, as indicated in a speech he gave in 1917(19).

The limitations to the intellectual and cultural changes brought about by Kang, Liang and Zhang explains why many Chinese intellectuals felt the need of an in-depth "intellectual revolution" and "cultural renovation" which would re-evaluate and criticise the traditional moral codes, customs, rites, family system and social relations of China closely associated with Confucianism, during the New Culture and May Fourth Movement. Even the American philosopher John Dewey (1859-1952), who was lecturing in China during the May Fourth Movement, thought China could not be changed without a social transformation based on a transformation of ideas and values, while the political revolution of China had failed to change Chinese people's conceptions of life, which really controlled Chinese society(20).

Kang, Liang and Zhang's reconstruction of Confucianism was closely linked with their nationalist discourse, ideologies and movements which aimed at strengthening China, transforming it into a strong modern unified nation and defending it from foreign aggression. However, the political chaos in the early Republican Period (e.g. the disintegration of China into the rule of local warring warlords) and intensification of foreign aggression (e.g. Japan's Twenty One Demands 二十一條款 in 1915 and the transfer of German rights in Shandong to Japan in 1919) indicates the failure of their reform and revolutionary movements. As Zhang Hao has suggested, when a tradition keeps failing in its process of adaptation while bringing pains and frustration to its people, it is inevitable that intellectuals will lose confidence in the tradition and attempt to turn against it. Since the failure of Kang, Liang and Zhang's reform and revolutionary movement indicates that their attempt to save China by reconstructing Confucianism, reinterpreting Confucian notions and synthesizing them with Western ideas had failed, radical Chinese intellectuals in the 1910's felt strongly the need to attack directly Confucianism and its moral codes as well as to promote directly modern western ideas like democracy, science, liberty, equality, socialism and Marxism in order to save China(21).

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19. See Jiang Yihua (Shanghai Sanlian, 2000), P.125-6

20. Feng Zusheng (1989), P.83-4/ Chow Tse-tsung (1960), P.185, 222, 224

21. Feng Zusheng (1989), P.82

Finally, although Kang, Liang and Zhang's reconstruction of Confucianism had directly or indirectly influenced and inspired the New Culture and May Fourth Movement, Kang and Zhang opposed the two movements, so they were regarded as conservatives and reactionaries by intellectuals of the two movements(22). Liang also opposed radical ideas of the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement such as "wholesale westernisation".

Kang and Zhang were traditional Confucian scholars who attempted to preserve and strengthen Confucianism, so despite their various attempts to relieve Chinese people from the constraints of Confucian tradition they felt the importance of preserving the foundation of Confucianism. This explains why they opposed radical Chinese intellectuals' attempts to uproot the whole Confucian tradition and replace the core values, moral codes and principles of Confucianism with modern western values, principles and moral codes(23).

Moreover, based on his belief in cultural relativism, pluralism and distinctiveness, Zhang opposed the radical Chinese intellectuals' attempt to transplant modern western culture, which he thought carried the distinctiveness of western culture, in China. Zhang also refuted their dichotomisation of Chinese and Western culture into "old (traditional)" versus "new (modern)" as well as their view of modern western culture as good and superior. On this basis, Zhang argued that since the West had created its own modern culture based on its own traditions, China could also create its own version of modern culture based on its traditional culture(24).

Kang, as a cultural conservative who perceived the loss of culture and tradition in the early Republican era as a threat to the continued existence of the Chinese race, also opposed the replacement of traditional Chinese culture with modern Western culture. As discussed before, Kang also refuted radical Chinese intellectuals' belief that modern western moral ideas were superior to traditional Confucian moral virtues.

Liang also thought it futile to take over Western values blindly, since Western progress had emerged out of its own rhythms of glory and decay. Based on his belief that Chinese culture could supplement the weaknesses of Western culture as a means of constructing a new world civilisation, Liang opposed the idea of "wholesale westernisation" (全盤西化) of Chinese culture advocated by Chinese intellectuals like Hu Shi (胡適 1891-1962) in this period(25).

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22. See Hu Shi's "*The meaning of new intellectual trend 新思潮的意義*" (1919) in *New Youth Volume 7 No.1*

23. Wang Rongzhu (Lianjing, 1988), P.117

24. Wang Rongzhu (Lianjing, 1988), P.117, 124

25. Philip Huang (University of Washington, 1972), 9/ Li Longmu (1990), 382

## 2. Impact on New Confucianism

As the reaction to the attack on Confucianism in the New Culture and May Fourth Movements, some Confucian thinkers tried to re-establish the authority, assert the status, protect the tradition and reformulate the content of Confucianism in the movement of New Confucianism (*xin rujia* 新儒家). This movement began in the early 1920's and continued throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century (in Mainland China until 1949 and in Hong Kong, Taiwan and overseas Chinese communities after that). Kang, Liang and Zhang's transformation and reformulation of Confucianism influenced New Confucianism in several ways.

First, Kang and Liang's synthesis of Confucian notions with modern western ideas (e.g. Kang's reinterpretation of "Three Ages" and Liang's reinterpretation of "Primacy of the people" discussed in Chapter 3) set the precedent of "Confucianising" modern western ideas as well as "modernising" and "westernising" Confucian notions for New Confucian thinkers.

For example, similar to Kang and Liang's attempt to revitalize Confucian notions by synthesizing them with western notions, Feng Youlan (馮友蘭 1895-1990), a leading first generation New Confucian thinker, reconstructed the metaphysical system of Neo-Confucianism based on western philosophy and logic in his book "*New Neo-Confucianism* 新理學" (1939) in order to make Neo-Confucianism compatible with modern western philosophy (New Confucian thinkers were the modern champions and defenders of the Neo-Confucian moral ethical system and its ethico-spiritual symbolism, which they considered the core of Confucian faith)(26).

Moreover, as discussed in Chapter 3, a major purpose behind Kang's attempt to synthesize traditional Confucian notions like "Three Ages", "Great Unity" and "benevolence" with modern western ideas like evolution, progress, constitutional monarchy, democracy, equality, love and fraternity was to transform Confucianism from a conservative, past-oriented feudal imperial ideology, which served as Chinese rulers' means of oppression and the ideological foundation of imperial rule, into a modern, forward-looking universal ideology which served all mankind. Consequently, Kang laid the foundation for reorienting the focus and function of Confucianism for New Confucian thinkers.

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26. Wang Jianping (王鑒平), *A Study of the Philosophical Thought of Feng Youlan* 馮友蘭哲學研究 (Sichuan Renmin, 1988), P.17-18/ Feng Zusheng (1989), P.103/ Jiang Yihua (Shanghai Sanlian, 2000), P.123/ Charlotte Furth, *The Limits of Change: Essays on Conservative Alternatives in Republican China* (Harvard University, 1976), P. 278, 286

Second, as discussed before, Kang, Liang and Zhang's reconstruction of Confucianism represents their attempt to adapt it to the drastic external challenges and internal changes of China in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Kung-Chuan Hsiao has pointed out that Kang lived in an age when drastic social and political changes dictated a thorough re-examination of the Confucian tradition in order to adapt China intellectually and institutionally to the new conditions. Jiang Yihua has also pointed out that the reconstruction of Confucianism in contemporary China was an attempt to resolve the conflicts and contradictions between Chinese and Western culture, spiritual and material concerns and tradition and modernity in China's response to the challenge of Western culture and the process of modernisation(27). Therefore, New Confucian thinkers from 1920's until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, who were also faced with drastic external challenges and internal changes in China and other Chinese communities in East Asia (e.g. the rise of communism, influx of Western cultural influences, rapid modernisation, economic development and democratisation) had to follow their example of reconstructing Confucianism in order to adapt it to the new social and political conditions.

Third, New Confucian thinkers followed Kang and Liang's views on the universal character and modern significance of Confucianism as well as endorsing their attempt to transform Confucianism into an important component of modern world civilisation. As mentioned before, Kang tried to transform Confucianism into a modern universal ideology. Joseph Levenson has also pointed out that Kang and Liang's reinterpretation of the "Three Ages" as a theory of progressive historical evolution, which served the dual purpose of making world history fit a Confucian pattern and fitting a Confucian China into world history, was a manifestation of their attempt to stress the universal character of Confucianism and transform it into a universal ideology(28). Moreover, as discussed before, Liang stressed the significance of Confucius' moral philosophy for the entire modern world while trying to combine Confucius as a symbol of Chinese culture and the image of Confucius as a great person of the world whose teaching was universally applicable.

We can find evidence which suggests that New Confucian thinkers adopted a similar view on the universal character and modern significance of Confucianism. For example, Du Weiming has suggested that Confucianism is entering a new stage of development in the modern era, i.e., Confucianism's third stage of development (儒學第三期發展), in which it will have global application and significance. That is, Confucianism will cut across ethnic lines and transform itself from a Chinese (East Asian) tradition into a universal cultural resource which can cope with the challenges and problems of the modern and postmodern world. There have also been attempts by New Confucian thinkers to promote Confucian ethics as universal moral codes, in the same way as Kang and Liang(29).

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27. Kung-Chuan Hsiao (University of Washington, 1975), P.95/ Jiang Yihua (Shanghai Sanlian, 2000), P.128-9

28. Joseph R. Levenson (*Journal of the History of Ideas*, 1950), P.480/ Jiang Yihua (Shanghai Sanlian, 2000), P.122, 129

Moreover, like Liang Qichao, many New Confucian thinkers have proposed to develop Confucianism in the modern era by reconstructing the Confucian value system and affirming its characteristics (e.g. its focus on human beings) in comparison with Western culture. Based on their confidence in Chinese culture, they have also held the view that Chinese culture could supplement the weaknesses of Western culture. For example, Liang Shuming (梁漱溟 1893-1988), another leading first generation New Confucian thinker, claimed that Western culture needed to be reconstructed through Eastern culture and that the future world civilisation would be the revival of Chinese culture. (Due to the similarity in their views, Liang Shuming and Liang Qichao were regarded together as the “Eastern Culture Group 東方文化派” in the 1920’s)(30).

In “*Manifesto to People of the World on Behalf of Chinese Culture 為中國文化敬告世界人士宣言*” (1958), four leading second generation New Confucian thinkers; Mou Zongsan, Zhang Junmai (張君勱 1886-1969), Xu Fuguan (許復觀 1903-1982) and Tang Junyi also suggested that Chinese culture could supplement the weaknesses of western culture. They claimed that while western people’s reliance on concepts in perceiving things limited their ability to understand the distinct features and character of individual things, the Chinese wisdom of perceiving things in a holistic way through intuition (圓而神的智慧) could supplement such a weakness. Also, the traditional historical consciousness of Chinese people which links antiquity with present and future and the Eastern wisdom of not clinging to anything (e.g. the Buddhist notion of “emptiness 空” and Taoist notion of “non-being 無”) could supplement the spiritual inadequacy of western people and solve the spiritual problems of modern western society(31).

Mou Zongsan, following the view of “Eastern Culture Group”, also claimed that Western culture was moving towards decline and self-destruction while the future world civilisation would be based on Confucianism, combined with science and democracy(32).

In my view, there are several reasons why New Confucian thinkers stressed the strength of Chinese culture and believed that it could supplement the weaknesses of Western culture and that the future world civilisation would be based on the revival of Chinese culture and Confucianism

29. Henry Yuhuai He, *Dictionary of the Political Thought of the People’s Republic of China* (M.E. Sharpe, 2001), P.356/ Du Weiming, *Modern Spirit and Confucian Tradition 現代精神與儒家傳統* (Lianjin, 1996), P.437-438/ Eddie C.Y. Kuo, *Confucianism as Political Discourse in Singapore: The Case of an Incomplete Revitalisation Movement* (National University of Singapore, 1992), P.15
30. Li Longmu (1990), P.379-380/ Bao Ci (鮑震), *The Essential Academic Works of Liang Shuming 梁漱溟学术精华录* (Beijing Normal University, 1988), P.41-7
31. Feng Zusheng (1989), P.39-44, 47
32. Ibid. P.122, 133

First of all, New Confucian thinkers attempted to re-establish the authority and status of Confucianism in reaction to the severe attack on Confucianism and the idea of “wholesale westernisation of China” after the May Fourth Movement. This, together with their strong confidence in Chinese culture, explains why they stressed so much the strength of Chinese culture in comparison with Western culture, something which was not found in the writings of Chinese intellectuals in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century (e.g. Kang, Liang and Zhang) when Confucianism and Chinese tradition were not yet under severe challenge and attack.

