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CONFUCIUS IN CONTEMPORARY CHINA

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I INTRODUCTION

In Chinese history the period roughly from 550 to 200 B.C. is known as the classical era. It was a period of the »Hundred Philosophers«, producing six major schools of Chinese thought: Confucianism, Taoism, Mohism, the Yin and Yang school, the Dialecticians, and Legalism. Of these, already during the Former Han dynasty (206-23 B.C.), Confucianism was raised to a state cult. Confucian classics served as study material in imperial examinations, and every one of the 2,000 counties in China built a temple in honour of Confucius. Confucianism even spread to neighbouring East Asian nations. It is particularly highly valued in modern South Korea. The biggest Confucian temple outside China is in fact in Seoul (Chongmyo Shrine), and the most authentic Confucian sacrifice, *Sokchon*, is performed there. The influence which Confucianism exerted historically, and still continues to exert, cannot be overstated. The success of Confucianism compares well with any other philosophy, or religion, of the world, and can only be explained by its ability to respond to universal needs.

Zi Gong, a close disciple of Confucius, once asked his master, »"Is there one single word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life?" The Master said, "Is not reciprocity such a word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to

others."»¹ *Shu*, the principle of reciprocity, often aptly translated as forgiveness, is an example of humanitarian principles attributed in East Asia to the Confucian school of thought, along with other ethical principles such as benevolence (*ren*), propriety (*li*), and filial piety (*xiao*). Confucian ethics share a lot with other moral codes of the world, including those of all the main religions.

Confucianism dealt with human relations, it was humanism trying to provide guidelines for life — a major difference with Western philosophies which concentrated more on metaphysical questions. In China Confucianism has traditionally not only been held as synonymous with learning, but it has even more generally been characterized as »the way of life followed by the Chinese people for well over 2,000 years».²

Chinese culture did not start with Confucius (551-479 B.C.) and his disciples. They inherited the culture of earlier periods, adapted and reorganized it, adding to it their own by no means negligible contribution, and in turn passed it on to posterity. The Chinese people have a tendency to personify achievement. Consequently, Confucianism is seen as an unbroken cultural tradition giving all the credit to Confucius and his early followers, the most famous of whom was Mencius (372-289 B.C.) despite the fact that every succeeding generation made its own interpretations of and additions to the heritage of earlier generations.

How is contemporary China relating itself to this Confucian heritage? The present work tries to present primarily an overall view of the development of contemporary Chinese evaluations of Confucius and only secondarily of the Confucian school of thought, as the latter is perhaps too general and complex a task to try to attempt in a single study. As source material the author has used a selection of articles published in Chinese daily newspapers and periodicals (i.e. sources reflecting public discussion) while specialized works dealing with Confucius have been omitted from the analysis since these due to their very nature tend to be more limited to the specialist circles and generally do not receive wide attention. The author also excludes from the analysis the anti-Confucian writings of what earlier used be called The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution which began in 1966 and which is nowadays written in small letters within quotation marks. According to the contemporary view, the Cultural Revolution period included also the campaign of »Criticize Lin Biao and Confucius» (*Pi-Lin pi-Kong*, 1974-1976). This hectic anti-Confucian turmoil has been analysed in detail by Kam Louie in his work *Critiques of Confucius in Contemporary China*³, therefore there is no need to attempt the same again here. For purposes of comparison, however, a selection of articles from the 1950's and early 1960's has been included in the analysis.

It may be worth emphasizing that the author prefers to let the Chinese scholars build up their own picture of Confucius, rather than present first some standard portrait of Confucius and attempt to compare it with contemporary Chinese interpretations. A certain amount of repetition has been unavoidable, but in principle all the 70 articles were chosen

¹ The *Analects*, book XV, chapter 23. Transl. from James Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, vol. I, p. 301.

² »Confucius and Confucianism», *The New Encyclopædia Britannica*, 1985, vol. 16.

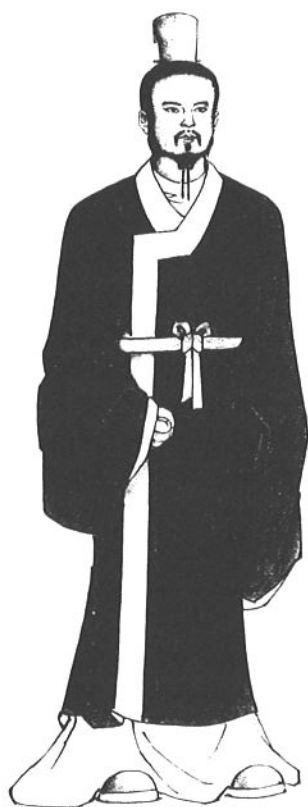
³ Kam Louie, *Critiques of Confucius in Contemporary China*, Hong Kong 1980.

so as to present a panorama of the different views on Confucius, including some themes indirectly dealing with Confucius or Confucianism. As these articles were originally meant for the general reader in China, they do not go into too much detail, and therefore the author is reluctant to draw too far-reaching conclusions. The general tendencies that emerge, however, should be self-evident enough from the material presented below.

As supplementary material, an account of the native town of Confucius and his descendants, as well as translated documents on the Confucius Foundation of China are added as Appendixes 1 and 2.

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布衣孔子三十而立像 畫



一九八四年春
吳門程名元敬繪

»Confucius the Commoner» at the age of 30.
Drawing by Cheng Zongyuan, 1984. Published in Kuang Yaming,
Kongzi pingzhuan (A Critical Biography of Confucius), Jinan 1985.

II THE EVALUATION OF CONFUCIUS IN THE 1950'S AND 1960'S

II 1. New Conditions for Confucian Studies After 1949

In 1938, eleven years before the inauguration of the People's Republic of China, Mao Zedong noted in a report to the Central Committee of the Communist Party:

Contemporary China has grown out of the China of the past; we are Marxist in our historical approach and must not lop off our history. We should sum up our history from Confucius to Sun Yat-sen and take over this valuable legacy.⁴

Mao returned to the topic in his article in the first number of *Zhongguo wenhua* (Chinese Culture), a magazine published in Yanan in 1940. According to Mao:

China also has a semi-feudal culture which reflects her semi-feudal politics and economy, and whose exponents include all those who advocate the worship of Confucius, the study of Confucian canon, the old ethical code and the the old ideas in opposition to the new culture and ideas.⁵

Elsewhere in the same article Mao does, however, give credit to traditional Chinese culture:

A splendid old culture was created during the long period of Chinese feudal society. To study the development of this old culture, to reject its feudal dross and assimilate its democratic essence is a necessary condition for developing our new national culture and increasing our national self-confidence, but we should never swallow anything and everything uncritically. It is imperative to separate the fine old culture of the people which had a more or less democratic and revolutionary character from all the decadence of the old feudal ruling class.⁶

The above seem to have been the main guideline available for Chinese scholars when they started their research on Confucius after the establishment the People's Republic of China in 1949 and these passages have since been frequently quoted in literature. Even since the May the Fourth Movement in 1919, when students attacked the traditional society under the slogan »Overthrow the Confucian Curiosity Shop» (*dadao Kongjia dian*), many intellectuals had been critical of Confucianism, but there were also many who still supported it. Zhang Dainian, now Professor of Chinese philosophy at Beijing University, recalls the change in direction was by no means an easy task when the university curriculum in philosophy had to be re-organized along Marxist lines after 1949.⁷

⁴ »The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War», *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, vol. II, Beijing 1975, p. 209.

⁵ »On New Democracy», *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, vol. II, Beijing 1975, p. 369.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 381.

⁷ Zhang Dainian, »Tansuo Kongzi sixiang de zhendi — liushi nian lai duiyu Kongzi sixiang de tihui» (On the Very Essence of Confucianism — Sixty Years' Experience on the Thought of Confucius), *Kongzi yanjiu*, 1989:4, p. 33.

II 2. The Fifties: Hesitant Debate

In the 1950's Chinese scholars were still relatively careful of making either positive or negative judgements on Confucius: they were not yet ready or willing to adopt any distinct position in public. Nonetheless articles published during this period generally gave a fairly positive view of Confucius and his role in Chinese history. **Ji Wenfu**, for example, notes in an article written in 1953 that Confucius represented and worked for the interests of all aristocrats (whom Ji divides into great, middle, and petty), although he himself was not associated with them, for the simple reason that his thought was too far-reaching for the aristocracy to dare to employ him.⁸ Ji gives Confucius credit for developing China's ancient culture. Confucius is known to have been the first person in China to establish private schools open to the public. His several decades of teaching activity were like a seed which spread China's traditional culture to classes outside the aristocracy. Ji classifies Confucius' thought as being humanistic, since it is centered around man. Confucius held that the ancient rites (*li*) should be given new meaning by having benevolence (*ren*) incorporated into them. Previously, rites had involved much with mysticism and superstition. Ji evaluates Confucius' thought as possessing, on the whole, a democratic essence predominantly because of his humanism and his educational activity among commoners.⁹

Feng Youlan, a well-known Confucian, wrote in 1956 that to attack the »Confucian Curiosity Shop« in no way amounted to genuine research on Confucius. Feng pointed out that although among scholars there were differences of opinion concerning Confucius' concepts of Heaven, rites, and benevolence, all were unanimous about Confucius having been particularly fond of learning. According to Feng, Confucius was clearly progressive as he emphasized reality — he was even critical of his own scholarship. He did not accept uncritically ancient legends as being reliable without scrutiny. For Confucius, learning (*xue*) had several aspects: hearing and seeing, the study of institutions, and learning from others. To isolate oneself would be particularly dangerous: »He who learns but does not think is lost, he who thinks but does not learn is perilous.« By »teaching without any discrimination« (*you jiao wu lei*) and by »teaching without ever getting weary of it« (*hui ren bu juan*), Confucius educated over 3,000 students, thus making a great contribution to spreading ancient culture among his contemporaries and passing it on to posterity. According to Feng, for two thousand years Confucius' philosophy served as »the philosophical thought of the superstructure of the feudal society.« »His name is now one of the beloved names in Chinese history and will continue to be so in the future.«¹⁰

Zhang Dainian appreciates highly Confucius' teaching curriculum which consisted of the Six Arts: poems (*shi*), political documents (*shu*), rites, music (*yue*), archery

⁸ Ji Wenfu, »Guanyu Kongzi de lishi pingjia wenti« (Concerning the Question of How to Evaluate Confucius in History), *Lishi jiaoxue*, 1953:8, p. 4.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

¹⁰ Feng Youlan, »Guanyu Kongzi yanjiu de jige wenti« (A Few Questions Concerning Research on Confucius), *Guangming ribao*, 14 November 1956.

(*she*), and chariot riding (*yu*). On the philosophical front, Confucius' merits included his advocacy of morality (*daode*), benevolence, and theory of knowledge (*renshilun*). He laid down the basic principles for feudal morality, which since the Han dynasty formed the superstructure in the thought of the feudal society. Confucius did not favour the common reasoning of something being »the Will of Heaven«. Zhang claims that politically Confucius opposed the desire of the aristocracy for political authority. Instead Confucius advocated the strengthening of the power of the monarch, or the Prince (*junzi*), who in Confucius' view should by his example show that he was a gentleman, or a Superior Man in moral terms. Confucius' doctrine on the Rectification of Names (*zhengming*) meant that not merely the nature of an object should correspond to its name but that the same should also be required of humans: Prince, minister, father, and son should all maintain a moral dignity corresponding to their positions. Thus the Prince, for instance, was expected to be an example for his people also in terms of morality.¹¹

Towards the end of the 1950's discussion around Confucius gained some vitality as Marxist doctrines spread also to this field of research. A new theme in historiography was now whether the Spring and Autumn Period (722-481 B.C.), at the end of which Confucius lived, was still slave society or whether the changeover to feudal landownership had occurred. An example of such a debate can be found on the pages of *Guangming ribao* (Guangming Daily) from May to July 1957. It was started by **Chen Zhenwei** who put forward four theses which were in sharp contradiction with the traditional view on Confucius. Chen claimed that Confucius did not demand social or political reforms, but, on the contrary, actively supported the old system. Neither did he reflect the demands of the people. Confucius' ideas of benevolence and government by virtue had the effect of a narcotic drug on the common people. Finally, Confucius was fond of material gain, Chen claimed.¹² As a reaction to these views, **Zhang Muling** argued that Confucius saw in his time the disruption of slavery and demanded reforms in society and politics, thus supporting the emergence of feudal landownership. Zhang reminds Chen Zhenwei of the need for historical evaluation. According to him, Confucius, as a product of his own time, could prepare the way only for feudalism — one should not therefore expect him to work for socialism or communism. Zhang further points out that a strict distinction should be made between Confucius' own thought and post-Han Confucianism, which rulers used for their own purposes.¹³ Another reaction to Chen Zhenwei's views came from **Huang Liqiang** who wrote that Confucius by no means wished to see the Western Zhou (approx. 1066-771 B.C., usually referred to simply as the Zhou dynasty) system continue without change — he demanded reforms. Huang regards Confucius' thought as double-sided. On the one hand, Confucius was to a certain degree an active, progressive, enlightened politician; on the other hand, he disliked war and expected rulers to reform themselves on their own initiative without being forced to do so in order that

¹¹ Zhang Dainian, »Kongzi« (Confucius), *Zhongguo qingnian*, 1956:14, pp. 26-29.

¹² Chen Zhenwei, »Guanyu Kongzi pingjia wenti« (Concerning the Problem of How to Evaluate Confucius), *Guangming ribao*, 1 May 1957.

¹³ Zhang Muling, »Ye tan Kongzi de pingjia wenti« (Further Discussion on the Problem of How to Evaluate Confucius), *Guangming ribao*, 30 June 1957.

conflicts could be avoided peacefully.¹⁴

Like Huang Liqiang, **Li Fengshan** also emphasizes in his article in *Dagongbao* on 8 January 1858 the importance of giving Confucius a fair evaluation against the background of his own society. Class analysis had now become the topic also in Confucian studies. In Li's opinion, the slave system underwent remarkable changes during the Spring and Autumn Period. Animals and iron tools began to be used and trade and handicraft production took a step forward. On the other hand, politically the period was most unstable. In the 242 years in question 36 rulers were assassinated and as many as 52 states disappeared. Thus it was to be expected that Confucius was tired of war and desired the smooth development of the society.¹⁵

Li Fengshan summarizes the views on Confucius presented in the press recently as falling into two different categories. The first of these, represented by Song Yuke, Zhang Gong and Chen Zhenwei, held that Confucius supported the orthodox patriarchal clan system which served the interests of slave owners. Confucius himself was, according to this view, born into a declining aristocratic family, learning Zhou rites from a young age. The Zhou system was therefore the political ideal for Confucius, who consequently advocated that the Prince, the minister, father, and son should act according to these rites which would secure smooth social development. In order to reach this aim, the Rectification of Names, and the redefinition of rites with the help of benevolence (*ren*) was helpful and in the interest of the ruling class. Furthermore, the Prince was a slave owner himself, and Confucius' ideas of benevolence, etc. concerned only him and the rest of the ruling class, while they did not apply to the commoners — the slaves (*xiaoren*). Finally, Confucius opposed rebellion against one's superiors, which also meant that he stood for the ruling class. The second category of views on Confucius, represented by Wei Jichang and Zhang Muling, held that Confucius saw the decline of the slave owners' rule and demanded, in accordance with the trend of historical development, necessary reforms from ancient slavery toward modern feudal landownership. His doctrines were in the interest of enlightened slave owners, feudal landowners, and the common people. According to this view, Confucius' concept of benevolence was a new moral standard — he demanded that the old slave owners respect the interests of other classes as well as their own. Furthermore, when Confucius served his home state Lu as a minister, he himself practised the virtues of respect (*gong*), lenience (*kuan*), confidence (*xin*), and graciousness (*hui*). Representatives of both categories shared, however, some common ground. Confucius' concept of benevolence was progressive, so was his educational thinking («teaching without any discrimination»). Confucius taught students out of regard for their abilities and did not refuse students because of their background. For instance, he taught Zhong Gong and Sima Niu even if their father and elder brother were evil. Moreover, his attitude to teaching and learning was practical. He frequently encouraged students to seek out themselves answers to their own questions.¹⁶

¹⁴ Huang Liqiang, «Wo dui pingjia Kongzi de yixie yijian» (Some Views on the Evaluation of Confucius), *Guangming ribao*, 7 July 1957.

¹⁵ Li Fengshan, «Kongzi de pingjia ruhe?» (What About the Evaluation of Confucius?), *Dagongbao*, 8 January 1858.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*



Portrait of Confucius as the Minister of Justice in the state of Lu. Qing dynasty, painter unknown.
From Qufu Administration Commission of the Cultural Relics of Shandong (ed.), *Portraits of Confucius. Portraits of the Dukes of Yansheng and Their Wives*. Jinan 1987, p. 12.

II 3. The Sixties: A Marxist Tone

In the 1960's Marxist approaches became more conspicuous than in the preceding decade in Confucian studies. **Ji Wenfu** now wrote that the application of historical materialism to research on Confucius had already produced good results. Confucius was subjected to class analysis and his progressiveness or backwardness was under scrutiny. Ji called for further analysis of the different social classes of Confucius' time and stressed that actually every period had its own image of Confucius — Han Confucians had one such image, Song Confucians another, Kang Youwei his own, etc.¹⁷

One sees an expression of post-revolutionary idealism also in an article written in 1962 by **Cai Shangsi** about the conditions for Confucian studies and their meaning. According to Cai, the Kong family (descendants of Confucius) had, despite changes of dynasties and rulers, existed as a kingdom of its own, and Confucius had been regarded as a saint or model teacher for more than two thousand years. It was not until the Liberation of China under the Chinese Communist Party that the study of Confucius on the basis of facts finally became possible. According to Cai, Chinese scholarship was now being guided by »the most scientific, the most revolutionary« thought of Marx, Lenin, and Mao, and therefore research was freer than ever before under the principle »Let a hundred flowers bloom, a hundred schools of thought contend«. Cai stresses the importance of Confucian studies by noting that research on China's ancient history, culture, and thought was not possible without the study of Confucius and his doctrines.¹⁸

Cai notes that a critical adaption of China's cultural heritage is useful for communism. Confucius belongs to the oldest part of this cultural heritage, therefore Confucius is well worth scientific study. Cai reminded readers that only 12 or 13 years had passed since the Liberation of China and therefore the impact of Confucian thought was still strong. Scientific Confucian studies could consequently help one raise one's own consciousness.¹⁹ Cai complains that not much decent research had been done recently on Confucius. The best work had been written already during the Republican period by Zhao Jibiao under the title *Gudai rujia zhexue pipan* (A Criticism of Ancient Confucian Philosophy). As advice for future research, Cai recommends two different approaches: one such approach taking as its starting point the societies of Western Zhou and the Spring and Autumn Period, and the other Confucius' thought as its starting point. Under the guidance of Marx, Lenin, and Mao, careful evaluation of material should be carried out with the help of textual criticism, clearly distinguishing between primary and secondary sources, correcting errors, and sorting out forgeries.²⁰ Cai also warns that one should not judge Confucius, a man who lived over 2,000 years ago, utilizing advanced modern class analysis, otherwise he could only but look a reactionary. Neither should

¹⁷ Ji Wenfu, »Zenyang jinyibu yanjiu Kongzi« (How to Study Further Confucius), *Xueshu yuekan*, 1962:7, pp. 12-13.

¹⁸ Cai Shangsi, »Tantan guoqu, xianzai he jinhou duiyu Kongxue wenti de zhenglun« (About the Debate on Past, Present and Future Problems of Confucian Studies), *Xueshu yuekan*, 1962:7, p. 33.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

Confucius be beautified to suit the progressive ideas of our age such as socialism, dialecticism, or materialism — there was no need to make Confucius look like a revolutionary. Confucius was not God but a man, who did not live in the modern age but in ancient times, Cai stresses. On the whole, however, Cai does not consider Confucian studies as a field of deserving urgent attention. »If someone said that Confucian studies do not suit modern times, that should not sound strange, but it is strange indeed that people of modern times hold Confucian learning in high regard!»²¹

Like Cai, **Guan Feng** also regrets that a scientific evaluation of Confucius' thought on the whole still remained to be done. According to Guan, Confucian studies could be further promoted by paying more attention to the history of society (e.g. economic and political history, habits, and customs) and through the critical interpretation (exegesis) of ancient texts. Guan stresses that »the existence of a society (*shehui cunzai*) determined the consciousness of that society». If one disregards the existence of a society, then any philosophical analysis faces the danger of becoming either Leftist or Rightist.²² According to Guan, a chronicle of Confucius could be edited on the basis of the critical evaluation of historical documents, and it could include accounts on the historical events of Confucius' time, his own environment, his speeches, etc. Concerning the exegesis of Chinese characters, Guan remarks that in recent years attention to characters had not been adequate and that »without knowing ancient characters and not understanding their meaning, naturally no Marxist analysis is possible.» For example, since the *Analects* by Confucius were still difficult to comprehend, further critical interpretation was necessary. According to Guan, recent works on the *Analects* were not of much reference value and he recommended the use of old notes to the classic such as *Lunyu jishi* (The *Analects* with Notes) by Cheng Shude, which unfortunately was out of print. Guan also draws attention to the limitations of the scholarship of the ancients. First, they did not have Marxism-Leninism as their guide — their philosophies, for example, lacked explanations of a categorical nature. Second, research on the inscriptions of oracle bones and bronze vessels had not yet started. Finally, the ancients did not have the knowledge and methodology of modern history and natural science to assist them. Altering Confucius' saying about the need for learning instead of mere thinking, Guan concludes: »To stick only to historical sources and critical interpretation of texts, but not to study diligently Marxism-Leninism, would make one lose direction; to read only Marxism-Leninist works, but not study historical material and conduct critical interpretation of texts, would make one fall into the error of dogmatism.»²³

Another writer who remarks on methodology is **Zhou Yutong**. He reminds readers about the problem of the reliability of source material and notes that the only comparatively reliable source concerning Confucius is the *Analects*, as it was edited during or soon after Confucius' time, while other sources could be used only with extreme care. Zhou also stresses that one should keep in mind that »Confucius», »Confucianism», and

²¹ Ibid., pp. 33-34.

²² Guan Feng, »Cong taolun Kongzi zhaxue xiangdao de yidian yijian» (A Thought on the Discussion of the Philosophy of Confucius), *Xueshu yuekan*, 1962:7, p. 21.

²³ Ibid., pp. 22-23.

»Confucian religion» are not one and the same thing. Confucians included such disciples as Mencius, while supporters of Confucian religion included such philosophers from the Han dynasty down to the modern age as Dong Zhongshu, Liu Xin, Zheng Xuan, Wang Su, Kong Yingda, Cheng Yi, Zhu Xi, Wang Shouren, Gu Yanwu, Dai Zhen, and Kang Youwei. Zhou Yutong also emphasizes the great need for a chronology of Confucius, which should be compiled on the basis of existing material by »those who know how to use the sources». Moreover, a history of the development of Confucianism remained to be compiled. Even the etymology of the term for Confucian, *ru*, was still unclear, despite efforts by Zhang Taiyan and Hu Shi to explain it. Zhou Yutong furthermore suggests that the influence of Confucianism outside China, not merely in East Asia but even in the West, should also be delineated. Finally he, also, stresses the difficulties of the ancient texts. Every period had its own vocabulary and grammar, even every thinker had a style and vocabulary characteristic of him. Therefore scholars had to be trained in exegesis. Zhou also states that dictionaries on the *Analects* and on Chinese philosophy in general should be edited as soon as possible.²⁴

Hong Tingyan points out that despite all Confucians respecting Confucius as their Master (*fuzi*), the Confucian thought itself showed great variation. Changes due to the passing of time, the development of society, and changes in the political situation all had an influence on the Confucian thought of any given period. In Hong's view, any important historical thinker comes to be used by later thinkers who may emphasize, change, or reform certain aspects of his thought for the purpose of class struggle. Consequently Confucians, representing different classes or political interests, interpreted the doctrines of Confucius according to their own needs. Thus there is a need for analyzing the characteristics of Confucianism typical of different periods. Hong, however, is not ready to put a certain claimed »original shape» of Confucius on a pedestal at the expense of later interpretations. According to him, some wanted to revive Confucius after the May the Fourth Movement by emphasizing the difference between Confucius and later Confucians. To Hong this was »completely reactionary» since »their aim was to beatify Confucius», to make him a saint instead of letting him merely stay as the highest representative of feudal culture.²⁵ Hong's concern raises serious questions. Could it be possible at all to try to restore the original shape of Confucius? Is the historical material not too scarce for this task? Might not to »revive» Confucius in this way merely result in producing one more feudal ideal of Confucius? These questions will be given further attention below.

In addition, **Zhong Zhaopeng** draws attention to the possibilities of assembling a picture of Confucius on the basis of the sources available. He writes that among pre-Qin philosophers quite a large amount of material is available on Confucius and that this material is also fairly reliable. For example, the *Analects* not merely record the speeches and deeds of Confucius but touch even on such details of Confucius' life as his preferences for food and wine. On the basis of these sources, it should be possible to achieve

²⁴ Zhou Yutong, »Youguan taolun Kongzi de jidian yijian» (Some Views Concerning the Discussion About Confucius), *Xueshu yuekan*, 1962:7, pp. 36-39.