Some prominent western scholars’ views on the relative strengths of Chinese culture in this period also supported the New Confucian thinkers’ position. For example, the English philosopher Bertrand Russell (1872-1970), who visited China between 1920 and 1921, suggested that the pacific temper and the tranquil, pacific, humane and tolerant life of Chinese people should be preserved and combined with the knowledge of western science. Russell further claimed that there was nothing westerners could teach Chinese people except science, technical skills and scientific methods(33). Such a view helped to reinforce the New Confucian thinkers’ view that the future world civilisation would be based on Chinese culture combined with western science and democracy.

Moreover, the international context from the late 1910’s until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, including the large scale devastation of European countries in two world wars, as well as the cold war and nuclear crisis, also confirmed the New Confucian thinkers’ view of the weaknesses of Western culture and its tendency towards self-destruction.

Finally, this view served New Confucian thinkers’ attempts to use Confucianism to assert Chinese cultural nationalism, as Kang and Liang had done. As China continued to confront foreign aggression (e.g. the invasion by Japan in the 1930’s and 40’s) and the superiority of Western scientific, economic and military power throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we can interpret New Confucian thinkers’ stress on the strength of Chinese culture in comparison with Western culture as their attempt to assert the spiritual superiority of Chinese culture in order to overcome Chinese people’s sense of inferiority, to safeguard their inner dignity and to build up collective cultural resources for the regeneration of China.

Anthony Smith has pointed out that cultural nationalists believe that the nation’s destiny is always glorious and that its golden past will shine forth again through regenerating the true spirit of the nation, recreating it in modern terms under transformed conditions and combining the sense of distinctiveness given by indigenous traditions with the progress provided by modern science(34). This explains why New Confucian thinkers believed that the future world civilisation would be based on the revival of Chinese culture and Confucianism combined with modern science and democracy.

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33. Chow Tse-tsung (Harvard, 1960), P.232-238

34. See Anthony Smith (Polity Press, 2001), P.30 and Anthony Smith, *Ethnicity and Nationalism* (E.J. Brill, 1992), P.107

Nevertheless, there are weaknesses in the New Confucian thinkers' idea of combining the strength of Chinese culture (e.g. its spiritual dimension) and Western culture (e.g. its science). As Chow Tse-tung has pointed out, the idea of preserving the traditional spiritual characteristics of Chinese people and combining it with western science was very similar to the idea of "Chinese study as fundamental structure and Western study for practical use" (中學為體,西學為用) advocated by Chinese scholar-officials during the "Self-Strengthening Movement" in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, the failure of the Self-Strengthening Movement indicates the difficulty of such a combination. There was also criticism of Russell's idea that China could industrialize without losing the pacific character of its people and its traditional ethics developed in an agricultural society(35).

Fourth, Kang, Liang and Zhang's discourse on culture in their reconstruction of Confucianism triggered the New Confucian thinkers' discourse on the distinctiveness of Chinese culture in comparison with Western culture, and the relations between them in the modern world. As discussed before, based on the idea of cultural progress in his reinterpretation of "Three Ages", Kang argued that since the West had attained a more advanced level of culture and a higher stage of historical evolution due to its achievements in science and political systems, modern Western culture represented a universal advanced culture which China should follow. On the other hand, based on his view of cultural relativism and pluralism, Zhang believed that each culture has its distinct character. Therefore, Zhang stressed the distinctiveness of Chinese culture and believed that modern western culture also carried the distinctiveness of western culture.

We can find examples which suggest that many New Confucian thinkers asserted, as did Zhang, the distinctiveness of Chinese culture in comparison with Western culture based on cultural relativism and pluralism. For example, Liang Shuming stressed the distinct features of Chinese culture (e.g. its strong focus on family and ethics) in comparison with other cultures (e.g. Western and Indian) in his book "*The Essence of Chinese Culture* 中國文化要義" (1949)(36). Based on this view, Liang refuted the belief, common during the May Fourth Movement, that Western culture was superior to Chinese culture due to its high level of scientific development. Liang argued that Chinese culture lagged behind in science only because it did not emphasize material comforts and the conquest of nature like the West. In his view, Chinese culture had developed along a different path from the West rather than lagging behind it.

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35. See Chow Tse-tung (Harvard, 1960), P.237-238

36. See Liang Shuming 梁漱銘, *The Essence of Chinese Culture* 中國文化要義 (Sanlian, 1987)

In "*Manifesto to People of the World on Behalf of Chinese Culture*" (1958), the four New Confucian thinkers also stressed the distinct features of Chinese culture in comparison with Western culture. They pointed out that due to the existence of a moral tradition (*daotung* 道统) in Chinese culture, Chinese philosophers had the traditional function of inheriting and perpetuating this moral tradition. Therefore, their writings usually contain a great deal of philosophical, cultural and historical implications but with few arguments and no clear differentiation of subject matters. This made them very different from western philosophers who always try to create their own system of thought and put this clearly into writing. Since Chinese philosophers had a very different role in Chinese culture from Western philosophers in Western culture, western people should take into account the distinct features of Chinese culture and the special function of Chinese philosophers when they attempted to evaluate them from a western point of view(37).

Moreover, similar to Zhang's endorsement of cultural pluralism and his view that Western culture should not attempt to dominate other cultures, New Confucian thinkers criticised western people's attempts to universalise and impose the ideals of Western culture on other cultures while neglecting their distinct features. They suggested that Western people should use the Chinese wisdom of perceiving things in a holistic way when interacting with other cultures, to learn about them with sympathy and to respect, understand and appreciate their mentality and spiritual worlds as well as incorporating them into the Western cultural tradition(38).

Nevertheless, there was at least one New Confucian thinker who stressed, like Kang, that Western culture was a universal advanced culture on the same lines as Chinese culture, which Chinese culture could imitate,. Feng Youlan suggested that Chinese and Western culture were on different levels but on the same line of development. This was different from Liang Shuming's view that Chinese and Western culture were on different lines of development. Based on the view that modern Western culture belonged to an industrial type of culture, Feng believed that Chinese culture could catch up with Western culture by removing elements of Chinese traditional culture which were unfavourable to industrialisation while other distinct Chinese cultural elements could be preserved(39)

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37. Feng Zusheng (1989), P.1, 10-13, 129

38. Ibid. P.38-9, 44, 118

39. Wang Jianping (Sichaun Renmin, 1988), P.161-166

Finally, as the first major contemporary Chinese thinker who categorised Confucianism as a religion and stressed its religiousness, Kang inspired the New Confucian thinkers' religious interpretation of Confucianism.

Like Kang, many New Confucian thinkers perceived the unity of Heaven and human as the foundation of the religiousness of Confucianism. However, as Zhang Hao has pointed out, while Kang's religious interpretation of Confucianism stemmed mainly from the New Text interpretation of Han Confucianism, the New Confucian thinkers' religious view of Confucianism was based on Song and Ming Neo-Confucianism(40).

For example, Mou Zongsan perceived moral cultivation as a religious experience based on the belief that the only way to actualize the way of Heaven was through engaging in an endless and rigorous process of moral spiritual discipline. Basing his ideas on the Confucian belief that the transcendent moral self was an endowment from Heaven (where the inner transcendence of nature is integrally linked with the outer transcendence of the way of Heaven), Mou believed that to engage in moral efforts is to fulfil one's inner real self and follow the command of Heaven. On this basis, Mou identified the doctrine of "unity of Heaven and Human" as the key to the high degree of religiousness in Confucianism.

Building on his perception of the unity of morality and religiousness in Confucianism, Mou perceived Confucianism as both a moral system and a religion, i.e., a moral religion (道德教). Such a view was very similar to Kang's interpretation of the "jiao" in Confucianism as both "teaching" and "religion", based on the unity between the sphere of human and god (deity/ spirit) in Confucianism and his perception of the religious origin and nature of Confucianism's "teaching of the human way" based on the unity of Heaven and human(41).

Du Weiming, by reinterpreting "*Doctrine of the Mean*", also stressed the religiousness of Confucianism, based on the inseparability of humankind from the way of Heaven. Du suggested that the ultimate moral orientation of Confucianism, which is rooted in the way of Heaven, is manifested in everyday lives and human relations according to Mencius' notion of "exhausting the mind in knowing one's nature, one knows Heaven" ("*jinxin zhixing zezhitian* 盡心知性則知天")(42). Tang Junyi also expressed the hope, like Kang, that Confucius could one day become the religious master of the whole world.

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40. Charlotte Furth (Harvard University Press, 1976), P.278

41. Ibid., 288-293

42. See Du Weiming (State University of New York Press, 1989), P.10-11

### 3. Impact on the discourse on Confucianism's relation with modernisation and economic development

Since Kang, Liang and Zhang's reconstruction of Confucianism in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century was an integral part of the response and adaptation of China, Chinese tradition and Confucianism to the challenge of modernity, modernisation and the modern world in that period, it initiated a discourse on the relation between Confucianism and modernisation. As the economies of East Asian areas (e.g. Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea and Singapore) which are influenced by Confucianism in one way or another, took off in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this further developed into a discourse on the relation between Confucianism (e.g. its ethical principles and values) and the economic success of East Asia.

A major focus of the discourse was how Confucian notions and values contributed to or hindered modernisation and the process of economic development. Since a major intention behind Kang and Liang's reconstruction of Confucianism was to transform it into a modern universal ideology, we can find in their writings efforts to accommodate Confucianism with modernity and assert its modern significance. For example, as discussed in Chapter 2, Kang sought a breakthrough from traditional Confucian historiography and formulated a view of historical development as a process of gradual progress in his reinterpretation of the "Three Ages" to respond to the conditions and ideology of modernity. Liang also kept stressing the modern significance of Confucius' moral philosophy in his writings in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Nevertheless, by the time of the New Culture and May Fourth Movements in the 1910's, most Chinese intellectuals had come to consider Confucian values anti-modern, antithetical to modernisation and economic development and the root of China's backwardness. For example, as discussed before, Chen Duxiu stressed the incompatibility between Confucianism and modern political and economic systems in "*The way of Confucius and modern life*" (1916), pointing to its contradictions with the concepts of individualism, financial independence and independent political belief on which the modern economic and political system was based(43).

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43. See *New Youth Volume 2 No.4*/ The Institute of East Asian philosophies, *A Forum on the Role of Culture in Industrial Asia: The Relationship between Confucian Ethics and Modernisation* (1988), P.3/ Du Weiming, *Confucian Traditions in East Asian Modernity: Moral Education and Economic Culture in Japan and the Four Mini-dragons* (Harvard University Press, 1996), P.266

Moreover, even leading Western scholars in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century like Max Weber (1864-1920) raised Confucianism as an example of the link between the nature of Asian culture and the failure of the development of modern rational forms of capitalism in Asia. Weber argued that the this-worldly and world-affirming orientation of Confucianism meant that it failed to create the tremendous tension between this-worldly and other-worldly concerns as Calvinism which had brought about the attitudes of rational calculation and manipulation within social and economic life necessary to the growth of capitalism in the West. Weber also pointed out that while the Calvinist ethic had introduced an activism into the believer's approach to worldly affairs and a drive to success in worldly activity with its doctrine of predestination and the notion that success in worldly affairs was sign of salvation, these elements were absent in Confucianism. Moreover, Weber thought that Confucianism's stress on "rational adjustment to the world as it is" could not generate a dynamism in economic activity comparable to Calvinism's stress on "rational domination of the world". Finally, Weber pointed out the Chinese kinship system and family ethos as well as the lack of emphasis on law and professional specialization as elements of Confucianism which constituted barriers to the rise of capitalism in China(44).

However, the economic success of East Asian areas in the later half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century made many Chinese and Western scholars reverse the argument. They suggested that Confucian values and notions had contributed to the economic development of East Asia. To support their arguments, they tried to find elements in Confucianism which were favourable to modernisation and economic development.

For example, many scholars have pointed out the function of Confucianism in supporting the authority of the centralised state bureaucracy and facilitating the acceptance of the leadership of a bureaucratic elite. Ambrose King has pointed out that the Chinese ruler had the traditional right and duty to intervene in the socio-economic activities of society, a duty ideologically justified by the Confucian notion of cosmically based universal kingship based on the "Mandate of Heaven". Du Weiming has also pointed out that the Confucian idea that government assumes full and comprehensive responsibility for the well being of people while bureaucrats are not merely government functionaries but also leaders, intellectuals and teachers of the people remains persuasive in East Asia(45). These Confucian values have contributed to the economic development of East Asia since they help to create social and political stability. They also enable active government leadership in economic development and close government-business relations, which many economic scholars consider crucial in the economic development processes of Japan, Korea and Singapore.