²⁵ Hong Tingyan, »Kongzi sixiang yu lidai rujia sixiang» (The Thought of Confucius and the Confucian Thought of Past Dynasties), *Xueshu yuekan*, 1962:7, pp. 30-31.

an overall evaluation of Confucius. Zhong warns, however, that with fragmented sources (selective information) one can prove whatever one wishes and that this should not be the goal of research which should seek to present a total picture. Zhong points out that, according to a principle of historical materialism, the thought of any given philosopher reflects a certain society and social struggle. Since the periodization of China's ancient history was still unsettled (i.e. no consensus existed yet about the timing of the transformation from slavery to feudalism), the evaluation of Confucius is complicated, Zhong claims.²⁶

Yang Rongguo draws attention to a pattern in China's feudal politics, the alternation of Confucianism and Legalism (*yang ru, yin fa*). In Yang's opinion, the differences between the two philosophies may after careful research turn out to be smaller than presumed. For example, the Confucian *li*, rules of propriety, are a reflection of Legalist political thought. Han Fei (died 233 B.C.) noted that during the Warring States Period (403-221 B.C.) already eight factions of Confucianism existed, but, with the exception of the schools of Mencius and Xunzi, no knowledge of the concrete nature of these schools has so far come down to us. Thus there is obvious need for further research.²⁷

The articles introduced above deal primarily with questions of research methods and sources. Below some of the theses concerning Confucius will be presented. **Ji wenfu** elaborates rites (*li*) in the thought of Confucius. Rites were according to him moral criteria dating from the early slave society — they were the base for such orders as the social hierarchy and the patriarchal clan system. Confucius and other intellectuals in the Spring and Autumn Period talked in terms of a rite being or not being followed when they meant that a certain event was good or not good. In the society of that time, morality and politics were inseparable, ethics and law were one and the same thing. Confucius gave a humanistic colour to rites by adding *ren* (benevolence, great virtue) to them. Originally rites had only been primitive superstition and custom, an ethical norm serving the aristocracy, while now they became a norm concerning the whole people. Confucius felt nostalgic for the beginning of the Zhou dynasty, the time of the Duke of Zhou. Politically he was a »middle-of-the-roader«. He was neither a reactionary nor a revolutionary, but a reformer. Change (*ge*) was to be based on reason (*yin*), a peaceful, controlled change, and not on revolution, Ji concludes.²⁸

Yan Beiming maintains that Confucius supported Zhou rites — »the noble slave-owners' system of traditional institutions« — and opposed Legalist rule, which reflected the demands of a new feudal rule. Thus Confucius was conservative, as he, according to Yan, also wanted to save the old slave-owning class. On the other hand, his cognitive theory (according to which both perception and rational thought should be combined) and his pedagogic views made him a great educationalist, with a certain element of rational

²⁶ Zhong Zhaopeng, »Ruhe pouxi Kongzi sixiang« (How to Analyse Confucius' Thought), *Xueshu yuekan*, 1962:7, pp. 26-27.

²⁷ Yang Rongguo, »Guanyu Kongzi de taolun« (Concerning the Discussion on Confucius), *Xueshu yuekan*, 1962:7, p. 15.

²⁸ Ji wenfu, »Duiyu Kongzi de yige jiandan kanfa« (A Simple View on Confucius), *Guangming ribao* 7 November 1961.

materialism. According to Yan, one condition for an overall evaluation of Confucius, including his historical function as the »Throneless King» (*suwang*), is that the real Confucius be separated from the views of later Confucians serving the needs of different periods (e.g. the classicism [*jingxue*] of the two Han dynasties, the Neo-Confucianism of the Song and the Ming dynasties, and the unadorned learning [*puxue*] of the Qing dynasty). Yan Beiming concludes that »Now has the time come to put things in order. Only the proletariat is the honest follower of the historical culture of mankind, as we have no need to distort any historical person.»²⁹

Zhu Qianzhi sees a democratic essence in Confucius' utopia of Great Unity, or Great Harmony (Datong),

When the great *Tao* was in practice, the world was common to all; men of talents, virtue and ability were selected; sincerity was emphasized and friendship was cultivated. Therefore men did not love only their parents, nor did they treat as children only their own sons. A competent provision was secured for the aged till their death, employment for the able-bodied, and a means of upbringing for the young. Kindness and compassion were shown to widows, orphans, childless men, and those who were disabled by disease, so that they all had the wherewithal for support. Men had their proper work and women had their homes. They hated to see the wealth of natural resources undeveloped, but also did not hoard wealth for their own use. They hated not to exert themselves, but also did not exert themselves only for their own benefit. Thus (selfish) schemings were repressed and found no development. Robbers, filchers and rebellious traitors did not show themselves, and hence the outer doors were left open. This was the period of Great Unity (ta t'ung).³⁰

According to Zhu, the idea of Great Harmony later inspired Hong Xiuquan, the leader of the Taiping Rebellion in the mid-19th century, Kang Youwei, Sun Yatsen, and even Mao Zedong.³¹ Mao wrote:

...Western bourgeois civilization, bourgeois democracy and the plan for a bourgeois republic have all gone bankrupt in the eyes of the Chinese people. Bourgeois democracy has given way to people's democracy under the leadership of the working class and the bourgeois republic to the people's republic. This has made it possible to achieve socialism and communism through the people's republic, to abolish classes and enter a world of Great Harmony. Kang Yu-wei wrote *Ta Tung Shu*, or the *Book of Great Harmony*, but he did not and could not find the way to achieve Great Harmony. There are bourgeois republics in foreign lands, but China cannot have a bourgeois republic because she is a country suffering under imperialist oppression. The only way is through a people's republic led by the working class.³²

²⁹ Yan Beiming, »Zenyang pingjia Kongzi» (How to Evaluate Confucius), *Xueshu yuekan*, 1962:7, pp. 18-20.

³⁰ *Li Ji* (Book of Rites), ch. 7. Fung You-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, transl. by Derk Bodde, Princeton 1952, vol. I, pp. 377-378.

³¹ Zhu Qianzhi, »Guanyu Kongzi de Datong sixiang» (Concerning Confucius' thought on the Great Harmony), *Xueshu yuekan*, 1962:7, p. 23.

³² Mao Tse-tung, »On the People's Democratic Dictatorship», *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, vol. IV, p. 414.

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Confucius giving guidance to herdsmen. Drawing by Cheng Zongyuan, 1984.
Published in Kuang Yaming, *Kongzi pingzhuan* (A Critical Biography of Confucius), Jinan 1985.

Ren Jiyu maintains that Confucius' purpose in life was to restore Zhou rites. His political method was to be the Rectification of Names (*zhengming*) and the philosophical guarantee, benevolence (*ren*), which would make aristocrats adopt a feeling of affection towards others. Confucius was the first person to put forward the idea of *ren*, applying it to a class society until then governed only by the natural laws of shameless exploitation. For this reason Ren acknowledges benevolence as a progressive element in Confucius' thought.³³

Tang Lan regards Confucius as a great progressive thinker of »revolutionary nature«. According to him, those who in the past worshipped Confucius as a saint, did not understand the fact that feudal rulers did not approve of Confucius' doctrines — they only borrowed Confucius' name to consolidate their own order. Confucius was made a sage and even a religion was established on the basis of his doctrines.³⁴ In Tang's view, feudalism had already prevailed for a long time in the Spring and Autumn Period, therefore Confucius could not even know that Shang, Xia, and Zhou had been slave dynasties. Politically, Confucius, however, longed for a nation with a centre. As no such state existed during his time, he turned his eyes to previous dynasties. Demands for central authority and the unity of the country, which Confucius advocated in his *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu*), were progressive claims for the time. In order to save the nation Confucius advocated that »the ruler should attend strictly to business, punctually observe his promises, economize on expenditure, show affection towards his subjects, and use the labour of peasantry only in the slack season of the year«. In governing the most important thing was to have »sufficient food, sufficient weapons, and the confidence of the people«. The head of the state or family »is not concerned lest his people should be poor, but only lest they should be ill-apportioned. He is not concerned lest they should be few, but only lest they should be divided against one another. And indeed, if all is well-apportioned, there will be no poverty; if they are not divided against one another, there will be no lack of men.«³⁵ Tang maintains that these ideas were in the interest of the people, and therefore progressive. The humanism of Confucius centered around *ren* — it was made with the ordinary people in mind. Only a person who had corrected, »rectified« himself, was suitable to become a leader. Confucius' »teaching without any discrimination« also formed the basis of ordinary people's culture. Furthermore, the Warring States Period slogan »Let a hundred schools contend« was, according to Tang, inspired by Confucius.³⁶

Zhou Gucheng evaluates the impact of Confucianism in China, seeing it as threefold. (1) Confucian learning was constantly employed by rulers for their own purposes for more than two millenia. For example, during the Qing dynasty, the Kangxi

³³ Ren Jiyu, »Kongzi de *ren* de baoshou sixiang zhong de jinbu yiyi« (The Progressive Meaning in Confucius' Conservative Thought on Benevolence), *Xueshu yuekan*, 1962:7, pp. 27-28.

³⁴ Tang Lan, »Yinggai gei Kongzi yi xin de pingjia« (Confucius Should be Given a New Evaluation), *Xueshu yuekan*, 1962:7, p. 28.

³⁵ Quoted translations from Luo Chenglie, *et. al.*, *Kongzi mingyan* (A Collection of Confucius' Sayings), Jinan 1988, pp. 2, 8, 14.

³⁶ Tang Lan, *op.cit.*, pp. 29-30.

emperor held the Confucian classics in especially high esteem. Even modern reformers used Confucianism in their fight against the ruling class, like Kang Youwei in his *Datong shu* (Book of Great Harmony) and Tan Sitong in his *Renxue* (Learning of benevolence). Generally speaking, during his own lifetime Confucius was, however, not yet considered great. (2) Confucianism served as a weapon against Buddhism, which originally came from India. Buddhism spread very rapidly in China. It not only appealed to the poor, but it also helped the wealthy to preserve their fortunes. During the Eastern Wei (534-550 A.D.) China had some 2 million Buddhist monks, and during the Northern Qi (550-577) the figure is estimated to have reached 3 million. The number of Buddhist monasteries rose accordingly from 30,000 during the Eastern Wei to 44,000 during the Tang dynasty (618-907). After this Buddhism underwent a decline. (3) Confucianism was even used as a weapon against Western influences, such as Christianity. For example, Zeng Guofan attacked the Christian ideology of the Taipings with the help of Confucian slogans. The fact that after 1898 Confucianism was made a religion, reflects the need to counter Western religious influence. Zhang Zhidong also gave Confucianism a central position with his slogan »Old learning for basic principles, new learning for application« (*jiu xue wei ti, xin xue wei yong*).³⁷

Zhou Gucheng concludes his article by admitting that although Confucius' thought after his death had been employed for governing people, resisting Buddhism and Western culture, it still had not completely occupied the minds of later generations, Buddhism has neither been totally defeated by it, nor was Western culture. On the other hand, all these foreign influences have had to adapt to Confucianism, that is through their struggle with it. Thus Confucius' legacy, blended with certain foreign influences, became an important native element in the formation of China's national spirit.³⁸

The following two articles summarize the discussion about Confucius in the early 1960's. The first of them, written by **Feng Youlan**, coins the opinions of four basically different views: (1) Confucius was the representative of the thought of the slave-owning aristocracy and landowners; his thought was entirely conservative, even reactionary. (2) Confucius represented the thinking of the broad masses; his thought was entirely progressive, even revolutionary. (3) Although Confucius represented the thought of slave-owning aristocracy and landowners, there was a reformist element in his thought even if it did not outweigh the element which sought to preserve the old system. Thus Confucius was still basically a conservative or reactionary. (4) Confucius represented the thought of a newly-born landowner class, but he was nevertheless a reformer, and reformist thought was uppermost in his mind.³⁹ In Feng's estimation, the first view above — that Confucius was a total conservative — is unacceptable for two reasons. Confucius' view on *ren* has a certain logic to it, and it is, moreover, accepted by all. It treats slaves as humans, thus working as a narcotic relieving class contradictions. This could not be the thought of

³⁷ Zhou Gucheng, »Jinian Kongzi, taolun xueshu« (Commemorating Confucius, Discussing Scholarship), *Xueshu yuekan*, 1962:7, pp. 34-36.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

³⁹ Feng Youlan, »Wo dui Kongzi de jiben kanfa« (My Basic View on Confucius), *Xueshu yuekan*, 1962:7, pp. 24-25.

slaveowners, who only whipped their subordinates. Another aspect in Confucius' thought, which is generally acknowledged as progressive, is his thought on education. In all eras people's educational thought does not differ greatly from their political views. In modern times, for example, all proponents of educational reform are known to have been progressive also in their political orientation. Likewise, in Feng's opinion, Confucius had progressive political tendencies. The second view above, according to which Confucius was entirely progressive or revolutionary, is also incorrect, in Feng's opinion. Since Confucius in reality discriminated against commoners, even despised them, clearly standing for the interests of the ruler — how could such a person represent the working people, Feng wonders. The third viewpoint outlined above is also dismissed by Feng, since as a backward class, the slave-owners could not possibly represent the thought of a more advanced class. Confucius' *ren* was a new idea which neither the Zhou King Wen nor the Duke of Zhou had had. Confucius clearly represented the opinions of a more advanced class, the landowners. The fourth view is supported by Feng, who considers the Spring and Autumn Period as a transitional stage from slavery to landownership.⁴⁰

The second summary on views on Confucius is by **Che Zai** who presents the material under four categories: the class nature of Confucius' thought, his world view, the core of his thought, and the historical evaluation of his thought. As no consensus existed about the periodization of China's ancient history at that time, views on the class nature of Confucius naturally also differed. Che himself sees Confucius as representing the interests of the declining old landowner class, and therefore Confucius' thought is to be classified as conservative. With regard to Confucius' world view, different scholars have regarded it as having either a materialistic or an idealistic tendency. Some divide idealism into objective and subjective idealism. Che regards Confucius as an objective idealist, when taking his whole thought into consideration. All that Confucius did supported feudal order. He often talked about the Way of Man, but only seldom about the Way of Heaven, unlike Zhuangzi.⁴¹ As for the core of Confucius' thought, most scholars regard either *ren*, *li*, or *zhongyong* (the Mean) as constituting the core. Che considers *dao* (the Way) as the the main concept, after which come in an order of declining importance *de* (virtue), *ren*, *xiao* (filial piety), and *li*. With regard to the historical evaluation of Confucius' thought, Confucius without doubt was the sage of the feudal society, representing the interests of the oppressor class, and supporting the feudal order in general. Confucius called rulers »sages» (*shangzi*), while commoners were deemed »stupid» or »dull» (*xiayu*). Confucius' great stature among the feudal ruling class was according to Che due to two factors. First, Confucius established a theory to support feudal social relations based on respect for the Prince and father. Second, he educated a great number of intellectuals, who then served the feudal ruling class. Confucius thus became a model teacher (*wanshi shibiao*). Che sees Confucius' thought as having had the following positive functions. (1) The recommendation to employ the common people at the proper season so as not to interfere with agricultural production. This was in the interest of both

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 25-26.

⁴¹ Che Zai, »Guanyu Kongzi sixiang taolun de jige wenti» (Concerning a Few Questions in the Discussion of Confucius' Thought), *Xueshu yuekan*, 1962:7, p. 16.

rulers and subjects. (2) The idea of sacrificing one's life to preserve one's integrity. This was the highest requirement for a virtuous ruler, but it had nothing to do with the commomers. (3) In his educational thought, Confucius aimed at education according to a person's talents, at reward for eagerness to learn, and at the development of man's overall personality.⁴²

In 1966 China entered the turmoil of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, which was to last until 1969. Its stern mental atmosphere, however, basically lasted until 1976 when Mao Zedong died and the ruling »Gang of Four« was ousted from power. The whole decade 1966-1976 has now been downgraded simply to »cultural revolution« in quotation marks, thus bearing a strong negative connotation. During the mass movement of the Cultural Revolution, traditional values, symbols, and systems were attacked as reactionary. Confucius and the Confucian school of thought were then natural targets for such onslaughts. Confucius was not infrequently branded as a descendant of a slave-owning, noble family and a spokesman for slave-owners, who carried out a die-hard struggle against landowners. According to these accusations, Confucius during his short employment as a minister in his home state Lu cheated and fought against the Ji clan, a representative of the newly born landowning class, and executed the Legalist pioneer Shao Zhengmao. A typical conclusion in the pamphlets of the 1974-1976 movement of »Criticize Lin Biao and Confucius« (*Pi-Lin pi-Kong*) was: »All reactionaries in Chinese history down to Chiang Kaishek, Liu Shaoqi, and Lin Biao fetched their intellectual weapons from the Confucian Curiosity shop. So too do imperialists and Soviet revisionists.«⁴³ Needless to say, Confucian studies were at that time at a standstill and Confucian scholars were forced to keep a low profile. Many of them were forced to undertake physical labour, and some even lost their lives. Zhang Dainian recalls that when he was ordered to teach Confucianism at Beijing University, he had no other choice than to teach facts to students while trying to leave the criticism of Confucius to others. To present opposing views at that time was impossible. For Confucian studies the whole Cultural Revolution along with the succeeding *Pi-Lin pi-Kong* campaign was, in Zhang Dainian's words, »a disaster«.⁴⁴

III THE REVIVAL OF CONFUCIAN STUDIES AFTER THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

A policy to »shift the emphasis of activities to the construction of socialist modernization with Chinese characteristics« was adopted in the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on 18-22 December 1978. This also marked

⁴² Ibid., pp. 17-18.

⁴³ Beijing Daxue Zhongwen Xi Gudian Wenxian Zhuanye (The Classical History Class at the Department of Chinese Language, Beijing University), ed., *Kong Qiu fandong sixiang ziliao pizhu* (Annotated Material on Kong Qiu's Reactionary Thought), Beijing 1974, p. 3.

⁴⁴ Zhang Dainian, »Tansuo Kongzi sixiang de zhendi — liushi nian lai duiyu Kongzi sixiang de tihui« (Probing the Essence of Confucius' Thought — Based on Last Sixty Years' Study of Confucius' Thought), p. 33.

the first occasion when academic activities were liberalized. As traditional Confucian learning had long been a target for more or less centrally led mass movements, a political decision of this type was necessary so that the revival of research on Confucius could seriously begin. Until then the articles appearing on Confucius were somewhat sterile, with the exception that the »Gang of Four» were attacked. An example of this tendency is a column by **Sha Yu** in *Guangming ribao* on 20 August 1978 on the different ways to designate Confucius. According to the article, the »Gang of Four» had claimed that to use »Kongzi», the standard designation for Confucius, was an expression of respect, and therefore Kong Qiu (Qiu was Confucius' given name) or Kong Laoer (the Second-eldest Kong) were preferable. Sha points out that in ancient China both Kongzi and Kong Qiu were used. »Zi» was a common way of address, with no special expression of respect. Later it survived in the names of philosophers (as *zi* also designated one of the four categories of books): Mengzi, Xunzi, Han Feizi, etc. To call Confucius Kong Laoer was less formal, but nevertheless acceptable. Lu Xun and Mao Zedong used to refer to him as »Master Kong» (Kong fuzi). Originally »fuzi» was simply a polite expression for men, but later it came to be used with the meaning of teacher, and also as a term of address for a wife to her husband.⁴⁵

An article in *Wenhuibao* on 25 January 1980 containing the views of scholar **Jin Jingfang** is one of the earliest comments on the state of Confucian studies after the liberalization of discussion. According to Jin, since 1949 many anti-Confucian campaigns had taken place, and, in his opinion, much of this criticism was warranted, but at the same time it was essential that criticism should also be methodologically faultless. Jin finds three flaws in criticisms of Confucius: (1) Not understanding that to criticize is not the same as to negate. To criticize and to assimilate what is best are the opposite ends of the same continuum. Both apply to the historical legacy. History is metabolic, in continuous movement — things from the old society cannot be applied to the present day without criticism. Moreover, human society develops without interruption on the basis of the past. Therefore criticism also always involves the question of how to assimilate the good. (2) Not understanding that in order to criticize someone such a person must first be understood. (3) Not understanding that criticism must be scientific, based on facts.⁴⁶

Another scholar on Chinese philosophy, **Li Zehou**, maintains in his article, which is dated December 1978 and was published in February 1980, that the Spring and Autumn Period as well as the Warring States Period belonged to an era of transition from early slavery to mature slavery. Typical of this era was, according to Li, that the clan-based ruling system and the society based on primitive communes were disintegrating and falling apart. The Zhou rites belonged to the early slavery and they consisted of a great number of primitive clan ceremonies. To a certain extent, they resembled a primitive democracy and »affinity» (*renminxing*).⁴⁷ Confucius' political and economic sugges-

⁴⁵ Sha Yu, »Kongzi, Kong Qiu, Kong Laoer» (Confucius, Kong Qiu, the Second-eldest Kong), *Guangming ribao*, 20 August 1978.

⁴⁶ »Kongzi yanjiu de fangfalun wenti» (Methodological Questions Concerning Confucian Studies), *Wenhuibao* (Shanghai), 25 January 1980.

⁴⁷ Li Zehou, »Kongzi zaipingjia» (A Re-evaluation of Confucius), *Zhongguo shehui kexue* 1980:2.

tions were inappropriately conservative. Yet he was against cruel oppression, demanding restoration and preservation of the relatively moderate ancient clan rule, which had a democratic nature as well as *renminxing*. According to Li, Confucius' teachings had a spirit of clan democracy about them, a primitive humanitarianism, and a demand for human individualism (*geti renge*). Confucius passed on this spiritual legacy to posterity, Li notes.⁴⁸

Li Zehou notes further that the concept of benevolence (*ren*) was an example of Confucius' practical reasoning. Confucius did not approach a problem on a high theoretical or philosophical level but tried to find out how to solve it in every-day life. He created the idea of benevolence in order to give to the rites (*li*) a new meaning. Confucius hoped thus to be able to revive and maintain the system of clan rule. The concept of benevolence was, in Li's opinion, composed of four elements: ties of blood, certain psychological principles, humanitarianism, and individualism. Through education, benevolence was nurtured over a long period to a kind of national culture — the Chinese psychological make-up (*xinli jiegou*). Although Confucius failed in his political activity, he was instrumental in moulding the Chinese psychological make-up. For this reason his scholarship had, according to Li, a function which no one else in Chinese history could match.⁴⁹ In Li's opinion Confucianism has, however, an aspect which one should warn of, namely an »Ah-Q mentality«. Ah-Q, the main character in a short story with the same title written by Lu Xun, is a woman living in a traditional Chinese countryside setting. She tries to seek her rights within the bounds of the social order of the traditional closed society, frequently colliding with the limits of the established order. She is, however, always forced back to her starting point, falling into hopeless apathy, while the society continues as it always did. Li warns against this kind of be-content-with-your-lot mentality, because it could hinder the industrialization and modernization of China. One should not, for example, be satisfied with petty-production scale only.⁵⁰

The former president of Nanjing University, **Kuang Yaming**, also discusses the meaning of Confucian studies for the present day. He notes that Confucius was a »historical giant with enormous influence« not only in the past but even today. Confucianism is involved in the construction of the present material civilization and especially in that of socialist mental culture, Kuang claims. The study of historical persons such as Confucius requires, in his opinion, that the researcher all the time bears in mind two things. First, to evaluate whether the person had a progressive or reactionary function under his own specific historical circumstances. Second, to judge the extent in which he, in the spirit of »making the past serve the present« (*gu wei jin yong*), may or may not profit the Chinese people or the cause of socialism.⁵¹ Kuang gives reasons why Mao in

Reprinted in Zhongguo Kongzi Jijinhui Xueshu Weiyuanhui (The Academic Committee of The Confucius Foundation of China), ed., *Jin sishi nian lai Kongzi yanjiu lunwen xuanbian* (A Selection of Scholarly Articles Published During the Last Forty Years), Jinan 1987, pp. 386-387.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 394.

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 395, 409-410.

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 414, 417.

⁵¹ Kuang Yaming, »Dui Kongzi jinxing zaiyanjiu he zaipingjia« (Carrying out New Research on and Reappraisal of Confucius), *Guangming ribao*, 13 September 1982.

his remark on summing up China's historical legacy from Confucius to Sun Yatsen of all thinkers chose Confucius as the starting point. (1) Confucius' doctrines not only formed the mainstay for the rule of feudal dynasties for 2,000 years but also had a deep meaning for the great masses — no other thinker had a comparable record in this respect. (2) Confucius was a prominent representative of the early intellectuals in China. He transmitted knowledge from his predecessors to his successors in many fields. (3) Confucius had great political ambitions (which is perhaps the reason why he did not succeed in becoming a politician). (4) He influenced most later thinkers, including Sun Yatsen.⁵²

Concerning problems in the study of Confucius, Kuang firstly deals with the question of what kind of society Confucius lived in. In Guo Moro's opinion, the Spring and Autumn Period constituted a slave society, while to Fan Wenlan it was already a period of feudalism. Kuang favours Fan's position. He sees Confucius' time as constituting early feudalism and the thought of Confucius as representing the superstructure (i.e. state, traditional institutions, and consciousness of thought) of feudal society. Class analysis was essential although on its own it would still be inadequate. The second problem in Confucian studies is the problem of sources. In fact a multitude of works deal with Confucius. All the 24 official dynastic histories contain Confucian ideas. Kuang divides sources on Confucius into six categories: (1) sources which directly represent or reflect Confucius' thought include the *Analects*, *Spring and Autumn Annals*, *Zuo-zhuan*, the *Great Learning*, the *Mean*, *Mencius*, *Xunzi*, and the *Book of Rites*. Moreover, Confucius himself edited or checked the *Book of Poetry*, the *Classic of History*, and the *Book of Changes* — as a result these works also bear his hallmark; (2) works by philosophers of the Spring and Autumn as well as the Warring States Period (such as *Laozi*, *Zhuangzi*, and *Han Feizi*), and thinkers from Wang Chong down to Wang Fuzhi who were critical about or disagreed with Confucius; (3) material on Confucius' life in dynastic histories such as the *Records of the Historian (Shiji)* by the Han dynasty historian Sima Qian; (4) works by later Confucians (e.g. Dong Zhongshu, the Cheng brothers, and Wang Shouren) showing the development of Confucianism; (5) evaluations of Confucius from the May the Fourth Movement (1919) down to the present; (6) evaluations on Confucius abroad.⁵³

The third problem deals with the content of Confucius' thought. Kuang suggests three kinds of attitudes by the researcher toward his sources according to the content of the latter (in later articles Kuang presents these attitudes as the »Triple method«, *sanfafa*):

- (1) Confucius' backward, reactionary thought, which was exclusively for the service of the feudal landowner class, must be severely criticized and then »sent to the Historical Museum« in order to prevent it from poisoning society;
- (2) Progressive material showing affinity toward the people (*renmingxing*) can be analyzed and used for reference. For example, the ideas of Great Harmony (*Datong*) and *tianxia wei gong* (the world is for everybody). Both examples themselves are

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

based on a romantic view of the past, but, at the same time, an expectation for the future of an enlightened philosopher of 2 millenia ago. Confucius' concept of benevolence (*ren*) is seen by some as the end-result of the utopia of the Great Harmony, and by others as the highest norm of human relationship in the Great Harmony. According to Kuang, although benevolence suits feudal society, it has also some universal importance, as it maintains stability between unequal people.

(3) Confucius' methods of, and attitudes to, learning and teaching contain no reference to classes — they are the most glorious part of Confucius' thought, and are as such relevant even today. An example of such teaching, »To learn and put into practice what you have learned at proper time, is that not after all a pleasure?» (*xue er shi xi zhi, bu yi le hu*).