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44. See Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1992), P. xvi and *The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism* (Macmillan, 1964), P.148-150, 160-1/ Michael Hill, *Asian Values as Reverse Orientalism: The Case of Singapore* (National University of Singapore, 2000), P.4, 7/ Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer, "Max Weber's interest in Confucianism" in Silke Krieger (1991), P.245

45. Du Weiming (Harvard University Press, 1996), P.231/ Silke Krieger (Mainz, 1991), P.35

Moreover, as S. Gordon Redding has suggested, the function of Confucianism in facilitating East Asian people's acceptance of authority has contributed to legitimising authority and justifying the authority relations in modern Chinese business enterprises (e.g. in Hong Kong and Singapore)(46).

I agree with this view because most ethnic Chinese business enterprises in East Asia, which are the driving force of local economies, are family businesses with an authoritarian and centralised management style. Therefore Confucian ethics, which justify and legitimise this sort of power structure and human relations, can contribute to the smooth functioning of individual business firms and hence the overall performance of the economy.

Chan Heng-chee and Lau Kwok-keung have also identified the rational, this-worldly and world-affirming orientation of Confucianism (i.e., the "humanistic rationalism" of Confucianism) as contributing factors to the development of modern East Asian capitalist economies. Lau has also pointed out that Confucianism's stress on the realization of "benevolence" implies the conscious effort of the subject to achieve a rational purpose, which supplies individuals with an active spirit which contributes to the process of modernisation.

Finally, many scholars have pointed out that traditional Confucian values such as the emphasis on self-development in an ever-expanding circle of human relationships, adjustments to and acceptance of authority, communal solidarity and concern with the interests of the whole rather than the claims of the parts, can be easily translated into modern values of materialistic outlook, achievement orientation, meritocracy, social cohesion and acceptance of an activist and interventionist government(47).

Although many scholars have argued that "Confucianism" has contributed to the modernisation and economic development of East Asia in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there are several problems with these arguments.

First of all, the use of "Confucianism" as an explanatory factor of modernisation and economic development is problematic. While we can establish links between Confucianism and some of the cultural factors which scholars claim have contributed to the modernisation and economic development of East Asia (e.g. the rational and world affirming orientation of East Asian people as well as their acceptance of the authority of the state and its bureaucrats), to what extent can we identify cultural traits like diligence, frugality, stress on communal solidarity, concern with collective interest and emphasis on family, education, human relations and social harmony as "Confucian" (or "Asian")? As Lau Kwok-keung has pointed out, these virtues are treasured not only by the Confucian tradition but also by other religious and cultural heritages. John Clammer has also pointed out that "Asian values" can hardly be distinguished from their Western counterparts. I agree with Lau and Clammer's views because according to Max Weber's argument, the Christian notions of calling, salvation and predestination also generated a work ethic which stressed diligence, self-discipline and frugality(48).

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46. Du Weiming (Harvard University Press, 1996), P.263-4

47. The Institute of East Asian philosophies (1988), P.4-5, 13, 16/ Silke Krieger (Mainz, 1991), P.222

Also, should and can Chinese culture be reduced to “Confucianism” and can what is traditional about China be identified as “Confucian”?

I think an underlying problem here is the traditional use of the term “Confucianism” in the West to represent Chinese tradition and cultural traits. As Lionel Jensen has pointed out, the association between Chinese traditional cultural traits and “Confucianism” has been a result of the use of Confucianism and Confucius as symbols, icons and representations of Chinese tradition and culture in the West since the Jesuits in the 17<sup>th</sup> century(49).

The second problem is the multiple meanings and interpretations of “Confucianism”, which are already indicated in contemporary Chinese intellectuals’ different and often contradicting views on the origin, nature, essence and content of Confucianism discussed above. The problem is further complicated by the differences between “Confucianism” as a state political ideology, as a way of moral cultivation for intellectuals and as the moral codes governing the everyday lives of ordinary people.

Third, as John Wong has pointed out, there is a limit to any “simplistic cultural explanation” of economic development. Wong suggests that scholars must be more specific about how Confucian notions, ethics and values have “operational implications” for significant economic activities before they attempt to establish the link between Confucianism and economic development. Wong has also suggested that the importance of cultural factors in economic development should not be overemphasised(50).

I agree with Wong’s view because there are many internal factors (e.g. successful government economic policy and planning) and external factors (e.g. the increase in demand for cheap and high quality consumer goods by developed countries) behind the rapid economic growth of East Asian countries which cannot be directly linked with cultural factors. The rapid economic growth of non-Confucian (e.g. Islamic and Buddhist) East Asian countries like Malaysia and Thailand in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century also indicates that Confucianism was not the only cultural factor behind the economic growth of East Asia.

Moreover, some Confucian cultural traits, which scholars claim to have contributed to economic development, can also be negative factors at the same time. For example, family solidarity and strong kinship ties, which many scholars claim have contributed to the flourishing of Chinese family business firms in East Asia, are also found to be imposing a limit on their development due to the practice of nepotism as well as the limited entrepreneurial and management skills within the family network.

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48. See Lau Kwok-keung, “An Interpretation of Confucian Virtues and their Relevance to China’s Modernisation” in *Confucianism and the Modernisation of China* (1991), P.221, John Clammer, *Singapore: Ideology, Society and Culture* (Chopmen Publishers, 1985), P.23 and Max Weber (Routledge, 1992)

49. See Lionel Jensen (Duke University, 1997), P.8-9, 142

50. See “Hong Kong, Singapore and Overseas Communities” in *Confucian Traditions in East Asian Modernity* (1996), P.261

Fourth, as Chan Heng-chee has questioned, if culture were the key to the economic success of modern East Asia and there are so many elements in Confucianism which are favourable to economic development, why did large scale economic development take place in East Asia only in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century but not before it (except in Japan)(51)? Why was China least effective in meeting the challenge of modern western countries when (in the 19<sup>th</sup> century) she was the most Confucian? Why were Confucian values and notions widely considered by Chinese intellectuals and Western scholars in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century to be stumbling blocks for modernisation and the development of a modern capitalist economy in China?

This indicates that despite Kang and Liang's stress on Confucianism's compatibility with modernity and their attempts to transform it into a modern ideology in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Confucianism was widely considered a negative factor for modernisation and economic development by Chinese and Western scholars in that period. (Hence, in order to refute these views, Chen Huanzhang, Kang's disciple and a key figure of the Confucian Religion Movement in the 1910's, attempted to find elements in Confucian classics like the *Great Learning* (*daxue* 大學) which were similar to the principles of modern economics, in order to convince people that Confucius was in favour of industry and commerce)(52).

Then, why did so many Chinese and Western scholars try to look for elements in Confucianism which they thought accounted for the rapid economic development of East Asia in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century? Why did they consider Confucian notions and values as functional equivalents of Calvinism and the Protestant work ethic as the driving force of economic activities and the spirit of capitalism? How could they explain why Confucianism, which was considered by leading Chinese and Western scholars in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century to be a negative factor for modernisation and economic development, became a contributing factor in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century?

First of all, the empirical fact of the rapid modernisation and economic development of East Asia in the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century made many Chinese and Western scholars attempt to attribute the phenomenon to cultural factors, which they put under the label of "Confucianism". As Michael Hill has suggested, Western social scientists attempted to attribute the economic success of East Asian societies to a set of cultural traits, a process which is best labelled "reverse Orientalism". That is, while the West attempted to account for the economic success of the West in contrast to the economic underdevelopment of Asia in the past with the notion of "Orientalism" (the idea that the West is typified by the positive values of progress, rationality and inner-worldly asceticism while the Orient is characterised by magic, mysticism and other worldly preoccupation), they now attempt to reverse the notion and attribute the dynamic economic progress of Asia, in contrast to the economic stagnation of western countries, to a set of traditional "Asian values" like diligence, frugality, emphasis on family, collective interests and education(53) .

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51. The Institute of East Asian philosophies (1988), P.17

52. Han Hua (*Modern Chinese History Studies* , March 2002), P.206-209

53. See Michael Hill (National University of Singapore, 2000), P.6

It is also due to scholars' recognition of the fact that all development or concepts of development must include at the core the human dimension. As John Clammer has suggested, economics is subordinate to cultural development while values are true and integral development in themselves(54).

Second, some scholars have suggested that although Confucianism contains the seeds of transformation, it only bears fruit and influences positively the course of economic development in the right institutional settings. Therefore, the emergence of pro-economic development institutional settings (e.g. free, open and fair economic system and pro-development government institutions) in East Asia in the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century explain why Confucianism could transform into a contributing factor for economic development(55).

Third, some scholars (e.g. Du Weiming) have pointed out the weaknesses in Weber's argument about the link between Confucianism and the failure of the development of a modern form of capitalism in East Asia. For example, in reaction to Weber's argument that Chinese kinship system and family ethos were barriers to the rise of capitalism in China, Du pointed out that Weber had overlooked the role played by Confucian values in promoting patterns of familial and social organisation that sustain and intensify the influence of capitalism.

I agree with Du's view because, as will be discussed later, there is an apparent link between traditional Chinese family ethics, clan system, kinship network and the flourishing of family enterprises and kinship based business activities among ethnic Chinese in East Asia.

We can find other weaknesses in Weber's argument. For example, instead of Weber's claim that Confucianism failed to create a sense of activism about worldly affairs, a drive to success in worldly activity and dynamism in economic activity, I suggest that the this-worldly and world-affirming orientation of Confucianism and its lack of concern for other-worldly matters contributed to Chinese people's pragmatism as well as their strong focus on worldly affairs, worldly interests and worldly success. Zhang Taiyan's previously-mentioned observation that it is in the nature of Chinese people to attend to political matters, daily needs and work and that they are not concerned with things beyond this life and things which transcend experience can support my view(56).

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54. See John Clammer, *Values and Development in Southeast Asia* (Pelanduk Publications, 1996), P.2

55. Du Weiming (Harvard University Press, 1996), P.260

56. Du Weiming, *The Confucian World Observed: A Contemporary Discussion of Confucian Humanism in East Asia* (University of Hawaii, 1992), P.2/ *Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan Volume 4* (Shanghai Renmin, 1985), P.194-5

On this basis, we can also refute Weber's argument that the this-worldly and world-affirming orientation of Confucianism meant that it failed to bring about the attitudes of rational calculation and manipulation within social and economic life necessary to the growth of capitalism. I suggest that Confucianism's this-worldly and world-affirming orientation and its lack of other-worldly concerns contributed to Chinese peoples' attitudes of rational calculation and manipulation which were due to their strong urge to achieve worldly interests and success. In my view, such attitudes failed to contribute to the growth of capitalism in pre-modern China because the traditional civil service examination and bureaucratic system and the negative attitudes towards and constraints on merchants and commercial activities led to a focus on political instead of commercial activities. However, with the emergence of pro-economic development institutional settings as well as attitudes in favour of merchants and commercial activities in East Asian Chinese communities in the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Chinese peoples' attitudes of rational calculation and manipulation became a favourable factor to the growth of capitalism in these areas.

The development of commerce in Japan during the Tokugawa Period, when Neo-Confucianism was the state ideology and orthodoxy, and the industrialisation and modernisation of Japan in the Meiji Period, when Confucian values were stressed in the Rescript of Education, could also refute Weber's association between Confucianism and the failure of the development of capitalism in Asia. As Robert Bellah has pointed out, the notion of occupation (*shokubun* 職分) as the fulfilment of one's obligations to and return for the blessings (*on* 恩) of a higher entity (superiors, family, society, nation, ancestors, Buddha...etc.) as well as a calling determined by Heaven, which was an adaptation of Confucian values in the Japanese context, contributed to Japanese people's stress on diligence and frugality as well as their strong urge to attain success in work and commercial activities. The existence of this notion, which generated economic rationalisation and inner-worldly asceticism analogous to Calvinism's notion of the calling, explained the development of commerce in the Tokugawa Period as well as the industrialisation and modernisation of Japan in the Meiji Period despite the strong influence of Confucianism in these two periods (e.g. Neo-Confucianism's rationalising influence on Japanese ethics, philosophy and psychology during the Tokugawa Period)(57).

The Shingaku Movement (心学運動) in the middle to late Tokugawa Period started by Ishida Baigan (石田梅岩 1685-1745) claimed that the selfish heart and its desires can be eliminated by the practice of asceticism and devotion to one's occupation, based on the Neo-Confucian notion (Neo-Confucian moral principles were the core of Shingaku moral teachings) of "preserving the principles of Heaven and removing human desires" ("存天理, 去人欲"). This movement too contributed to the stress on diligence, frugality and work ethics in the Tokugawa Period as well as paving the way for Japan's transformation into a modern industrial society in the Meiji Period(58).

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57. Robert Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion: The Values of Pre-industrial Japan* (The Free Press, 1957), P.115-6, 123, 126, 151-2/ Michael Hill (2000), P.7

Fourth, as discussed before, New Confucian thinkers since the 1920's showed great confidence in Chinese culture and believed that the strengths of Chinese culture could supplement the weaknesses of Western culture. Therefore, many New Confucian thinkers try to use the economic success of East Asian Chinese societies in contrast with the economic slowdown and social problems of Western countries in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century as proof of this view. They suggest that Confucianism could provide a solution to the problems associated with modernisation and economic development (e.g. moral crisis and alienation of individuals)(59).

Finally, in explaining why Confucianism ceases to be a negative factor of the modernisation and economic development of East Asia, some scholars have attributed this to the weakening and decline of certain Confucian ethics and values in modern East Asia. As Ambrose King has suggested, Confucianism in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century has long been deconstructed, and the cultural systems of modern East Asian societies are now a mixture of indigenous values and Western influences. For example, the disappearance of traditional Confucian negative attitudes towards merchants, the entrepreneurial spirit, commercial activities and innovation have stimulated commercial activities and the spirit of capitalism.

Based on such a view, Robert MacFarquhar has suggested that one reason why the economic development of Mainland China lacked behind other East Asian countries from the 1950's to 1970's was the communist government's attempt to reproduce in Marxist-Leninist form the old Confucian state with all its hindrances to economic development (e.g. negative attitudes towards entrepreneurial spirit, individual initiatives, commercial activities and innovations), despite its critique of Confucianism discussed before(60).

I agree with MacFarquhar's view because it explains why the economy of Mainland China lacked behind other ethnic Chinese communities in East Asia (e.g. Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore) before its adoption of a state policy which favoured economic growth, commercial activities and entrepreneurship in 1978, even though ethnic Chinese people in these areas are all influenced by Confucian ethics and values. The rapid development of the Mainland Chinese economy after the shift in government policy and attitude also supports the view that Confucianism could positively influence the course of economic development only in the right institutional settings.

Ambrose King's suggested link between the emergence of "rationalistic traditionalism" in Hong Kong and its rapid economic development since the 1950's can also support the view that Confucianism became a contributing factor to the economic development of East Asia due to the weakening of Confucian ethics and values which are negative to economic development, and the preservation of those which are conducive to it, in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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58. Han Lihon (韩立红), *A Comparative Study of the Thought of Ishida Baigan and Lu Xianshan 石田梅岩与陆象山思想比较研究* (Tianjin Renmin, 1999), P.118-9  
59. Jiang Yihua (Shanghai Sanlian, 2000), P.124  
60. The Institute of East Asian philosophies (1988), P.33, 39

King has suggested that in the process of economic development of Hong Kong, local Chinese people have adopted a pragmatic, rationalistic and instrumental attitude toward traditional values. That is, they have selectively preserved Confucian values which have extrinsic usefulness in pursuing economic goals, while removing those values which hinder such a pursuit. This reconstruction of the traditional value system in favour of economic and instrumental rationality has contributed to economic growth. Since King claims that the emergence of "rationalistic traditionalism" is not just a phenomenon of Hong Kong but is a general cultural phenomenon in Confucian East Asia, we can use it as an explanatory factor of the economic success of other East Asian Confucian societies as well(61).

I agree with King's view because due to ethnic Chinese people's strong urge and desire to develop the economy, improve their living standard and pursue material wealth in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century, they were willing to remove, modify and rationalize traditional values and systems (many of them based on Confucian ethical principles) which were negative to economic development. For example, due to rapid economic growth, traditional social constraints on Chinese women were modified or removed so that they could participate in the labour force and even take up managerial positions in business firms. The traditional Chinese patrimonial management style was also modified, based on modern western management systems and practical needs, in order to increase the efficiency and competitiveness of Chinese family business firms. On the other hand, ethnic Chinese people have preserved those traditional values and systems which are favourable to economic development. For example, the traditional cohesiveness and unity of the family as well as kinship and social networks are preserved because they contribute to the flourishing of family business enterprises and "network capitalism" (business transactions among ethnic Chinese across national borders based on kinship and social networks), which are the driving force of the economies of Chinese communities in East Asia.

I think the selective preservation, modification, rationalisation and removal of traditional values in East Asian Chinese communities in their process of economic development can also explain why essential elements of Confucianism such as the traditional Chinese family system, relations and ethos, which were regarded by Max Weber and Chen Duxiu as barriers to the rise of capitalism and obstacles to the development of modern capitalist economy in China in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, became contributing factors to the economic development of East Asian Chinese communities in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century. This development is consistent with Kang, Liang and Zhang's overall intention of reconstructing Confucianism in order to transform it into a positive factor in China's modernisation.

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61. Du Weiming (Harvard University Press, 1996), P.261, 270

#### **4. Impact on the discourse on revitalising Confucianism as a national ethical system and the content of moral education in modern society**

As discussed before, Kang suggested the use of Confucian moral codes as a means to establish and clarify the customs and moral standard of China as well as to put “The way of Confucius is the foundation of moral cultivation in national education” in the Chinese constitution during the Confucian Religion Movement (孔教運動) in order to solve the moral problems of China in the 1910’s. Liang also argued that Confucian moral teaching would occupy a very important position in modern moral education and he stressed the importance of Confucius’ teaching in cultivating the moral character of the citizens of modern China. Consequently, Kang and Liang initiated the discourse on revitalising Confucianism as a national ethical system and as the content of moral education in modern society.

In response to this discourse, some scholars have suggested that Confucian moral teaching could be a solution to the increasingly serious and complex social and moral problems of modern societies. They share Kang and Liang’s view that the ethical teaching of Confucianism is applicable in the modern world. For example, Rolf Trauzettel has suggested that social ethics, as the very heart of Confucianism, is the part of Confucianism that can be most thoroughly stripped of its historical elements to meet the condition of universal applicability. Feng Youlan was also a zealous advocate of the universality of certain Confucian ethics. For example, he saw the Confucian notion of “benevolence” as an idea that had significance even in the present(62).

On the other hand, some scholars have questioned whether Confucian ethics and values, which are closely linked with the pre-modern social environment, can be used to solve the problems of modern society. There have also been doubts on the effectiveness of incorporating Confucian ethics within modern education(63).

I think we can explore the effectiveness of revitalising Confucianism as a national ethical system and the content of moral education in modern society by analysing the experiences of contemporary Chinese societies.

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62. Silke Krieger (Mainz, 1991), P.46, 123

63. The Institute of East Asian philosophies (1988), P.26

Despite the abolition of the Civil Service Examination (which was based on Confucian classics) and the implementation of a modern education system in the early 1900's, there have been, throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, attempts to make Confucianism the core of education, to include courses on Confucian ethics in the school education system and to promote Confucian ethics among the general public in China and other ethnic Chinese communities. For example, the late Qing government asserted Confucianism as an unchallengeable orthodoxy and the code of behaviour that everyone should follow. It also included compulsory courses on moral self-cultivation, based on Confucian ethics, in the school curriculum. As discussed before, Yuan Shikai was also active in promoting Confucian doctrines. One of the "Principles of Education" he issued in 1915 was "to follow the instructions of Confucius and Mencius"(64). From this perspective, Kang's proposal to adopt "the way of Confucius" as the foundation of moral cultivation in national education in the 1910's was consistent with the Chinese government's attitude and policy on Confucianism's role in moral education in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

The Nationalist government (1927-49) restored Confucianism to the status of official orthodoxy by synthesizing it with the Nationalist Party Doctrine of "Three People's Principles 三民主義". For example, it claimed that the Three People's Principles was born of the Confucian morality of humanity and righteousness. In 1934, the Nationalist leader Jiang Jieshi (蔣介石 1887-1975) staged a "New Life Movement" (新生活運動) to promote Confucian ideas among Chinese people. In 1938, Jiang ordered that the moral teachings of *The Spring and Autumn Annals* and *The Book of Rites* should become the core of ethics textbooks. An obligatory course in ethic was also added in 1942 to higher education curricula to instil traditional Chinese morality and Confucian ethical theories. After its relocation to Taiwan, the Nationalist government launched a Cultural renaissance movement (文化復興運動) in the mid-1960's which aimed at promoting a better understanding of the application of Confucianism to daily life in contemporary society(65).

There was a similar attempt by the Singapore government from the late 1970's to revitalise Confucianism as a national ethical system and to incorporate it in the national education system of Singapore, where ethnic Chinese account for the majority of the population. For example, Confucian ethics was included as a component of a compulsory religious knowledge course in 1979. The Singapore government has also attempted to turn Confucian ethics into a code of personal conduct for Singaporean people, at least among the ethnic Chinese(66).

Despite the differences in historical and social contexts, we can find similarities between these attempts to revitalize Confucianism as a national ethical system and to make it the content of moral education in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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64. Glen Peterson, *Education, Culture and Identity in Twentieth Century China* (University of Michigan, 2001), P.196-205

65. Ibid., P.208-211/ Du Weiming, *Confucian Traditions in East Asian Modernity* (1996), P.237

66. Eddie C.Y. Kuo, *Confucianism as Political Discourse in Singapore: The Case of an Incomplete Revitalisation Movement* (National University of Singapore, 1992), P.4-5, 7

First, there is an assumption that the state should take the initiative and responsibility to restore the moral order of the nation and an attempt in these movements to employ school education as a means to instil ethical values in the people. As mentioned above, the idea that the government assumes full responsibility for the people and the idea that the very process of governing is a process of moral rectification are Confucian. As discussed in Chapter 1, Kang perceived the important role and religious implications of “*jiao*” in governing a nation in the sense that moral rectification implies a return to the way of the moral virtue of the ancient sage kings and an established religious dynamic at the heart of the ancient Chinese social-political order. Du Weiming too has pointed out that in East Asia the state is seen as a mechanism for exerting social control as well as establishing and maintaining social order. At the same time, schools in East Asia are expected to instil moral values in their students, which lends a moral dimension to the entire education system(67).

Second, there was an assumption of the close link between Confucianism and the tradition, customs and morality of Chinese people in these movements.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Kang thought Confucianism was the most suitable state religion of China and the means to solve China’s moral problems, due to its central role in Chinese culture and its close links with the customs and moral standards of Chinese people. Similarly, the Singapore government thought Confucianism was suitable to solve the moral crisis of Singapore because Confucian moral teachings had already been transmitted over generations among Singaporean Chinese through the family and through the “little tradition” (e.g. a Confucian ethos was embodied in the values and relationships of the Chinese organisations of Singapore). Such view was reflected in Singapore education minister Goh Keng-swee (吳慶瑞)’s claim that Confucian ethics were suitable for the moral education of Singapore. Like Liang Qichao, Goh pointed out the important role of Confucian moral teaching in modern moral education and its function in cultivating the moral character of citizens. The Nationalist government in Taiwan also held the assumption that Confucianism was the foundation of China’s cultural heritage when it launched the “Cultural renaissance movement” in the 1960’s.

Based on this assumption, Kang, the Nationalist government (both in Mainland China and Taiwan) and the Singapore government all attempted to re-establish a set of common values and moral codes among Chinese people based on Confucianism. Similar to Kang’s proposal to adopt Confucianism as the state religion of China, there were proposals to elevate fundamental Confucian values to the level of state ideology during Singapore’s Confucian movement in the 1980’s. Confucian values like the concept of government by “honourable men” (*junzi* 君子) who have a duty to do right for the people were also incorporated as components of Singaporeans’ shared values as stipulated in the Singapore government’s “*White Paper on Shared Values*” in 1990(68).