Kuang concludes that Confucius must be evaluated scientifically and with a cool head, he must be given the historical status which he is entitled to. Kuang notes that this is the task for the academic world, the Marxists in particular.⁵⁴

In addition, **Zhang Dainian** emphasizes Confucius' role in the formation of Chinese culture. By quoting Stalin he points out that a nation not only shares a common language, region, and economic life, but also possesses a common psychological character which expresses itself in a common culture. In China Confucius' influenced more deeply than anyone else the common culture of the Chinese nation and the formation of its common psychology. In Confucius' thought Zhang sees the following three characteristics as the basis for the development of the Chinese culture: (1) a positive, optimistic, promising spirit; (2) a great emphasis on ethical values; and (3) historical empiricism. According to Zhang, Confucius spent his whole life in trying to establish an ideal order based on central government. He pressed for a stable new order which could guarantee long-time social development. Zhang notes that in the past many thought that Confucius by advocating Zhou rites wanted to restore the old order. This is, according to Zhang, a misunderstanding. Confucius did not regard everything in the Zhou system as good. For example, some have interpreted Confucius' words *keji fuli*, (restrain yourself and return to the rites), as an expression of a desire to restore Zhou rites, while they in reality only meant that rules of propriety should also be observed in deeds.⁵⁵

Like many other scholars, Zhang Dainian also gives credit to Confucius for his function in nurturing the Chinese spirit. Confucius taught the Chinese »to work hard to get forward, to strengthen oneself without rest.» Benevolence, *ren*, was the highest norm in Confucius' ethics. Mental life was above material, even though the latter formed the basis for the former. Zhang points out that Confucius advised man to seek elevation of his moral character instead of enjoyment of material things. Confucius' emphasis on personal integrity, upright and unyielding spirit provided inspiration to both scholars and ordinary people throughout Chinese history. Furthermore, Confucius had great respect for history. That China's historical literature is the most abundant of its kind is, in Zhang's opinion, partly due to Confucius.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Zhang Dainian, »Kongzi zai Zhongguo wenhuashi shang de diwei» (The Position of Confucius in the Cultural History of China), *Beijing ribao*, 19 July 1985.

Even a sage has his drawbacks. Zhang criticizes Confucius for his passive attitude to reforms, in the way that he only gave ideas but himself did not try to realize them. Confucius stressed the importance of government by virtue, but did not give enough attention to military affairs. Confucius held rites and music in high regard, while he looked down on productive labour. These demerits, Zhang sees as having had long-term effects on Chinese culture. Han classicism, the Song and Ming Neo-Confucianism, and the Qing textual criticism all lacked the spirit of initiative. A tendency developed to respect scholarly pursuits and to despise the military profession developed especially after the Song dynasty. Agricultural labour became despised as well. Both the merits and the demerits of Confucianism came under severe attack during the decade of Cultural Revolution, which Zhang Dainian labels as a period of »blind Anti-Confucianism». Now evaluation of Confucius, however, had become an academic issue, and was no longer a political one, Zhang concludes.⁵⁷

The liberalization of academic activity also made it possible to organize symposia on Confucian studies. On 21 August 1983 a »Symposium on Confucius» was arranged by the Education Society (Zhongguo Jiaoyu Xuehui), the Society for Study of Education History (Jiaoyushi Xuehui), and Qufu Teachers' College. According to an article in *Wenhuibao*, all the participants of the symposium shared the view that Confucius had been the most influential figure in ancient China, even more so than the emperors Qin Shihuang, Han Wudi, Tang Zong, or Song Zu. Confucius' positive influence was great. First, Confucius carried forward the cultural legacy of the preceding dynasties. Second, his ethical principles of *zhi* (wisdom), *ren* (benevolence), and *yong* (courage) were equally as important as his political advocations of government by virtue or benevolence (*dezhi, renzheng*), or great unity (*datong*) — all these were meant to help in consolidating internal unity and »opposing foreign aggression». They were spiritual weapons for the Chinese people to gain independence among the peoples of the world. Confucius was, according to the article, regarded as the founder of China's traditional national spirit. Third, Confucius posed many questions of a materialistic and dialectical nature and introduced principles and methods of education and psychology. He was the first one in ancient China to establish a philosophical school and to run a private school. He became the ancient model for maturing through self-study.⁵⁸ Not only Confucius' positive influence but even his negative influence was deemed great by the participants of the symposium. Among the negative aspects discussed were (1) Confucius' despisal of physical labour, his support of a patriarchal hierarchy, (2) the fact that he talked but did not do anything himself, emphasized the old but did not create anything new, (3) that he favoured men while he despised women, presented idealistic views, such as the concept of the Mandate of Heaven, which served as obstacles against the progress of society until today.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ »Guanyu Kongzi de pingjia ji qi yingxiang» (Concerning the Evaluation and Influence of Confucius), *Wenhuibao*, 21 August 1983.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

子路曾皙冉有公西華侍坐 董桐



Confucius in an affectionate discussion with his students. Drawing by Cheng Zongyuan, 1984. Published in Kuang Yaming, *Kongzi pingzhuan* (A Critical Biography of Confucius), Jinan 1985.

In 1984 at least two conferences were held on Confucian studies in China. The first one, with the Law History Society (Zhongguo Falüshi Xuehui) as the main organizer, was held in August. It dealt with Confucius from the angle of legal studies. One view expressed held that benevolence (*ren*) not merely was the core of Confucius' thought but even formed the basis for his legal thinking. It was the highest norm both in legislation and in the execution of the law. A second view maintained that the rules of propriety (*li*) constituted the core of Confucius' legal thought. While benevolence was an ethical category, propriety was, in Confucius' view, what was needed for the rule of the country and its people. Another view held that Confucius combined legal thought and ethics by letting the latter lead the former. Benevolence was central to this moralistic legal thought. According to yet another view, Confucius, although he put forward many proposals on legislation and the execution of law, failed to present any *complete* set of legal ideas — the Confucian thought of »virtue as the mainstay, punishment as a support« (*de zhu, xing fu*) first appeared during the Han dynasty.⁶⁰

On 21-26 September 1984 a »Symposium on Confucius' Educational Thought« was jointly organized in Qufu by the Education Society, the Education Society of Shandong Province, and the Research Institute of Confucius at Qufu Teachers' College. Two descendants of Confucius, the 76th generation descendant Kong Lingming and the 77th generation descendant Kong Demao joined the 100 participants coming from all over China. The symposium dealt with a wide variety of topics on Confucius and Confucianism. It was generally held that Confucius was neither a saint nor a demon, but a great educator, thinker, and politician in ancient China, and, moreover, a prominent cultural eminence in world history. It was emphasized how Confucius devoted his life to education. He not only had abundant experience in education but also formulated precious educational theory. In order to raise the research work on Confucius to a new level, the symposium decided to establish two organizations, the Confucius Research Society (Kongzi Yanjiuhui) and the Confucius Foundation of China (Kongzi Jijinhui).⁶¹

IV THE SURGE OF INTEREST IN CONFUCIUS SINCE 1985

In Spring 1985 a meeting was held in Beijing at the Temple of Confucius, recently restored and reopened to the public. Some 240 Chinese scholars participated in this meeting. Also Confucius' descendants Kong Lingming and Kong Demao were also present. At the meeting a decision was made to establish a Confucius Research Institute (Kongzi Yanjiusuo). Professor Zhang Dainian, who is the chairman of the Society of Philosophical History (Zhongguo Zhexueshi Xuehui), was elected director of the new institute. Zhang reported in the meeting, that the time of blind worship or blind criticism of Confucius was gone. He said: »our task is to throw away impure feudal elements from Confucian thought and to choose democratic elements from it«. The former total con-

⁶⁰ *Zhongguo baike nianjian* (Chinese Encyclopedic Yearbook), Shanghai 1985, p. 386.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 457.

demnation of Confucius during the Cultural Revolution Zhang was deemed »childish«. Masafumi Rinoie, a Japanese scholar visiting Beijing at the time of the conference, wrote that with the rising surge of Confucian studies a spirit of almost millenarian revivalism had taken hold of scholars: »Confucius is now returning from among the dead.«⁶²

In October 1985, a Festival to Commemorate the 2,536th Anniversary of the Birth of Confucius was held in Qufu with some 500 guests from China and abroad. The festival itself had important significance as regards the position of Confucius and Confucianism in China, since it was first such festival organized since the 1949 Revolution. The guests visited Confucius' statue, tomb, and the Kong mansion, which had been repaired after its destruction during the Cultural Revolution. A painting exhibition was arranged at the Mansion. Foreign and overseas Chinese guests wore ancient clothes and rode in ancient-style horse carts around the Forest of Confucius (the area containing the tombs of the descendants of Confucius). In the evening music was performed in the style of Confucius' time.⁶³

In connection with the festival, preparatory meetings of the Confucius Foundation of China were held in Qufu. The constitution and the general regulations of the Foundation were adopted at the meeting (for further information, see Appendix 2). The new quarterly of the Foundation, *Kongzi yanjiu* (Research on Confucius) was issued for the first time in Spring 1986. In the foreword of the first issue, Gu Mu, the honorary chairman of the foundation and a member of the State Council of China, praised Confucius as one of the giants of the cultural history of the world. Turning to the conditions of Confucian studies, Gu noted that »for various reasons research on Confucius became very delicate after 1949, and for a fairly long period people regarded research and evaluation of Confucius as a dangerous road,« while »after overthrowing the "Gang of Four" and eliminating the chaos and restoring the original state of affairs, a new period of research based on facts began.« The need to re-evaluate Confucius was urgent in Gu's opinion. The satisfactory way to »critically develop further the cultural legacy« of Confucius was through a »completely democratic discussion in the style of "Let a Hundred Flowers Blossom and a Hundred Schools of Thought Contend" (*baihua qifang, baijia zhengming*)«. Confucius and China's traditional culture was to be made an object of science and submitted to systematic research. Scholars of different disciplines, both Chinese and foreign, were invited to compete with one another. In Confucian studies, Marxism was the guideline, with dialectical materialism and historical materialism as the methods. This, however, did »not exclude valuable research results obtained through other methods«. ⁶⁴ The right to apply other methods than Marxist ones was now proclaimed. Many Chinese scholars had earlier given their articles an outer appearance which would satisfy the minimum requirements of ideology, this especially seemed to have been the case in late 1950's and 1960's. Gu's statement can therefore be seen as a major concession in a more liberal direction.

The Academic Committee of the Confucius Foundation of China held its first Spring symposium in Qufu on 26-30 April 1986 with some 50 participants. The academic side of

⁶² Rinoie Masafumi, *Koshi no fukkatsu* (The Revival of Confucius). Tokyo 1986, pp. 211-212.

⁶³ *Zhongguo baike nianjian* (Chinese Encyclopedic Yearbook), Shanghai 1986, p. 508.

⁶⁴ Gu Mu, »Fa kan ci« (Foreword), *Kongzi yanjiu*, 1986:1, pp. 3-4.

the meeting concentrated on the discussion of how to evaluate China's traditional culture and thought. According to one view, China's traditional culture is usually regarded as a mental culture of an ideological type. Buddhism and Taoism had their influence on Chinese culture, but it was the teachings of Confucius and Mencius that served as the ethical base for feudal society and therefore as the base for traditional culture. Another opinion gave credit to both Confucianism and Taoism. In the formation of the Chinese culture, Confucianism had been the base for ethics and Taoism the base for science. Concerning the nature of China's traditional culture and thought, it was noted to be »harmonious but not identical» (*he er bu tong*), allowing for the expression of different opinions in the style of the Hundred Schools of Thought during the Warring States Period. However, when Confucianism became an orthodox philosophy during the Han and again during the Ming dynasties, it lost its creativity and became instead »identical but not harmonious» (*tong er bu he*). This demand for conformity became a big inert force in Chinese cultural history. The creative forces were those who avoided sticking to conventions and presented independent ideas — heterodoxy (*yiduan*) was seen as a progressive, creative factor. The core of culture and thought was patriarchal ethics, which provided a source for Confucianism. For example, Confucius' concepts of filial piety (*xiao*) and respect for the elder brother (*ti*) came from from the patriarchal societies of the Shang and Zhou dynasties. The Han Confucian Dong Zhongshu's *sangang wuchang* were another example of traditional patriarchal views.⁶⁵

Some scholars also saw positive elements in traditional culture. It was stable, independent, and provided patterns for thinking. Moreover, theoretical breakthroughs had occurred even within the bounds of tradition. For example, no concept of the individual had been formed during the Xia, Sang, or Zhou dynasties, since blood relations governed the patriarchal society of the time. Confucius' concept of benevolence was something clearly attachable to individual human beings. Individuals were also defined in terms of profiting a group. Other scholars, however, regarded Confucian ethics and other ideas of feudal society as posing a predominantly negative influence as the restriction on human being by traditional culture was overwhelming. Even Confucius' doctrine of the mean could not be regarded as a part of China's glorious tradition, since it was bound to traditional thought. Only in foreign countries which lacked a feudal background could it be of use, as it only governed human relations.⁶⁶

The symposium also discussed research policy in Confucian studies. The following questions were specified as being worthy of serious study: (1) How research should respond to the challenges of the 1980's; (2) How Marxist principles should be combined with the superb legacy of traditional Chinese thought and culture, and what could develop out of it; (3) How the excellent achievements of Western culture could be used for reference; (4) How the contradiction between commodity economy and China's traditional