67. Du Weiming, *The Confucian World Observed: A Contemporary Discussion of Confucian Humanism in East Asia* (University of Hawaii, 1992), P.6,11

68. Eddie C.Y. Kuo (National University of Singapore, 1992), P.10, 20/ *Collection of Kang Youwei’s Essays Vol. 7* (1925), P.27, 30/ Li Minghui (李明輝), *Confucianism in Modern East Asia 儒家思想在现代东亚: 總論篇* (Academia Sinica, 1998), P.256/ See “White Paper on Shared Values” in Appendix A, *In Search of Singapore’s National Values* (The Institute of Policy Studies, Singapore, 1990), P.113

Third, there was an assumption in these movements that the weakening of tradition and the influence of Western culture were the underlying causes of moral problems. For example, the late Qing government's decision to strengthen Confucian ethics among female students grew out of a concern for the violation of Confucian female norms due to women's changing status and position in Chinese society. Kang believed that the moral problems of China in the 1910's were due to the loss of tradition (e.g. the abolition of the cult of Confucius, the study of Confucian classics in school and the rites to Heaven) and the influence of Western culture (e.g. the increasing influence of Christianity, modern western values and morals). Similarly, the Singapore government's attempt to revitalize Confucianism was based on the belief that the moral foundation of Singapore society had been eroded by the influence of Western culture and that Singapore people (especially the younger generation, after the medium of instruction at schools in Singapore was changed to English in the 1970's) had failed to resist this influence due to the loss of their cultural heritage(69).

Based on this assumption and that of the close link between Confucianism and the traditional morality of Chinese people, they all believed that the revitalisation of Confucianism, which could reinforce traditional moral virtues on the one hand and deter influence of Western values on the other, could be the solution. This view is also held by the modern Mainland Chinese government, which thought that the revival of Chinese tradition, especially the Confucian system of values, could check the undesirable intellectual and moral influence of the West since the 1980's(70).

Finally, due to Confucianism's close link with authoritarianism and imperial rule in history, these attempts to revitalise Confucianism were all linked, or believed to be linked, with the state's attempts to reinforce its rule. As Glen Peterson has suggested, the late Qing government's assertion of Confucian orthodoxy was due to its attempt to save the declining dynasty from collapse (e.g. its assertion of the notion of loyalty as a means to maintain powerful provincial governor-generals' loyalty to the court). The Qing government's *Aim of Education* (1906) also clearly associated worshipping Confucius with resisting Western liberal democratic ideas, which it considered heterodox and subversive to its rule. As discussed in Chapter 1, Kang's Confucian Religion Movement was closely linked with his attempt to restore the Qing dynasty, while Yuan Shikai's promotion of Confucian doctrines and cult of Confucius was closely linked with his attempt to restore autocratic rule and instate himself as the new emperor of China. One of the purposes behind Jiang Jieshi's promotion of Confucian ideas during the New Life Movement in the 1930's was to resist Western liberal democratic ideas as well as to make officials obey the ruler. Similarly, the Confucian movement was perceived by many Singaporeans as the government's attempt to contain the quest for democratisation and to reinforce an existing authoritarian political system(71).

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69. Li Minghui (Academia Sinica, 1998), P.264/ Han Hua (*Modern Chinese History Studies*, March 2002), P.218/ Lee Kuan Yew (李光耀), *Memoirs of Lee Kuan Yew 李光耀回憶錄: 1965-2000* (World book, 2000), P.177

70. Silke Krieger (Mainz, 1991), P.124

71. Glen Peterson (2001), P.195, 201-2, 205, 210-1/ Eddie Kuo (National University of Singapore, 1992), P.14-16, 20/ Li Minghui (Academia Sinica, 1998), P.256

Nevertheless, there are also differences between these movements.

First, although economic development and modernisation were not the concerns of Kang's Confucian Religion movement or Jiang Jieshi's New Life Movement, the assumption that Confucian values and ethics' contributed to economic development and modernisation was already widely accepted by scholars at the time the Singapore government launched the Confucian movement in the late 1970's, so many scholars believed that the promotion of Confucian ethics would not only provide a new moral order needed to confront moral crisis but would also play an active role in economic development and modernisation. For example, Singapore education minister Goh Keng-swee claimed that Confucian tradition could produce people of a certain character which would make it possible to achieve spectacular economic growth. The Singapore media also stressed the value and relevance of Confucianism to modern life. These views were consistent with Liang Qichao and the New Confucian thinkers' belief in Confucianism's contribution to the modern world discussed above. Many New Confucian thinkers, e.g. Du Weiming, served as advisors in Singapore's Confucian movement(72).

Second, Kang's Confucian religion movement differed from other movements in respect of its strong nationalistic elements. As discussed in Chapter 1, it was closely linked with Kang's deep sense of crisis over the continued existence of the Chinese race, which he thought was being threatened by the loss of Chinese culture and tradition. It was also used by Kang as a means to assert Chinese cultural nationalism.

Third, while the Confucian Religion Movement and New Life Movement were intended to be national movements covering all people in China, Singapore's Confucian movement could not take the form of a pan-Singaporean national movement and had to be contained within the Chinese community, due to the multicultural and multiethnic nature of Singapore society as well as Singapore's state ideology of multiracialism(73).

However, like Kang's attempt to revitalise Confucianism in China by adopting it as the state religion and putting it in the constitution, the Singapore government's attempt to revitalise Confucianism in Singapore by incorporating it in the school curriculum also had limited results. For example, few non-Chinese chose Confucian ethics as their option for the religious knowledge course. Moreover, as mentioned before, there was a lot of opposition to the movement among young English-educated Singaporeans who perceived it as an attempt to assert authoritarianism and contain democracy. Finally, due to its concern for the potential danger of inter-religious conflict following the strong upsurge of religious (e.g. Christian) activities and the trend of religious revivalism during the 1980's, the Singapore government decided to phase out the religious knowledge course as a compulsory subject in secondary school and remove Confucian ethics as a course in moral education. The Institute of East Asian Philosophies, which was originally established to propagate Confucianism in Singapore, was also converted to the study of East Asian politics and the economy(74).

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72. Eddie C.Y. Kuo (National University of Singapore, 1992), P.12/ Li Minghui (Academia Sinica, 1998), P.272

73. Eddie C.Y. Kuo (National University of Singapore, 1992), P.14

74. Ibid., P.18/ Li Minghui (Academia Sinica, 1998), P.313

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In my view, the failure of Kang's Confucian Religion Movement and Singapore's Confucian movement reveal the fundamental problems of revitalising Confucianism as a national ethical system and content of moral education for establishing social and moral order in modern society.

First, the failure of the Confucian movement to become a pan-Singaporean national movement which would cut across the ethnic differences of Singapore reveals the weakness in the argument of New Confucian thinkers such as Du Weiming that Confucianism would cut across ethnic lines and transform into a universal cultural resource and intellectual tradition which can be embraced by all people. It also indicates the problem with Kang and Liang's idea of transforming Confucianism into a universal ideology applicable to all people of the modern world and propagating Confucian ethics as universal moral codes. The Singapore government pointed out in its "*White Paper on Shared Values*" that it had no intention of imposing Confucian values on non-Chinese Singaporeans since the values could not be shared by non-Chinese people(75).

Second, a major reason for the failure of the two movements was due to the intellectuals' perception of Confucianism's close link with old ideas, moral codes and customs which they thought were incompatible with the life and ethos of modern society. As discussed before, many radical Chinese intellectuals opposed Kang's Confucian Religion Movement in the 1910's based on such a perception. Similarly, despite the government's official view on the relevance of Confucian values and ethics to modern life and moral education, many Singaporean intellectuals argued during the Confucian movement in the 1980's that Confucianism's stress on authoritarianism, submission to authority and passiveness would hinder freedom of speech, individual initiative, creativity, the spirit of renovation and democracy.

The persistence of this perception of Confucianism among intellectuals throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century has challenged the feasibility of revitalising Confucianism as a national ethical system and making it the content of moral education in modern society. For example, as Eddie Kuo has questioned, can Confucianism, or some of its selected elements, be relevant to the evolving new economic, political and cultural order of a modern nation like Singapore? Can selected and reinterpreted Confucian values be compatible with the urban industrial social structure? Chen Duxiu, as mentioned before, challenged the idea of authoritatively determining a certain school of thought as a modern nation's foundation of education. Jiang Yihua, reviewing the experience of modern China, has also challenged the New Confucian thinkers' view that traditional Confucian values and notions so closely linked with the socio-economic structure of pre-modern society, can solve the problems associated with modernisation without hindering its process(76).

So, can Confucianism be employed as a means to elevate the moral standard and solve the moral problems of modern East Asian societies by adopting its moral teaching as the national ethical system and content of moral education?

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75. See *In Search of Singapore's National Values* (The Institute of Policy Studies, Singapore, 1990), P.113

76. Eddie Kuo (National University of Singapore, 1992), P.16, 20, 22/ Li Minghui (Academia Sinica, 1998), P.278/ Jiang Yihua (Shanghai Sanlian, 2000), P.131-133

In my view, we can follow the experience of transforming Confucianism from a negative factor of economic development and modernisation into a positive one discussed before. That is, while the traditional form of Confucianism contains constraints on economic development and modernisation, the rationalised and modified form of Confucianism (after selectively preserving its elements which are favourable for economic development and modernisation while removing those which are not) can be a positive factor for development. Similarly, although traditional Confucian ethics and values are perceived as unsuitable to be the national ethical system and content of moral education of modern nation due to their incompatibility with modern life, society and ethos, they can become compatible after a process of selective preservation, modification and removal based on the reality of modern society and life.

For example, during Singapore's Confucian Movement some scholars suggested removing Confucian norms and values which were not compatible with modern life (e.g. those stressing authoritarianism and submissiveness), reinterpreting those which were still applicable but needed to be adapted to modern life (e.g. norms governing family and social relations, i.e., the "Five relations 五倫") and preserving those which contained eternal truth (e.g. benevolence and righteousness). Moreover, despite Chinese intellectuals' belief that Confucianism was anti-democratic and closely linked with authoritarianism throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, some modern scholars have suggested that the Confucian notion of the Mandate of Heaven, based on the ethic of the responsibility of the elite and on the notion of the person as a centre of relationships, can be conducive to modern democracy. They have also suggested that Confucian ideas of benevolent government, the duty of conscientiousness of the elite and the right of the people to revolt are consistent with the demands for civility, impartiality and public accountability in modern democratic society(77).

This indicates that Confucianism could be revitalised as the national ethical system and made the content of moral education in a modern democratic society after a process of selective removal, modification and preservation of Confucian norms and values. Such a process could also help to transform Confucian ethics into universal moral codes applicable to all people of the modern world as suggested by Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao and various New Confucian thinkers discussed above.

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77. Li Minghui (Academia Sinica, 1998), P.286/ Du Weiming (Harvard University, 1996), P.345-8/ Silke Krieger (1991), P.35-9

# Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to highlight the characteristics of Chinese intellectuals' reconstruction of Confucianism in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century from four perspectives, namely, religion, nation, modernity and culture. I argue that Kang, Liang and Zhang's discourse on Confucianism challenged and problematised notions of religion, nation, modernity and culture in the modern world.

## 1. Religion

As discussed before, Kang, Liang and Zhang's discourse on whether Confucianism was a religion, whether it had any religious dimension, whether Confucianism should be transformed into an organised religion, whether Confucius had any religious identity, and whether the Confucian notion of "*jiao*" and "Heaven" (*tian*) had any religious implication, was a result of contemporary Chinese intellectuals' re-evaluation of Confucianism, their reflection on its origin and nature, their reappraisal of Confucius, their reflection on his identity and status in response to the western notions of "religion", "secular" and "god" and the challenge of Christianity.

Based on my findings, this discourse led to two distinct views among contemporary Chinese intellectuals. Kang and many New Confucian thinkers categorised Confucianism as a religion. They undermined the dichotomy between religion (god/ deity/ spirit) and secular (human) as well as perceiving the religiousness of Confucianism in the notion of "unity of Heaven and Human". On the other hand, Liang, Zhang and many Chinese intellectuals in the early Republican Period opposed the religious interpretation of Confucianism and drew a sharp distinction between Confucianism and religion. They stressed the dichotomy between religion (god/ deity/ spirit) and secular (human) and refuted the religious implication of the Confucian notions of "*jiao*" and "Heaven".

Kang, Liang and Zhang's discourse problematises the Western notion of "religion" by challenging the definition of "religion" and "god", the foundation of religiousness and religiosity, and the dichotomy between religion and secular, god and human. It triggers a series of questions which challenge and undermine basic assumptions in Western religions such as Christianity. For example, should the notion of religion be linked with the concept of god? Must the foundation of religiousness and religiosity be based on god? Can the Western notion of "god" be substituted by other forms of transcendence such as the Confucian notion of "Heaven" (*tian*)? Can transcendence be internal instead of external, i.e., can one's mind instead of god be the ultimate source of moral values? Must the spheres of religion and secular, god (deity/ spirit) and human be dichotomised and mutually exclusive?

Kang's categorisation of Confucianism as a religion, his perception of its religious dimension based on the link between the ways of human and Heaven and the New Confucian thinkers' assertion of the religiousness of Confucianism based on the notion of "unity of Heaven and Human" broadened the definition and foundation of religion, religiousness and religiosity by adding plurality to these notions.

Kang's perception of the unity of the sphere of religion (god/ deity/ spirit) and secular (human) in Confucianism and his challenge to the Western notion of religion, and Du Weiming's view that the moral values of Confucianism, which are rooted in the ways of Heaven, are manifested in the social lives and relations of Chinese people also match with some contemporary Western anthropologists' views on aspects of Chinese society, culture and religions (e.g. ancestor worship). For example, Maurice Freedman has observed that religion does not exist in China as a separate area of cultural life but is deeply linked with Chinese social relations and order. In his view, Chinese ancestor worship and rites link the human and spiritual world by extending the social relations of the human world into the spiritual world. Based on this, Freedman argues that the Western notion of religion as "a separate or autonomous realm of belief and practice defined by belief in a Transcendent Being or God with a definite doctrine" cannot be applied to China and he calls for a hermeneutics of Western categories of religion, magic and divinity(1).

This indicates that, despite their different angles (Kang and Du's philosophical and intellectual angle versus Freedman's anthropological and popular religion angle), both contemporary Chinese intellectuals and Western anthropologists perceive the unity of religion and secular as well as the religiousness of social lives, relations and order in Chinese culture. (As Freedman has pointed out, the elite culture and peasant culture of China were not different things but were versions of each other)(2).

On the other hand, contemporary Chinese intellectuals' discourse had a very distinct character and a very different function from the discourse on the religion-secular dichotomy in the West.

William Cavanaugh has argued that the creation of the notion of religion as "a set of beliefs which is defined as personal conviction and which can exist separately from one's public loyalty to the state" has played a crucial role in the rise of the modern state in Western history. That is, by demarcating the spheres of "religion" and "secular", within which the church is granted freedom in the private sphere of beliefs and values, public authority (e.g. the use of coercive authority and violence) and people's ultimate loyalty were transferred to the state(3). Therefore, the discourse on the religion-secular dichotomy served in the West as an ideological tool of the state to secure absolute sovereignty over its subjects.

1. See Stephen Feuchtwang, "A Chinese Religion Exists" in *An Old State in New Settings: Studies in the Social Anthropology of China in Memory of Maurice Freedman* (Oxford, 1991), P.12-13 and Maurice Freedman, "On the Sociological Study of Chinese Religion" in *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society* (Stanford University Press, 1974), P.22
2. Maurice Freedman (Stanford University Press, 1974), P.23
3. See William T. Cavanaugh (1995), P.398-405

Although contemporary Chinese intellectuals' discourse was also linked with demarcating (or not demarcating) the sphere of "religion" and "secular" as well as the emergence of the modern state, they did not use the discourse to remove institutionalised religion from the public sphere, because there was no pre-existing institutionalised religion in China comparable to Christianity in the West which would be the rival of the state in this period. Although Confucianism had been the state ideology of China since the Han Period, it was always part of the state apparatus and it had never existed as an independent institutional force. Moreover, the state has always had absolute sovereignty over its subjects in China.

Instead, the discourse was closely linked with Kang's attempt to transform Confucianism into a religion and Confucius into a religious figure for various political and cultural purposes, an attempt which was opposed by Liang, Zhang and other Chinese intellectuals.

While the formation of the theoretical framework of the religion-secular dichotomy in the West was closely linked with the secularisation of Western society in history(4), the discourse on whether Confucianism should be classified as religion or secular in contemporary China was not related to the issue of secularisation. From Zhang's point of view, Chinese culture and society had already been secularised at the time of Confucius. From the point of view of Kang and many New Confucian thinkers', the issue of secularisation does not exist in China since there is no distinction between "religious" and "secular" in Chinese culture and society.

Finally, a feature of the discourse on the religion-secular dichotomy in the West was its tendency to demarcate the sphere of religion (god/ spiritual) and secular (human/ material). As Timothy Fitzgerald has pointed out, by constructing the world of religion, the imagined secular world of objective facts has also been constructed(5). However, as discussed before, in contemporary Chinese intellectuals' discourse on whether Confucianism is a religion, many of them (e.g. Kang and New Confucian thinkers) tended to undermine the dichotomy between religion (god/ spiritual) and secular (human/ material).

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4. Du Weiming, *East Asian Values and Pluralistic Modernity 东亚价值与现代多元性* (Chinese Social Science Press, 2001), P.35
  5. See Timothy Fitzgerald (Oxford University Press, 2000), P.8

## 2. Nation

Contemporary Chinese intellectuals' reconstruction of Confucianism was an integral part of their reconstruction and new understandings of Chinese tradition, in response to the emergence and development of nationalism, nationalist movements and nation building of China in this period. It represents contemporary Chinese intellectuals and governments' efforts to transform Confucianism to serve the needs of a modern nation and polity as well as to attain various nationalist goals.

My findings indicate that Confucianism had been transformed for a variety of nationalist purposes in this period. It had been transformed to construct and justify discourses on reform (e.g. Kang's notion of "Three Ages" and his image of Confucius as a reformer), on revolution (e.g. Zhang's critique of Confucius and Confucian followers), on strengthening the nation (e.g. Kang's use of Confucian religion as the core of reform movement), on constructing national identity and promoting nationalism (e.g. Zhang's inclusion of Confucius and Confucianism in the national essence of China), on promoting cultural nationalism (e.g. Kang's Confucian Religion Movement and Liang's use of Confucius as a symbol of Chinese culture) and on reasserting state control (e.g. the late Qing government and Yuan Shikai's promotion of Confucian doctrines and cult of Confucius, and Jiang Jieshi's New Life Movement).

These findings demonstrate Confucianism's changing and complex relations with contemporary Chinese nationalism, nationalist movements, nation building, state and politics. It indicates new dimensions into which the distinctive heritage of a nation can be transformed for nationalist ends. Kang, Liang and Zhang's arguments on Confucian religion's impact on China have also provided new perspectives for the discourse on the relations between religion, state, nation and politics in modern world by contesting these relations in the Chinese context.

Due to the simultaneous existence of diverse and contradicting nationalist interests, goals, agendas and ideologies as well as views on how the ideas and symbols of Confucianism could serve the political reality of China, each version of the reinterpretation and transformation of Confucianism were contested and refuted by another one in China at the time.

For example, Kang's attempts to advocate reforms by weakening the Confucian orthodoxy, by reinterpreting Confucian notions and by reconstructing the images of Confucius were opposed by conservative Manchu aristocrats and Han scholar officials who considered them heterodox. Kang's reinterpretation of the "Three Ages" to advocate constitutional monarchy and his blurring of the distinction between Han and Manchu was refuted by Zhang, who advocated establishing a republic with a revolution based on an anti-Manchu racial discourse. Zhang's attempt to undermine the status of Confucius and Confucianism in order to justify his revolutionary discourse clashed with the late Qing government's promotion of Confucian doctrines and a cult of Confucius designed to strengthen imperial rule. Finally, Kang's attempt to use Confucian religion to restore the monarchy and imperial rule clashed with radical Chinese intellectuals' attacks on Confucianism's links with authoritarianism, monarchism and imperial rule in the early Republican era.

### 3. Modernity

As Ann Anagnost has pointed out, the encounter between “modernity” and “tradition” dominated Chinese intellectual discourse, setting the terms of cultural and political debate in contemporary China(6). Due to the centrality of Confucianism in Chinese tradition, contemporary Chinese intellectuals’ reconstruction of Confucianism in response to the challenge of modernity was an integral part of such encounter and discourse. From this perspective, the successive struggles between the attempts to preserve and reassert Confucianism and the attempts to attack and weaken it discussed in this thesis can be interpreted as continuous clashes between tradition and modernity in contemporary China.

Within the framework of a dichotomy between tradition and modernity, Confucianism was usually classified as the sphere of tradition and the opposite of modernity. This was reflected in Kang’s attempt to deconstruct traditional Confucianism as a past-oriented, backward looking, conservative, pro-establishment state ideology and to construct a modern Confucianism as a progressive, forward-looking, reformative universal ideology. It is also reflected in the belief held by many modern scholars that China’s failure to attain a truly modern form (e.g. a democratic political system and reception of modern western values of liberty, equality and human rights) has been due to the cognitive limits set by its tradition, within which Confucianism was a major component, which prevented the progressive unfolding of its history toward an endpoint in modernity(7). Finally, it was reflected in Chinese intellectuals’ perception of Confucianism’s association with traditional ideas, customs, morals and rites as well as its incompatibility with modern life and society throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Nevertheless, the findings of Chapter 4 indicate that, despite the weaknesses in establishing links between Confucianism and the cultural factors which have contributed to the modernisation of East Asia, traditional values and ethics derived from Confucianism can be compatible with a modern political and economic system, society, life and ethos. They can also be transformed into a positive factor for modernisation and economic development after a process of selective preservation, modification, rationalisation and removal based on instrumental and economic rationality. These findings have challenged the common notion that modernity is a conscious rejection of, an unintended departure from, or a break with tradition(8).

Moreover, as discussed in Chapter 4, based on his belief in cultural relativism and pluralism, Zhang refuted the classification of Chinese and Western cultures as “old (traditional)” versus “new (modern)”. Zhang’s view also challenged the notion that tradition and modernity was a dichotomy whose two elements mutually excluded each other.

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6. Harumi Befu, *Cultural Nationalism in East Asia: Representation and Identity* (Berkeley, 1993), P.61

7. Ibid., P.61-62

8. Du Weiming (Harvard University Press, 1996), P.343/ David Harvey (Blackwell, 1990), P.12

Du Weiming has similarly argued that tradition and modernity should not be dichotomised and seen as contradicting and conflicting with each other. Du suggests that tradition and modernity are on a continuum and that they penetrate and influence each other(9).

Moreover, Zhang's opposition to the transplant of modern western culture into China based on the distinctiveness of Chinese and Western culture challenged the notion of modernity as a universal norm, a standard of inspiration and an emergent global phenomenon which all cultures should follow. As discussed in Chapter 3, Zhang refuted the notion that human beings were moving forward in progress by pointing out the problems associated with the advance of human society and technology.

Finally, Zhang's view that since the West had created its modern culture based on its own tradition, China could also create its own version of modern culture based on its tradition, Du Weiming's view that all modernities are derived and inseparable from their traditions, and the examples of traditional cultural elements combining with modern political and economic systems in contemporary East Asia, have all challenged the assumption that every nation should adopt the form of modernity developed by the West. These views have also challenged the assumption that there is only one (Western) model of modernity, and that modernity is a unified Western discourse producing global homogeneity while other modernities are derivative and second-hand. It has contributed to the changing meaning of modernity by suggesting that modernising processes may assume different cultural forms and there can be different models of modernity (e.g. East Asian and Chinese) based on distinct cultural traditions(10).

#### 4. Culture

Due to the centrality of Confucianism in Chinese culture, the reconstruction of Confucianism was closely linked with the discourse on culture in contemporary China.

First, it was closely linked with the crisis of cultural identity caused by the challenge of Western culture. As Zhang Hao has pointed out, in a society undergoing rapid and drastic changes, people are likely to become inundated by new ideas and experiences which make them feel cut off from their past. They become anxious to re-establish a meaningful continuity with the past in such a way that the shock of changes can be absorbed and meaning can be found(11). Kang and Liang's synthesis of Confucian notions (e.g. "Three Ages" and "Primacy of the people") with Western ideas and systems (e.g. constitutional monarchy, equality, democracy, people's rights and socialism) can thus be seen as their attempt to overcome the spiritual disorientation caused by the challenge of new western ideas, worldviews and values and an attempt to establish a meaningful continuity with Chinese culture.

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9. See Du Weiming, *East Asian Values and Pluralistic Modernity* (Chinese Social Science Press 2001), P.94

10. Ibid./ See "Differentiating the notion of evolution" (1906) in *Minbao Vol.7*, P.3

11. Charlotte Furth (Harvard University, 1976), P.278-281

Nevertheless, as discussed in Chapter 4, Kang, Liang and Zhang's reconstruction of Confucianism in many ways contributed to radical Chinese intellectuals' attacks on the core values of Confucianism and attempts to uproot the Confucian tradition during the New Culture and May Fourth Movements. The subsequent breakdown of the Confucian value pattern and worldview intensified the crisis of cultural identity and spiritual disorientation which Kang, Liang and Zhang had originally intended to solve.