⁶⁵ Zhang Anqi, »Zhongguo Kongzi Jijinhui Xueshu Weiyuanhui ji Kongzi yanjiu zazhi shoujie chunji xueshu taolunhui gaishu» (An Outline of the First Spring Symposium of the Academic Committee of the Confucius Foundation of China and the *Kongzi yanjiu* Magazine), *Zhongguo zhhexueshi yanjiu* (Research on History of Chinese Philosophy), 1986:4, pp. 121-124.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

thought and culture could be solved; (5) How to relate oneself to the question of assimilation by China's traditional culture.⁶⁷ Concerning the scholarly activities of the Confucius Foundation of China, it was formulated that the Foundation should in the future «enrich scholarly work in order to create a wide academic united front and strengthen international friendship». A desire was expressed to (1) publish *Kongzi yanjiu* on a monthly or bi-monthly basis (also an English-language edition should be issued for the purpose of international academic exchange); (2) prepare for publication a magazine with the title *Dongfangxue* (Eastern Studies) for the purpose of drawing international attention to East Asian affairs; (3) publish an English-language monograph twice a year; (4) establish the Academy of Confucius (Kongzi shuyuan) under the alternative name of the Nishan Academy (Nishan shuyuan) for the purpose of carrying out research and education in Confucian studies (in the beginning, short summer courses of 1 or 1 1/2 month's length could be organized for 60-80 participants each); (5) assign topics for research; (6) promote national and international scholarly exchange by organizing symposia and conferences.⁶⁸

In the first issue of the *Kongzi yanjiu* many scholars gave suggestions as to the direction of research, themes and methods. **Du Renzhi** regards Confucius as China's great politician, thinker, educator, and moralist, whose political advocations were democracy (*minbenzhuyi*) and *tianxia wei gong* (the world is for all). Du put forward the following suggestions: (1) A new biography of Confucius should be edited as the result of systematic research on Confucius' political, moral, and educational views. (2) In studying Confucius' philosophy, special attention should be paid to his general method — the Way of the Mean (*zhongyong zhi dao*). (3) In the study of Confucius' political thought, conditions for the establishment of a state should be studied (enlarging the population, then enriching it, and finally educating it; securing of adequate provisions, adequate weapons, and the confidence of the people). (4) Benevolence (*ren*) should be analyzed in depth. (5) In the study of ethics, an analysis of the relation between man and morality should be attempted. (6) The dialectical research method should also be applied to research on Confucius' educational thought. (7) The way how Confucius used the talents of the people, how he located the most talented ones, etc. should be analyzed.⁶⁹

Hou Wailu notes that already during the Warring States period Confucian teachings formed a prominent school (*xianxue*) of its own, and from the Han dynasty on it was the official school of thought. Evaluation of it was for a long time a taboo, but now it has been opened up again for free debate. Hou suggests that Confucius be studied as a single historical person, neither as a saint nor a straw doll to be attacked as was done during the reign of the «Gang of Four». Public discussion on the topic as well as strict obedience to scientific methods should guarantee the success of the effort. Hou notes that some

⁶⁷ Bu Jinzhi, «Zhongguo Kongzi Jijinhui Xueshu Weiyuanhui ji Kongzi yanjiu zazhi shoujie chunji xueshu taolunhui jiyao» (A Summary of the First Spring Symposium by the Academic Committee of the Confucius Foundation of China and the *Kongzi yanjiu* Magazine), *Kongzi yanjiu*, 1986:3, p. 10.

⁶⁸ Ibid.; Zhang Anqi, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

⁶⁹ Du Renzhi, «Yao zai jixu jinghua» (Adopting the Essence [of Confucianism]), *Kongzi yanjiu*, 1986:1, p. 13.

scholars specializing on Sino-Western intellectual history are fond of comparing Confucius with Western thought. In these comparisons it should, however, be remembered that every nation has its own specific historical and psychological characteristics. Therefore one should not try to attribute Western thought Confucius. Hou also notes that the historical base for China's national culture also included Confucius, and that the new socialist culture of China could by no means neglect this base. Confucian thought and culture must be carried forward. This did not mean the »revival of Confucianism»: it would, for example, be harmful to the sound development of the research on Confucius, to say — as some individuals have done — that »one must preserve and propagate Confucian thought», or even to suggest making the *Analects* »the document for Party rectification». Also regardless of whether the evaluation of Confucius was high or low, one should not give him a Rightist or Leftist cap. Hou concludes by expressing the hope that *Kongzi yanjiu* will actively promote research in the spirit of science and democracy, blazing thus new trails.⁷⁰

Feng Youlan takes as his starting point Sino-foreign relations. He writes that in recent years more and more people had been discussing Sino-Western cultural relations to the extent that their views drew attention to the whole of society. This atmosphere resembled the May the Fourth Movement, although the set up was different. In 1919 the target of attack was in reality the passiveness of China's traditional culture. Now, one used instead Western culture as an object of comparison to show the positive aspects of Chinese culture in order to perpetuate its tradition. The procedure of applying ancient culture to the present day had two sides to it: depending on the historical development, one at times emphasized criticism, at other times, the continuity of tradition. Feng reminds readers that a desire to continue tradition is often unnecessarily suspected of being restorationism. This suspicion is unfair because criticism is always a part of the whole procedure. Feng further notes that in order to rejuvenate China, one must construct a socialist society with Chinese characteristics inherited from ancient Chinese culture formed over several thousand years. One may, of course, have different opinions as to what this heritage consists of. To find out what is needed in a socialist society with Chinese characteristics, is a kind of new creation concerning the whole society — and not merely cutting up or repairing the past. It requires the work of several generations and may take a century or two, Feng concludes.⁷¹

Wang Ming points out that traditionally the Confucian classics were regarded as works of history, while in actual fact the ancients tended to theorize rather than describe events. He reminds us that any important historical person should be assessed under the conditions of his own time — otherwise the spirit of his time and the nature of his works cannot be properly expressed. Because of the difficulty of the ancient language, the Six Classics and other works of the period of the Hundred Schools of Thought need to be annotated and edited. Wang warns that modern clothes should not be put on the ancients. With the help of the principles of historical materialism, the original state of affairs should

⁷⁰ Hou Wailu, »Kongzi yanjiu fawei» (The Development of Confucian Studies), *Kongzi yanjiu*, 1986:1, pp. 5-6.

⁷¹ Feng Youlan, »Yidian ganxiang» (An Impression), *Kongzi yanjiu*, 1986, no. 1, pp. 6-7.

be reconstructed. Every period differed somewhat from both its predecessor and successor. Culture was in constant change — no »pure« civilization existed. The era in which Confucius lived was an unstable period with many different ideas. Confucius' contribution was, according to Wang, mainly in the fields of thought and education. Confucius stayed in real world, comparing for example wisdom to flowing water, and benevolence to high mountains. As teacher he hated pretention, emphasizing that it was not shame if one did not know the answer, while it was shameful if one did not admit it.⁷²

Zhou Gucheng contributes to the discussion as to what direction Confucian studies should be developed by making three suggestions. First, the critical study of the characters of the Chinese language was a precondition for research. The Qing scholars, such as Yu Yue, were famous for their capability in this matter, while modern scholars with such capability were few, Yu Shengwu being one of the few exceptions. Second, various factions of Confucianism needed to be identified and analyzed. For example, *Zhuangzi* mentions Confucians, Taoists, and Mohists, while Sima Qian talked about six schools: the Yin and Yang, Confucian, Legalist, Dialecticians, Mohist, and Moralists (*daode*). Was the above mentioned Confucian school the only Confucian school? Third, the influence of Confucius and the Confucian school needs to be assessed. According to Zhou, Confucianism had a nationalist function: it had been used in the fight against Buddhism (e.g. through Han Yu's *Yuan dao*) and Christianity (e.g. against the Taipings). Confucianism had served the ruling class but so also had Legalism. Were these alternatives for the ruler or could they have been used simultaneously, and why? Zhou asks.⁷³

Along with this revival in Confucian studies, discussion on traditional culture also underwent a revival. **Li Jingrui** sees this as a continuation of a similar discussion during the May the Fourth Movement when East-West cultural exchanges and the opening up of China towards the outside world were also debated. Li summarizes the discussion on traditional Chinese culture under seven viewpoints.

(1) The rules of propriety (*li*) represented the core of traditional Chinese culture, since it was the core in Confucianism and Confucianism was the core thought of the feudal establishment. Li provides examples of cultural traits where propriety is inherent: the concept of subordination; the life attitudes of modesty, courtesy, and the giving of precedence to somebody out of courtesy; value judgements emphasizing justice instead of profit; the tendency to seek common ground; and the cultural psychology of being content with one's lot.

(2) The Doctrine of the Mean (*zhongyong*) is the core. For example, China adopted foreign influences, but gave them Chinese characteristics, as, for example, with Buddhism. Thus Chinese culture attempts to find harmony even between contradictions. Chinese calligraphy is based on the principle of »firm content with gentle outlook« (*nei gang, wai rou*). The Doctrine of the Mean opposed destructive excesses, allowing for the stable development of China's culture.

(3) The basic spirit of Chinese culture is composed of (a) the interaction between vigorous action on one hand and the tranquility of Taoists and Song Confucians on the other, (b) the Doctrine of the Mean, (c) the use of exalted virtue, (d) concert between Heaven and man (*tian ren xiediao*).

⁷² Wang Ming, »Tantan Kongzi yanjiu« (Discussing the Study of Confucius), *Kongzi yanjiu*, 1986:1, pp. 11-12.

⁷³ Zhou Gucheng, »Zenyang yanjiu Kongzi« (How to Study Confucius), *Kongzi yanjiu*, 1986:2, p. 3.

(4) The relation between fusion (*ronghe*) and freedom (*ziyou*). Examples of this view are the wisdom which seeks the cause for some mishap of other to a fault in oneself; the political tradition according to which people form the root of the state; and the clever, simple, elegant world of fine arts.

(5) Humanism. In European humanism, according to this view, man has rational knowledge and emotions, his own will; while in Chinese humanism man is the product of the group to which he belongs. Thus man cannot be separated from human relations, and neither from nature. Heaven and man form a unity. Basically, Chinese culture also opposes profit-based thinking.

(6) Practical rationalism. Chinese culture is not based on mystery but on cool realism, not on desires but on reason, not on idealism and vested interests but on the study of human ways and human status.

(7) The closedness of Chinese culture. This includes, for example, the view that China developed in dynastic cycles; differences between the Chinese and barbarian tribes; and morality based patriarchalism such as blood relations. Concerning the future development of Chinese culture opinions are also divided. Some maintain that one must continue from the basis of traditional culture, while others claim that traditional culture does not suit modern life and therefore a new Marxist socialist culture needs to be created.⁷⁴

Zhang Jian and Cai Shangsi join the discussion on Confucius with suggestions on Marxist methods. **Zhang Jian** stresses that the best method in research is the dialectical method of dividing one into two (*yi fen wei er*). He presents five different approaches to Confucian studies:

(1) One must determine the positive and negative functions of Confucius' doctrines in the development of history — simply to praise or to condemn is unscientific.

(2) One must be aware of the fact that in Confucius' political thought conservatism exceeds progressiveness while in his educational thought progressiveness exceeds conservatism. To study only his political views while neglecting his educational thought would be unfair.

(3) One must study Confucius under the conditions of his own time and not attribute any preconceived ideas («caps») to him.

(4) Debate must be carried out in the spirit of »Let a Hundred Flowers Blossom«.

(5) One must combine theory and practice, make the ancient serve the modern. If Confucius had maxims containing an essence of democracy, they could become a part of the new content for socialism and communism.⁷⁵

Cai Shangsi notes that in researching Confucius' thought one must first read all the material on Confucius, all kinds of evaluations on him, then conduct scientific analysis, and only after that put forward one's own thesis. Referring to his own long-term comparative study on Chinese philosophy, Cai summarizes his findings on Confucius in the following way. He points out that the thought of Confucius differed from that of Confucians and that of Anti-Confucians: it formed a changing pattern like that of Mozi. Furthermore, Confucius does not, in Cai's opinion, belong to that category of thinkers

⁷⁴ Li Jingrui, »Chuantong wenhua taolun zongshu« (A Summary of the Discussion on Traditional Culture), *Kongzi yanjiu*, 1986:2, pp. 125-127.