The crisis of cultural identity in contemporary China stood out from other non-Western cultures (e.g. India and Japan) in their confrontation with the West. The crisis of cultural identity and meaning, along with the conceptual dislocation that gave rise to them, constitute an orientational crisis in China which began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and has continued to the present. Moreover, radical iconoclasm, represented by the idea of rejecting the whole Chinese tradition, has dominated the Chinese intellectual cultural outlook from the May Fourth Movement until the present. As discussed above, modern Chinese nationalism was also closely linked with anti-traditionalism, since its cause and content were intellectually alienated from traditional Chinese culture. As Zhang Hao has pointed out, such a radical cultural self-critique in contemporary China was a unique phenomenon in the modern world.

Second, the reconstruction was a means to preserve Chinese culture and resist Western cultural influences. It was reflected in Kang's attempt to use Confucian religion as a means to preserve Chinese culture, resist radical Chinese intellectuals' attacks on traditional thoughts, customs, morals and rites and refute Western cultural superiority. It was also indicated in the late Qing government's attempt in the *Aim of Education* (1906) to use the cult of Confucius to resist Western liberal democratic ideas, in Jiang Jieshi's attempt to use Confucian ideas to resist Western liberal democratic ideas during the New Life Movement and in the Singapore government's attempt to revitalize Confucianism based on the belief that the moral foundation of Singapore society had been eroded by the influence of Western culture and that Singapore people had failed to resist such influence because of their loss of their cultural heritage.

The manipulation of Confucius and Confucianism as the cultural symbol and identity of modern China serves to increase Chinese people's confidence in Chinese culture and promote Chinese cultural nationalism in face of the challenge of Western culture. It also provides Chinese people with the means to identity their position in relation to the West. This was reflected in Kang's use of Confucianism as the representation of Chinese culture, of Confucian religion as the counterpart of Christianity, and of Confucius as China's national symbol and centre of worship, in Liang's combination of Confucius as a symbol of Chinese culture and the image of Confucius as a great person of the world, in Zhang and the New Confucian thinkers' assertion of the distinctiveness of Chinese culture, and in Liang and the New Confucian thinkers' idea of supplementing the weaknesses of Western culture with the strengths of Chinese culture.

Finally, in their process of reconstructing Confucianism, contemporary Chinese intellectuals have formulated many diverse views on Chinese and Western culture, which have challenged and contributed to notions on intercultural relations.

China's defeat in the Opium War of 1841 marked the beginning of the confrontation between Chinese and Western culture in contemporary China. However, until the Sino-Japanese War in 1894, the majority of Chinese scholar officials still considered Chinese culture superior to Western culture except at the technical level (e.g. in science, technology, military skills and economic enterprises). They preserved the traditional Sinocentric worldview of "China versus barbarians" and the notion of China as a cultural order (the "*tianxia* 天下" system). Based on these perceptions of Chinese and Western culture, Chinese intellectuals' views of the relations between the two cultures in this period were characterised by the slogan "Chinese study as fundamental structure and Western study for practical use". They tried to preserve and assert the traditional social, political and cultural order based on Confucian orthodoxy while adopting Western culture at a technical level.

China's military defeat by Japan in 1894 and the subsequent intensification of foreign aggression shattered Chinese intellectuals' previous perceptions on Chinese and Western culture. Subsequently, three distinct views on Chinese and Western culture emerged among Chinese intellectuals.

Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao (in their early years when they were advocating reforms based on western lines) and Feng Youlan all represent a view which recognised the superiority of modern Western culture while trying to undermine the differences between Chinese and Western cultures. As discussed in Chapter 3, based on the idea of cultural and historical progress as well as his association of modern western political systems with the higher stages of historical evolution in his reinterpretation of "Three Ages", Kang considered modern Western culture to be a universal advanced level of culture which China should adopt. Kang and Liang tried to undermine the differences between the two cultures by synthesizing Confucian and Western notions, as well as convincing Chinese people that modern Western notions and systems could be found in the Confucian classics. Similarly, as discussed in Chapter 4, Feng Youlan suggested that Chinese and Western culture were on different levels but in the same line of development, such that Chinese culture could catch up with Western culture by removing cultural elements which were unfavourable to industrialisation. Feng also tried to synthesize Confucian and Western notions by reconstructing the metaphysical system of Neo-Confucianism based on western philosophy and logic.

Liang Shuming and Zhang Taiyan represent a view which stressed the distinctiveness of the two cultures and they opposed the direct transplant of modern Western culture. In Liang Shuming's view, Chinese and Western culture represent two different directions of cultural development. While Chinese culture emphasizes union with nature, intuition, emotion, human relation and happiness in internal peace of mind, modern Western culture emphasizes conquest of nature, rationality, individual and material comforts, which Liang thought led to a poor spiritual life and substantial spiritual sufferings for its people<sup>12</sup>. On the other hand, Zhang opposed the direct transplant of modern Western culture into China on the basis of the distinctiveness of Chinese and Western culture.

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12. Bao Ci, *The Essential Academic Works of Liang Shuming* (Beijing Normal University, 1988), P.41-7, 47-8/ Wang Jianping (Sichuan Renmin, 1988), P.148-9, 153-4

During the New Culture and May Fourth Movements, Chinese intellectuals such as Chen Duxiu and Hu Shi represented a view which stressed the superiority of modern Western culture and the incompatibility between traditional Chinese culture and modernity. Based on this view, they advocated the replacement of traditional Chinese culture with modern Western culture.

After World War I, and especially after World War II, with the exposure of the weaknesses of modern Western culture and the emergence of more equal and reciprocal intercultural relations(13), new perceptions of Chinese and Western culture emerged among Chinese intellectuals. Liang Qichao (in his later years) and New Confucian thinkers like Mou Zongsan, Zhang Junmai, Xu Fuguan and Tang Junyi represent such a view. On the one hand, like Zhang they stressed the distinctiveness of Chinese and Western culture while nevertheless trying to synthesize the two cultures just as Kang and Liang in their early years and Feng Youlan did. On the other hand, they suggested that the strengths of Chinese culture could supplement the weaknesses of Western cultures and that the future world civilisation would be based on the revival of Chinese culture represented by Confucianism combined with Western science and democracy.

These diverse views about Chinese and Western culture not only reveal contemporary Chinese intellectuals' changing perceptions of the two cultures and their relations but have contributed to the discourse on comparative culture, cultural conflicts, clash of civilisations, intercultural relations and dialogues in the modern world. Kang and Liang's synthesis of Confucian and Western notions, Zhang's view of mutual respect between different cultures based on cultural pluralism, the New Confucian thinkers' idea of understanding and appreciating the spiritual world of other cultures with sympathy and respect, as well as incorporating them into one's cultural tradition, have provided new perspectives and frameworks for interpreting cultural differences, improving intercultural understanding and relations and resolving cultural conflicts and clashes of civilisation.

Finally, as Samuel Huntington has suggested, a "universal civilisation", i.e., the common assumptions, values and doctrines accepted by people throughout the world, such as individualism, market economy, liberal democracy and human rights, is emerging in the modern multicivilizational world(14). Therefore, Kang and Liang's idea of propagating the teachings of Confucius to the entire world as a modern universal ideology and ethical system, Du Weiming's view that Confucianism would cut across ethnic lines and transform into a universal cultural resource and humanistic intellectual tradition in the modern era, and the belief held by many New Confucian thinkers that the future world civilisation will be based on a revival of Confucianism combined with science and democracy have contributed to this notion by suggesting that elements of Confucianism (e.g. its ethics and values) could be universalised as components of such a "universal civilisation".

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13. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisation and the Remaking of World Order* (Touchstone 1998), P.54

14. *Ibid.*, P.57

## Glossary

1898 Reform (Hundred Day Reform/ <i>bairi weixin</i> )	百日維新
1911 Revolution ( <i>xinhai geming</i> )	辛亥革命
Age of Approaching Peace ( <i>shengping shi</i> )	升平世
Age of Disorder ( <i>juluanshi</i> )	據亂世
Age of Universal Peace ( <i>taiping shi</i> )	太平世
Analects ( <i>lunyu</i> )	論語
Anti-Lin Anti-Confucius Campaign ( <i>pilin pikong yundong</i> )	批林批孔运动
Benevolence ( <i>ren</i> )	仁
Black Emperor ( <i>heidi</i> )	黑帝
Book of Changes ( <i>yijing</i> )	易經
Boxer Uprising ( <i>yihetuan</i> )	義和團
Buddhist temple registration system ( <i>teraukesei</i> )	寺請制
Cai Yuanpei	蔡元培
Chan (Zen)	禪宗
Chen Duxiu	陳獨秀
Chen Huanzhang	陳煥章
Chinese study as fundamental structure and Western study for Practical use ( <i>zhongxueweiti xixueweiyong</i> )	中學爲體,西學爲用
Confucian Association ( <i>kongjiao hui</i> )	孔教會
Confucian Religion ( <i>kongjiao</i> )	孔教
Confucian Religion Movement ( <i>kongjiao yundong</i> )	孔教運動
Cultural Renaissance Movement ( <i>wenhua fuxing yundong</i> )	文化復興運動
Cultural Revolution ( <i>wenhua dageming</i> )	文化大革命
Danka system ( <i>danka seido</i> )	檀家制度
Daotung (moral tradition)	道統
Doctrine of the Mean ( <i>zhongyong</i> )	中庸
Dong Zhongshu	董仲舒
Doubters of Antiquity ( <i>yigupai</i> )	疑古派
Du Weiming	杜維明
Eastern Culture Group ( <i>dongfang wenhuapai</i> )	東方文化派
Enlightened civilisation (Jap: <i>bunmei kaika</i> )	文明開化
Exhausting the mind in knowing one's nature, one knows Heaven ( <i>jinxin zhixing zezhitian</i> )	盡心知性則知天
Fan Wenlan	范文瀾
Feng Guifen	馮桂芬
Feng Youlan	馮友蘭
First Emperor of Qin ( <i>qinshihuang</i> )	秦始皇
Five relations ( <i>wulun</i> )	五倫
Four olds ( <i>siji</i> )	四舊
Fu Sinian	傅斯年
Fukuzawa Yukichi	福沢諭吉
Goh Keng-swee	吳慶瑞

Gongyang commentary ( <i>Gongyang zhuan</i> )	公羊傳
Gong Zhizhen	龔自珍
Great Learning ( <i>daxue</i> )	大學
Great Unity ( <i>datong</i> )	大同
Gu Jiegang	顧詰剛
Gu Yanwu	顧嚴武
Guangxu	光緒
Gujingjingsha	詰經精舍
Guo Moruo	郭沫若
Guojiao (state religion)	國教
Han Fei	韓非
He Xiu	何休
Heaven ( <i>tian</i> )	天
Honourable men ( <i>junzi</i> )	君子
Honouring the king, expelling barbarians ( <i>zunwangrangyi</i> )	尊王攘夷
Hua-yan (Flower Garland/ Avatamsaka)	華嚴宗
Huang Zongxi	黃宗羲
Human way ( <i>rendao</i> )	人道
Imperial Rescript on Education ( <i>kyoiku chokugo</i> )	教育敕語
Inoue Tetsujiro	井上哲次郎
Interaction between Heaven and Men ( <i>tianrenganying</i> )	天人感應
Internal transcendence ( <i>neizaichaoyue</i> )	內在超越
Ishida Baigan	石田梅岩
Jiang Jieshi	蔣介石
Jitsugaku (practical learning)	實學
Journal of Current Affairs ( <i>Shiwubao</i> )	時務報
Kang Youwei	康有為
Kanie Yoshimaru	蟹江義丸
King Wen	文王
Kotoku Shusui	幸德秋水
Legalism ( <i>fajia</i> )	法家
Li Dazhao	李大釗
Li Yun	禮運
Liang Qichao	梁啟超
Liang Shuming	梁漱溟
Liberty and people's rights movement ( <i>jiyuminken undō</i> )	自由民權運動
Liu Fenglu	劉逢祿
Liu Shaoqi	劉少奇
Liu Shiwei	劉師培
Liu Xin	劉歆
Lu Ban	魯班
Mandate of Heaven ( <i>tianming</i> )	天命
Mao Zedong	毛澤東
May Fourth Movement ( <i>wusiyundong</i> )	五四運動

Meiji Restoration ( <i>Meiji ishin</i> )	明治維新
Mencius	孟子
Minbao	民報
Mohism ( <i>mojia</i> )	墨家
Model teacher for ten thousand generations ( <i>wanshishibiao</i> )	萬世師表
Nakae Chomin	中江兆民
National essence ( <i>guocui</i> )	國粹
New Confucianism ( <i>xin rujia</i> )	新儒家
New Culture Movement ( <i>xinwenhua yundong</i> )	新文化運動
New Life Movement ( <i>xinshenghuo yundong</i> )	新生活運動
New Youth Journal ( <i>xinqingnian zazhi</i> )	新青年雜誌
On (blessing)	恩
Preserving the nation, teaching and race ( <i>baoguo, baojiao, baozhong</i> )	保國，保教，保種
Preserving the principles of Heaven and removing human desires ( <i>cuntianli, qurenju</i> )	存天理，去人欲
Primacy of the people ( <i>minbenlun</i> )	民本論
Pu Yi	溥儀
Qu Fu	曲阜
Rectification of names ( <i>zhengming</i> )	正名
Revolutionary Alliance ( <i>Tongmenhui</i> )	同盟會
School of Investigation ( <i>kaozhengxue</i> )	考証學
Self-reliance instead of reliance on external power ( <i>yizibuyita</i> )	依自不依他
Self-Strengthening Movement ( <i>yangwu yundong</i> )	洋務運動
Shangdi	上帝
Shao Zhengmao	少正卯
<i>Shiji (Historical Records)</i>	史記
Shingaku (Mind Learning) Movement ( <i>Shingaku undō</i> )	心學運動
Shiwu Academy ( <i>Shiwu xuetang</i> )	時務學堂
Shokubun (occupation)	職分
Shun	舜
Si Maqian	司馬遷
Six arts ( <i>liuyi</i> )	六藝
Society of National Learning ( <i>guoxuehui</i> )	國學會
Son of Heaven ( <i>tianzi</i> )	天子
Spring and Autumn Annals ( <i>chunqiu</i> )	春秋
Su Xun	蘇洵
Subtle words and profound meaning ( <i>weiyandayi</i> )	微言大義
Sun Yatsen	孫中山
Taiping Rebellion ( <i>taipingtianguo</i> )	太平天國
Tan Sitong	譚嗣同
Tang Junyi	唐君毅
Taoism ( <i>daoja</i> )	道家
Teaching of the human way ( <i>rendaozhijiao</i> )	人道之教

Ten Thousand Wood Thatched Hall ( <i>wanmu caotang</i> )	萬木草堂
Three Ages ( <i>san shi</i> )	三世
Three Bonds ( <i>sangang</i> )	三綱
Three People's Principles ( <i>sanminzhuyi</i> )	三民主義
Tianxia (all under heaven)	天下
Tokutomi Soho	德富蘇峰
Twenty One Demands ( <i>ershiyitiaokuan</i> )	二十一條款
Unity of Heaven and Human ( <i>tianrenheyi</i> )	天人合一
Unity of knowledge and action ( <i>zhixingheyi</i> )	知行合一
Wang Fuzhi	王夫之
Wang Man	王莽
Wang Yangming ( <i>Ōyomei</i> )	王陽明
Warring States Period ( <i>zhanguoshidai</i> )	戰國時代
Way of Celestial Master ( <i>tianshidao</i> )	天師道
Ways of god ( <i>shendao</i> )	神道
Ways of Heaven ( <i>tiandao</i> )	天道
Wei Yuan	魏源
Weishi (Yogacara / Consciousness Only)	唯識宗
Wholesale Westernisation ( <i>quanpanxihua</i> )	全盤西化
World of Great Unity ( <i>datongshijie</i> )	大同世界
Wu Yu	吳虞
Xunzi	荀子
Yan Fu	嚴復
Yao	堯
Yellow Emperor ( <i>huangdi</i> )	黃帝
Yi Baisha	易白沙
Yinyang and five elements ( <i>yinyang wuxing</i> )	陰陽五行
Yu Yue	俞樾
Yuan Shikai	袁世凱
Zhang Daoling	張道陵
Zhang Ji	張繼
Zhang Taiyan	章太炎
Zhou Enlai	周恩來
Zhu Xi	朱熹
Zhuangzi	莊子
Zhuzixue (study of ancient philosophical schools)	諸子學
Zongjiao/ shūkyō (religion)	宗教

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 “A letter to Xu Shichang 致徐世昌書”(1917) PWK P. 992-995  
 “Reflections on the republic 共和評議”(1917) PWK P.1018-1051

## II. Works by Liang Qichao

### Sources:

- |  | <u>Abbreviations</u> |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. <i>Selected Works of Liang Qichao</i> 梁啟超選集 (1984),<br>Shanghai Renmin Publishing House (上海人民出版社)   | SWL                  |
| 2. <i>Yin bing shi he ji</i> 飲冰室合集 (1941),<br><i>Collection of Yinbingshi</i> 飲冰室文集 (1941)<br><i>Special Collection of Yinbingshi</i> 飲冰室專集 (1941)<br>Shanghai Zhonghua Bookstore (上海中華書局) | CYBS<br>SCYBS        |
| 3. <i>Xinmin Congbao</i> 新民叢報 (1966)<br>Yiwen Publishing House (藝文印書館)   | XMCB                 |

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- “Introduction to a study of the forgeries of the Xin dynasty  
新學偽經考叙”(1897) CYBS Vol.2, P.61-62
- “The school regulations of Hunan Shiwu Academy  
湖南時務學堂學約”(1897) SWL P. 58
- “Preface to Yinbinshi notes on freedom 飲冰室自由書序”(1899) SCYBS Vol.2, P.1
- “The sin of giving up freedom 放棄自由之罪”(1899) SCYBS Vol.2, P.23-24
- “Nation's right and people's right 國權與民權”(1899) SCYBS Vol.2, P.31
- “Spiritual education is liberal education  
精神教育者自由教育也”(1899) SCYBS Vol.2, P.35-36
- “On China's religious reform 論支那宗教改革”(1899) CYBS Vol.3, P.58-59
- “Letter to Kang Youwei 致康有為書”(1899) SWL P.113
- “Letter to Kang Youwei 致康有為書”(1900) SWL P.136
- “On tracing the origin of China's weaknesses  
中國積弱溯源論”(1900) CYBS Vol.5, P.29
- “The biography of Master Kang Nanhai  
南海康先生傳”(1901) CYBS Vol.6, P.83-4
- “Preserving the teaching is not the way to honour Confucius  
保教非所以尊孔論”(1902) SWL P.305-311
- “Relation between Buddhism and collective rule  
論佛教與群治之關係”(1902) XMCB Vol.23 P.45-55
- “On the general trend of change in Chinese scholarship and thought  
論中國學術思想變遷之大勢”(1902) CYBS Vol.7, P.39-57
- “On the character of Chinese citizens 論中國國民之性格”(1903) CYBS Vol.14, P.2
- “Chinese socialism 中國之社會主義”(1904) SWL P.203-205
- “What are the actual benefits of Confucian doctrines to today's  
Chinese people 孔子教義實際裨益於今日國民者何在”(1915) CYBS Vol.33, P.60
- “Telegraph in opposition of restoration of monarchy  
反對復辟電”(1917) SWL P.715-7

- “Biography of great people in the world: Confucius  
世界偉人傳: 孔子” (1920) SCYBS Vol. 36, P.65
- “Confucius 孔子” (1920) SCYBS Vol. 36, P.56
- “Reflections on the trip to Europe 歐游心影錄” (1920) SWL P.718-733
- “Evaluation of the Anti-Religion Alliance 評非宗教同盟” (1922) CYBS Vol.38, P.19

### III. Works by Zhang Taiyan

#### Sources:

#### Abbreviations

- |  |     |
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| 1. <i>Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan</i> 章太炎全集 (1985),<br>Shanghai Renmin Publishing House (上海人民出版社) | CWZ |
| 2. <i>Selected Works of Zhang Taiyan</i> 章太炎選集 (1981),<br>Shanghai Renmin Publishing House (上海人民出版社) | SWZ |
| 3. <i>Selected Political Writings of Zhang Taiyan</i> 章太炎政論選集 (1977),<br>Zhonghua Bookstore (中華書局)   | SPZ |
| 4. <i>Minbao</i> 民報 (1957), Kexue Publishing House (科學出版社)   | MB  |
| 5. <i>Qiu Shu</i> 疇書 (2002), Huaxia Publishing House (華夏出版社)   | QS  |

#### Zhang's works referred to in the thesis in chronological order:

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- “On viewing the sky 視天論” (1899) SPZ P.125-127
- “Correcting the wrong idea of guest emperor 客帝匡繆” (1900) QS P.7
- “Correcting Confucius 訂孔” (1902) SPZ P.183
- “The origin of men 原人” (1902) QS P.71-73
- “Competition for teaching 爭教” (1902) QS P.222
- “Worrying about religion 憂教” (1902) QS P.224
- “Refutation of Kang Youwei's essay on revolution  
駁康有為論革命書” (1902) QS P.298-308
- “Differentiating the notion of evolution 俱分進化論” (1906) MB Vol. 7, P.3
- “On no God 無神論” (1906) MB Vol. 8, P.1-12
- “On the creation of religion 建立宗教論” (1906) MB Vol. 9, P.9
- “On various ancient schools of thought 論諸子學” (1906) SWZ P.369-370
- “Speech at the welcoming party of Chinese students in Tokyo  
東京留學生歡迎會致辭” (1906) SPZ P.276
- “Reply to Tiezhen 答鐵錚” (1907) CWZ P. 369-374
- “Refutation of the notion of spiritual self and constitutionalism  
駁神我憲政說” (1908) MB Vol. 21, P.41
- “On five negations 五無論” (1908) CWZ P.432-439
- “On nation 國家論” (1908) CWZ P.457-463
- “The origin of ru 原儒” (1909) SPZ P.489-493
- “On four puzzles 四惑論” (1909) MB Vol.22, P.10
- “Against establishing the Confucian religion 駁建立孔教議” (1913) CWZ P.194-5

#### IV. Works by other Chinese and Japanese intellectuals

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##### Abbreviations

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 1. <i>New Youth</i> 新青年 (1962)<br>Ōyasu Company (大安株式会社)  | NY  |
| 2. <i>Complete Works of Tan Sitong</i> 譚嗣同全集 (1954),<br>Xinhua Bookstore (新华书局)                                 | CWT |
| 3. <i>Complete Works of Sun Yatsen</i> 國父全集 (1957) ,<br>Zhongyang Wenwu Gongying House (中央文物供應社)                | CWS |
| 4. <i>Complete Works of Li Dazhao</i> 李大釗全集 (1999),<br>Hubei Jiaoyu Publishing House (河北教育出版社)                  | CWL |
| 5. <i>Contemporary New Confucianism</i> 当代新儒家 (1989),<br>Xinhua Bookstore (新华书店)                                | CNC |
| 6. <i>Complete Works of Fukuzawa Yukichi</i> 福沢諭吉全集 (1959),<br>Iwanami Shoten (岩波書店)                            | CWF |
| 7. Liang Shuming (梁啟銘), <i>The Essence of Chinese Culture</i><br><i>中國文化要義</i> (1987), Sanlian Bookstore (三联书店) |     |

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| Fukuzawa, "An invitation to learning 學問の勸め" (1880)  | CWF Vol. P.163  |
| Tan Sitong, "An Exposition of Benevolence 仁學" (1897)  | CWT P.14        |
| Sun Yatsen, "China should establish a republic 中國應建設共和國" (1905)                                   | CWS Vol.3, P.5  |
| Yi Baisha, "Evaluation of Confucius 孔子平議" (1916)  | NY Vol. 1 No.6  |
| Chen Duxiu, "Refuting Kang Youwei's letter to the president and prime minister 駁康有為致總統總理書" (1916) | NY Vol. 2 No.2  |
| Chen, "Constitution and Confucian Religion 憲法與孔教" (1916)  | NY Vol. 2 No.3  |
| Chen, "The way of Confucius and modern life 孔子之道與現代生活" (1916)                                     | NY Vol. 2 No.4  |
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| Li, "Natural ethical view and Confucius 自然的倫理觀與孔子" (1917)   | CWL P.454       |
| Chen, "Restoring the monarchy and Honouring Confucius 復辟與尊孔" (1917)                               | NY Vol. 3 No.6  |
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| Hu Shi, "The meaning of new intellectual trend 新思潮的意義" (1919)                                     | NY Vol. 7 No.1  |

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