⁷⁵ Zhang Jian, »Yanjiu Kongzi de taidu he fangfa« (Attitude and Approach in Studying Confucius), *Kongzi yanjiu*, 1986:1, pp. 13-14.

whose political and philosophical thoughts are inconsistent (e.g. Huang Zongxi's political thinking was more progressive than his philosophical thought, while with Wang Fuzi the opposite was the case). In Confucius' case, both sets of thought are about the same in terms of progressiveness. According to Cai, Confucius' thought did not belong to the progressive category of persons who shifted their position from reform to revolution on the conservatism-revolution continuum (examples of this type were Sun Yatsen, Li Dazhao, Lu Xun, and Wu Yuzhong). Neither did his thought belong to the category of people who regressed from reform to conservatism (as was the case with Yan Fu, Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, or Zhang Taiyan). Nor did he belong to those who first shifted from conservatism to reform and later back to conservatism (as Qian Xuantong). Moreover, Confucius was not one of those who for a long time were backward reactionaries before, in the end, suddenly taking the revolutionary path (as Yang Du). Finally, he was not one of those who were consistently reactionary (as Ye Dehui for example).⁷⁶

Cai sums up that with the exception of his educational thought, Confucius' philosophical, ethical, political, and literary (historical) views were basically conservative. Cai puts forward the following theses:

- (1) Propriety (*li*), filial piety, the Mean, etc. are after all expressions of the same thing. Benevolence (*ren*), which Confucius in his old age created to complement propriety, has filial piety and respect for elders at its roots, while propriety is its practical, visible aspect.
- (2) In his political activity Confucius was unsuccessful while as an educator he succeeded — the former is, however, usually a precondition for the latter.
- (3) Confucius advocated traditional thought with its poisonous elements, but on the other hand he preserved the cultural heritage. One must therefore neither completely deny nor completely confirm the value of Confucius' traditional thought.
- (4) The core of Confucius' thought did not change during his lifetime.
- (5) After the overthrow of the »Gang of Four« a tendency has appeared to beautify Confucius — many advocate Confucius' thought without informing themselves of the facts.⁷⁷

Mao Lirui is somewhat pessimistic about the future of Confucian studies. He notes that during the May the Fourth Movement the slogan »Overthrown the Confucian curiosity shop« (*dadao Kongjia dian*) should really have been directed against the feudal political image of Confucius, but since the needs of political struggle and of scientific research were not properly separated, an over-all denunciation of Confucius took place. This tendency, according to Mao, continued after 1949 »seriously hindering research on Confucius«. Still, even at the time of writing, not all »Leftist poisonous interference« had been eliminated, therefore it was too early to confirm whether engaging in research on Confucius was secure or not. Mao reminded readers that one should use the historical attitude and scientific historical methods in research on Confucius in order to return to him

⁷⁶ Cai Shangsi, »Kongzi sixiang tixi shuyu nazhong leixing?« (Which Category Does Confucius' System of Thought Belong to?), *Kongzi yanjiu*, 1986:1, pp. 7-8.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

the position which originally belonged to him in history.⁷⁸

Mao Lirui further points out that although Confucianism contained feudal *lijiao* (Doctrine of Social Order) which oppressed people, it had also the following positive aspects:

(1) Confucianism lacked religious traits and could therefore be used for fighting religious superstition and for opposing the authority of religion. Confucianism stood in the visible world: even the Mandate of Heaven (*tianming*) was a personal affair, and the political and moral norms and standards came from the present needs of the society, instead of being the abstract doctrines of some religion or other. Matteo Ricci, a missionary who more than four centuries ago arrived in China, regarded Confucianism as an orthodox school of thought established in the general interest of government and state. Both feudal rulers and ordinary people regarded Confucius as a saint (*shengren*) and not as god (*shen*). The respectful attitude given to Confucius, »the Supremely Sagacious Late Master« (*zhi sheng xian shi*) refers to a great teacher, and not to the head of a religious sect. In modern China some tried to make Confucianism into a religion, while others attacked it, and in so doing even resisted proper Confucian studies. Consequently, the non-religious nature of Confucianism should be made a topic for research. That religion never became politically important in Chinese history, is without doubt due to the existence of Confucianism.

(2) Confucianism contained the idea of the concentration of power (*jiquan*), great unity (*da yitong*), kept relatives in high esteem, etc. It formed a complete hierarchical order and ethical system which, of course, served the feudal government, but also kept people within the bounds of correct behaviour, showed them their social environment, and guaranteed social order. It was also geographically very important in maintaining unity in ancient China — a vast land with an underdeveloped transportation network.

(3) The Six Classics were originally classics written before Confucius' time, but they were edited and reshaped by Confucius into a new form. They were not merely the basis for education and the selection of good officials, but also served as a starting point for all scientific research in philosophy, economics, law, history, literature, natural sciences, and art. Should one negate the role of the Six Classics, then it would be difficult to explain why ancient China had such a magnificent national culture.

(4) Confucians advocated that government should be based on virtue, and stressed the importance of education. They ran schools and accepted pupils. When Confucianism became the official ideology, the establishment of schools became a high priority. Thus education in ancient China can all be traced back to Confucianism.⁷⁹

Mao regards Confucius as a great educator and thinker, with *ren* as the core of his thought, *li* as the form, and *zhongyong* as the method, and he reminds us that China was traditionally known as »the country of etiquette« (*liyi zhi bang*). Therefore the educational views of Confucius should be of use in contemporary education, and through it in the whole modernization process in China.⁸⁰

The following two articles to be introduced here penetrate further into substantial issues in Confucian studies. The first of them, by Jin Jingfang, evaluates Confucius as a historian, and the second, written by Chen Jingpan and Wang Bin, analyzes Confucius' utopian thought.

⁷⁸ Mao Lirui, »Jin yibu shenhua dui Kongzi de yanjiu« (A Need for Deeper Studies on Confucius), *Kongzi yanjiu*, 1986:1, p. 9.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

Jin Jingfang notes first that Confucius is commemorated and studied not only because he was a great person, but also because he bequeathed a precious heritage to posterity. What this heritage was, is a question for debate. In Jin's opinion, Confucius' heritage was the Six Classics: the *Odes*, *Classic of History*, *Book of Rites*, *Book of Music*, *Book of Changes*, and the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. According to him, these Six Classics constituted the sum of the cultural history of China down until that time. The *Odes* contained annals and records, the *Classic of History* accounted events, the *Book of Rites* laid down standards for conduct and the *Book of Music* standards for harmony and peace. The *Book of Changes* was an account of the dual principle of *yin* and *yang*, and the *Spring and Autumn Annals* dealt with ranks and titles. It has, however, been claimed that the *Analects* were Confucius' only real work, but in Jin's opinion this is not so. Were it true, then Confucius would simply be »kong fuzi« (a Hollow Master). Jin notes that the Six Classics were edited for use as textbooks in the »six arts«, and that especially the *Odes*, *Classic of History*, *Book of Rites*, and *Book of Music* were meant to be general study material for anybody. Among Confucius' three thousand disciples, 72 are known to have mastered all the Six Classics.⁸¹

Chen Jingpan and **Wang Bin** note that since 1949 the Chinese press very seldom discussed Confucius' thought on the Great Harmony (*datong*), especially its content. According to Chen and Wang, Confucius like other relatively progressive thinkers such as Guan Zhong and Mozi, did not conduct an uncompromising struggle against rulers, but called on some perished spirits for help, borrowing their names and slogans. Confucius chose the legendary times of Yao and Shun as the highest social and political ideal, a utopia, which he named the Great Harmony. It was preceded by the period of the Small Tranquility (*xiaokang*), which, in Confucius' view, had as its model the period of the Six Gentlemen: Yu, Tang, Wen, Wu, King Wen, and the Duke of Zhou. The Small Tranquility was the ideal of the near future to come, before striving for the Great Harmony, which for the time being was an unrealistic goal.⁸² Even if unrealistic, the Great Harmony was the base for Confucius' thought on social change and reform. As for the political content of Confucius' utopia, the idea of *tianxia wei gong* (the world is for all) was a practical realization of Confucius' highest moral ideal, benevolence (*ren*). In order to pacify the masses, rulers (in the style of Yao and Shun) reformed themselves, which resulted in general freedom and happiness in society. In building up the society of the Great Harmony, talented people were employed. Talents were drawn up from among the masses who were made a target for education. Confucius himself opened private schools for them. In order to bring about the Great Harmony it was the task of education to make the people conscious about the need to maintain sincerity and to cooperate peacefully with one another. As for the social content of the Great Harmony, the ideal of universal love meant the possibility of loving and being loved, like the members of a family loved each other. The ideal was a peaceful, harmoniously functioning society

⁸¹ Jin Jingfang, »Kongzi yu liujing« (Confucius and the Six Classics), *Kongzi yanjiu*, 1986:1, pp. 15, 23-25.

⁸² Chen Jingpan and Wang Bin, »Shi lun Kongzi de datong sixiang« (On the Concept of the Great Harmony in Confucius' Thought), *Kongzi yanjiu*, 1986:1, pp. 26-27.

where men and women would have their work, children receive care and education, and old people would be looked after. The economic aspect of Confucius' utopia meant that »men exhaust their talents, and land gives all its yield», and that no exploitation existed as everything belonged to the public. Everyone worked as well as he or she was able to. Socially the system resulted in lack of private desires, bad will, or crime. Therefore there were no punishments, and there was no need to lock the doors, either.⁸³

As Confucius himself did not believe in the attainment of the Great Harmony, he strongly advocated in favour of the more realistic Small Tranquility. The Six Gentlemen acted as personal examples in the latter. Confucius' educational target was to educate disciples to be able to rule the society like these Gentlemen. Under the Small Tranquility powerholders were families, and benevolence had specifically the nature of filial piety (*xiao*) and respect for elder brothers (*ti*). The rules of propriety (*li*) would govern the society. Later, under the Great Harmony, families and other »classes» would disappear, and benevolence would rule relations between individuals.⁸⁴

The utopia of the Great Harmony became an important part of the Chinese cultural legacy. Sun Yatsen's nationalism was influenced by it. Sun saw the freedom and equality of the Chinese as conditions for nationalism. Even Mao Zedong admitted that universal love was possible, but only after all classes everywhere had become extinct.⁸⁵

In 1985 the *Critical Biography of Confucius* (Kongzi pingzhan) authored by Kuang Yaming was published. Kuang had started his research on Confucius forty years earlier, and began writing the work in 1981. In order to understand better the feudal landownership of Western Zhou, Kuang despite his great age made surveys among the Tai people in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan Province, observing that their society was still reported to be in a feudal stage. *Guangming ribao* compared Kuang to Confucius, »whose zeal for work is such that he forgets to eat, and whose happiness in his pursuit of knowledge is so great that he forgets his troubles and does not perceive old age stealing upon him.»⁸⁶ Discussion around the nature and function of Kuang's work will be introduced in the following.

Lü Shaoguang calls Kuang Yaming's *Critical Biography* the most prominent breakthrough in Confucian studies since 1978. According to Lü, Kuang's work is written from the Marxist standpoint and is reliable in content. While scholars have usually debated which class Confucius represented, Kuang claims that Confucius' thought had a dualistic nature, which according to Lü is a new concept. This dualism consisted of negative elements (feudalism and conservatism in Confucius' basic way of thinking) and positive elements (a great thinker, politician, and educator — in several respects more advanced than others, with *renminxing*, democracy, and benevolence seen as merits). Dualism appears also in his influence on posterity. The negative elements were made use

⁸³ Ibid., p. 28.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 29.

⁸⁶ Yang Kaimin, »Bu zhi lao zhi jiang zhi — qin zhi xue lun Kongzi — ji Kuang Yaming xuanxie Kongzi pingzhan » (Working Hard Despite One's Old Age — Taking Pleasure in Writing on Confucius — Recalling Kuang Yaming Working on his *Critical Biography of Confucius*), *Guangming ribao* 20 October 1985.

of by the feudal ruling class, while the positive elements spread among intellectuals and working people and became a part of China's fine tradition. Thus Confucius' thought represented both the interests of the oppressing ruling class and those of intellectuals, the ruled peasants and serfs. Due to its duality, Confucius' thinking fitted well, according to Lü, with the principle of historical materialism.⁸⁷

In Lü's opinion, Kuang's work was also a breakthrough concerning the question as to how best to continue the Confucian legacy. Kuang's solution was the Triple Method (*san fen fa*), which has already been mentioned. New in this method was the observation that part of Confucius' wisdom was universal, applicable both to the past and to the future. Elements not acceptable, could be made acceptable (even in a socialist society) through criticism and reorganization.⁸⁸

Confucius' main philosophical concept, benevolence, had two aspects in it: affection for other people, and self-cultivation. He stressed the Way of Man instead of the Way of Heaven, that man himself decided his own fate and need not rely on gods or spirits. Man had a biological, social, and ethic nature which differentiated him from both gods and beasts. Lü agrees with Kuang's view that while the ancient Western philosophy dealt with the origin of the world, the ancient philosophy of China dealt with human affairs and questions of society. As a result of this, it was difficult to judge whether a certain ancient thinker (such as Confucius) was a materialist or an idealist.⁸⁹

Another evaluation on the *Critical Biography of Confucius* was by **Xin Guanjie** and **Wang Enyu**. They refer also to the dualism of negative and positive factors in Confucius' thought, saying that the former was a major reason for the long-term stagnation of China's feudal society, while the latter made a huge contribution by uniting the working people and progressive intellectuals to build up the glorious tradition and social customs peculiar to the Chinese nation. Xin and Wang note that although previous historical evaluations of Confucius may have been scientific to some extent, »it has not been possible to make scientific evaluations, since there was no Marxism-Leninism nor Mao Zedong Thought as a weapon of scientific theory to guide researchers, while there were also class limitations and historical limitations.« Xin and Wang summarize Kuang's teachings in the following way:

(1) We should recognize that Confucius was a product of the Spring and Autumn Period. He was a commoner who could become the political theorist of the aristocracy. He succeeded to the extent that he came to be regarded as supremely sagacious. He can therefore be said to have had a direct connection with the specific nature of the Chinese feudal society.

(2) We should recognize that it was the thought of this Confucius the Commoner that for over 2,000 years formed the intellectual mainstay and basis for the thought of the Chinese feudal society.

(3) We should recognize that within the alleged real Confucius there may be a fake Confucius, and within the fake there may be an element of the real man. One must distinguish between the real and

⁸⁷ Lü Shaoguang, »Kongzi yanjiu de xin tupo — ping Kongzi pingzhuan (A New Breakthrough in Confucian Studies — Comments on the *Critical Biography of Confucius*), *Kongzi yanjiu*, 1986:1, pp. 98-99.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102.

the fake and restore the original shape of Confucius. In so doing we must separate feudal elements and elements with affinity to the people (*renminxing*); and among elements with *renminxing*, separate things with reference value only from things which can be directly adapted.

(4) Even if critical observations about feudal poison, etc. are of crucial value in the evaluation of Confucius' thought, we must also acknowledge the good nature of Confucius within the framework of feudal society.

(5) We must recognize that Confucius was not merely a Chinese thinker, politician, and educator, but also a person with significance in world history.⁹⁰

A critical view on Kuang Yaming's work is presented by **Cai Shangsi**, who is a well-known scholar of Chinese philosophy, representing the Marxist viewpoint. First Cai acknowledges the following advantages in the *Critical Biography*:

(1) The author has dared to express his own views.

(2) Kuang is critical of worshippers of the Confucian religion and Confucian classics. He also correctly recognizes that Confucius despised women and physical labour.

(3) Kuang notes that in the struggle against feudalism, Confucius cannot be used as a target for slogans. Instead one should criticize the feudal ethical code such as the Three Cardinal Bonds (*sangang*) and Five Constant Virtues (*wuchang*).⁹¹

(4) During the May the Fourth Movement democracy and science were the earliest catch phrases, while the slogan »Overthrow the Confucian Curiosity Shop» came later.

(5) The Chinese Communist Party carried out a consistent struggle against the feudal poison of Confucian doctrines. Already during the period of the Great Revolution Mao pointed out that the feudal ethical code had served to consolidate »the power of politics, power of nationality, power of god, and power of the husband», which represented feudal patriarchy binding the Chinese people, peasants in particular.

(6) Confucius was himself an illegitimate child, a fact which later Confucians preferred to remain silent about.

(7) Confucian doctrines helped dynasties to prolong their existence. Consequently, also the whole feudal system was prolonged; backwardness lasted longer. Feudal rulers chose negative elements in Confucius' thought in order to consolidate their own authority, thus preventing the development of production and the introduction of capitalism, which was one reason for China's backwardness.

(8) The concept of *li* (rules of propriety) remained basically unchanged from dynasty to dynasty.

(9) In his twenties, Kuang held that Sun Yatsen excelled Confucius, while Sun in turn was excelled by Marx. This is a correct evaluation.

(10) Kuang's devotion and energy in making a survey of the feudal society of Xishuangbanna (in order to prove that Western Zhou was a feudal society) when himself almost 80 years of age is most admirable.⁹²

⁹⁰ Xin Guanjie and Wang Enyu, »Du Kuang Yaming tongzhi de Kongzhi pingzhuan» (On the *Critical Biography of Confucius* Written by Kuang Yaming), *Shehui kexue zhanxian* (Social Science Front), 1986:1, pp. 104-105.

⁹¹ The Three Cardinal Bonds are between Prince and subjects, father and son, and husband and wife. The Five Constant Virtues are benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and fidelity.

On the other hand, Cai finds in Kuang's work the following drawbacks:

- (1) It is questionable if Confucius' words were consistent with his deeds, as Kuang claims.
- (2) The scientific nature of the book is not strong. Confucius' own advocations, which occupy the main part of the work, are detailed and genuine, while criticism of Confucius is often abstract and farfetched and used more for purposes of contrast than anything else.
- (3) The core of Confucius' thought in Kuang's opinion is *ren* while *li* constitutes the form. According to Cai, Kuang only reluctantly accepts *ren* as being the core and then soon changes the focus to the doctrine of the Great Harmony. Kuang is afraid to acknowledge *li* as the core, since this would reduce Confucianism simply to a museum piece. According to Cai, the real core is the Doctrine of Social Order (*lijiao*) with the Three Cardinal Bonds as its key. The Doctrine of Social Order served virtually as a religion, with such ugly aspects as *san cong*, *si de*, and *qi chu*.⁹³ Confucius' Doctrine of Social Order had according to Cai such a bad influence on foreign lands that it was of no credit to the Chinese people. Confucius' *ren* had a patriarchal nature, based on blood relationships and hierarchical relations, and also on the Doctrine of Social Order and filial piety. According to Cai, it was not the *ren* of the Great Harmony.
- (4) To hide the evil and display only the good is against the principle of *shi shi qiu shi* (seeking the truth through facts). Confucius preferred, according to Cai, the backward state of Lu to the new Qi state, and Zhou to Lu. The Prince was his highest ideal. Cai also maintains that Kuang only noted that the aim of virtuous government first was to increase population, then wealth, and finally education. According to Cai, he does not note that Confucius also said that if one must give up something, then one should first give up soldiers, then food, and finally belief.
- (5) One cannot substantiate Confucius' progressiveness by referring to the nature of Western Zhou society. The stereotype that a particular society has a certain class typical of it and that this class in turn has an ideology typical of it is wrong, as both slave and feudal societies shared basic similarities, such as as patriarchalism and social hierarchy.
- (6) According to Cai Shangsi Kuang's evaluation of the early thinkers Gu Yanwu, Huang Zongxi, and Wang Fuzhi is not correct.
- (7) The *Critical Biography of Confucius* contains too much disseminated talk, hollow discussion, and repetition.

Cai concludes by claiming that Kuang's work moreover lacked direct analysis of Confucius' basic thought; therefore it could be improved on.⁹⁴

Following Cai's attack on Kuang, many scholars rose to the latter's defense. For example, **Yang Shanqun** refers to Cai's demand that the »main direction« of Confucius should be determined, and to Cai's claim that Confucius wanted the Spring and Autumn Period »revert« (daotui) to an era similar to that of the Zhou kings Wen and Wu. Yang, however, points out that Cai made no kind of specification as to what kind of society

⁹² Cai Shangsi, »Bu yi taigao Kongzi — ping Kuang Yaming de *Kongzi pingzhuan*« (One Should not Put Confucius on a Pedestal — Evaluating the *Critical Biography of Confucius* by Kuang Yaming), *Shulin*, 1986:1, pp. 3-4.

⁹³ *San cong* (the Three Degrees of Dependence observed by a woman): dependence upon her father first, then upon her husband, and finally upon her son. *Si de* (the Four Virtues required of a woman): virtue, proper speech, demeanour, and proper employment. *Qi chu* (the Seven Reasons for Divorcing a wife): failure to produce a son, adultery, disobedience to husband's parents, a bitter tongue, stealing, envy, and an evil disease.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-7.

Zhou was, and why Confucius wanted to »revert«.

According to Yang, during the kings Wen and Wu, the common people were peaceful and their livelihood was guaranteed. When the kings had a tower built, the commoners gladly came to participate in the construction. Slave society no longer prevailed during this period. During the reign of the Duke of Zhou, the peasantry was given land in land reform and the Duke himself encouraged peasants to grow grain. The economy was a private peasant economy, where peasants worked by their own free will. Agriculture therefore developed rapidly and politically the period was also stable.⁹⁵

Typical of the Spring and Autumn Period was, however, in Yang's opinion, chaotic feudal rule, warfare between feudal vassals, frequent increases of taxes, and other kinds of oppression of people by their rulers. The Lu of Confucius' time was an example of exploitation. Commoners suffered there greatly. To this situation Confucius had basically two kinds of solutions. First, public order should be restored so that everyone assumed his due place in the social hierarchy; second, exploitation of the people by rulers should cease. That Confucius opposed exhortation by the rulers and advocated improvement of the commoners' life should be seen as a positive, progressive view. According to Yang, Confucius wanted to restore the Zhou dynasty in order to improve his own society. His doctrine *keji fuli* (restrain yourself and return to the rites) has in the past been mistakenly regarded as an expression of the wish to restore the old system. In fact Zhou rituals had been set up when the slave system was already being reformed towards feudal landownership. *Keji fuli* was an appeal to the ruling class to restrain their desires — not to kill or punish commoners, but rather to collect wealth from their own storehouses. Thus there is no question about the progressiveness of the doctrine. To brand Confucius' »main direction« as »reverting« is an erroneous, Yang Shanqun concludes.⁹⁶

The preface written by **Kuang Yaming** to the foreign language editions of his *Critical Biography of Confucius* was published by *Wenhuibao* on 27 January 1987. In it Kuang quotes an American encyclopedia listing the 10 most famous thinkers of the world as Confucius, Platon, Aristoteles, Thomas Aquinas, Copernicus, Francis Bacon, Newton, Darwin, Voltaire, and Kant. According to Kuang, Confucianism contains China's traditional culture in its most concentrated form. Kuang adds that China's historical rulers misused certain negative elements in Confucius' thought, especially Confucius' demand for loyalty and respect towards the ruler (*zhongqun zunwang*). In the course of centuries the appreciation of Confucius grew. During the Ming dynasty he was already referred to as »The All-Encompassing Supremely Sagacious Late Master« (*dacheng zhi-sheng xianshi*), and in Confucian temples his statue bore the characteristics of that of a king. This, according to Kuang, cannot have been the original shape of Confucius. Neither was the Confucius, who was criticized during the Cultural Revolution, the genuine one, Kuang notes.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Yang Shanqun, »Kongzi pingjia yu Xi Zhou Chunqiu shehui — yu Cai Shangsi xiansheng shangque« (An Evaluation of Confucius and the Societies of the Western Zhou and the Spring and Autumn Periods — Discussing with Mr. Cai Shangsi), *Wenhuibao* (Shanghai), 17 July 1987.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Kuang Yaming, »Ruhe shi shi qiu shi de pingjia Kongzi« (How to Evaluate Confucius True to the

According to Kuang Yaming, the original image of Confucius is that of a man dressed in humble cotton garb, »Confucius the Commoner« (Kongzi buyi). During his youth Confucius earned his living by physical labour. Later he ran his own private school, studying and teaching, editing books. He became a self-educated intellectual and scholar. As the script of the Chinese language was not unified in all states at that time, Confucius learned to read the various scripts then in use. He taught anybody who was willing to learn. In Confucius' ethics benevolence (*ren*) was the core and the rules of propriety (*li*) were the form. In Kuang's opinion, no discrepancy existed between what Confucius taught and what he himself did.⁹⁸

Kuang notes that some regard Confucius' teachings as an eternal truth, while others reject them as ancient trash. In Kuang's opinion, both views are non-historical. Historical development is continuous, any two consecutive periods are directly related. Kuang reminds us that Marxism does not acknowledge any permanent existence, only permanent movement of change. Kuang emphasizes that research on Confucius must not be fragmentary but systematic, covering his whole life and activity, neither approving of everything nor discarding everything, on the basis of the Triple Method, which was introduced earlier. What is new here is Kuang's remark that concepts like loyalty (*zhong*), propriety (*li*), and filial piety (*xiao*) had during Confucius' time a historical content which these words no longer have. It is the historical content that must be criticized. Kuang repeats that through such analysis and criticism the thought of Confucius will be useful in the construction of modern Chinese society.⁹⁹

Cai Shangsi also discusses the possibilities for the correct evaluation of Confucius on the pages of *Wenhuibao* on 10 March 1987. He notes that the Hundred Schools' contention before the Qin dynasty was a glorious epoch not merely in China but also on a world-scale. After it the dynastic rulers, however, canonized Confucianism, making it orthodox, which meant the exclusion of other schools of thought. According to Cai, the 1911 Revolution and the May the Fourth Movement was the second period of the Hundred Schools' contention. During the latter, Ye Dehui, Gu Hongming, Lin Qinnan, Chen Huanzhang and Dai Jitao admired Confucius and Confucianism, while Chen Duxiu, Li Dazhao, and Lu Xun attacked Confucianism. According to Cai, Tan Sitong respected Confucius while attacking the Doctrine of Social Order (*lijiao*). Yan Fu, Liang Qichao, and Zhang Taiyan opposed Confucius at first, while they changed their opinions later. Thus, on the whole, Confucius enjoyed absolute respect for over 2,000 years, while thorough opposition against him lasted only a few decades. In contemporary China, too, the Marxists Guo Moro, Fan Wenlan, Zhao Jibin, Du Guoxiang, and Ji Wenfu all had their own differing views on Confucius and Confucianism.¹⁰⁰

Cai then criticizes Kuang Yaming by quoting Yang Bojun who said that any single sentence from the *Analects* was hardly enough to elucidate the original meaning. As an

Facts), *Wenhuibao* (Shanghai), 27 January 1987.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Cai Shangsi, »Ye tan shishi qiushi de pingjia Kongzi« (Further Discussion on How to Evaluate Confucius True to the Facts), *Wenhuibao* (Shanghai) 10 March 1987.

example, Cai mentions that the Confucian benevolence (*ren*) was not as unselfish as one might think, if one takes into consideration the context: »*Ren zhe, ren ye. Qin qin wei da.*» Which in effect means that the one possessing benevolence is a human being, and that one should first show one's affection to relatives (and only after that to others). As another criticism against Kuang Yaming, Cai stresses that in evaluating Confucius one should not exclusively rely on the views of one school only (in Kuang's case, Confucianism), otherwise one may easily conclude, as Kuang does, that »Confucius' speech and deeds were consistent». In Cai's opinion, Kuang's Triple Method was also meaningless without first determining the »main direction» (*da fangxiang*) of Confucius. Cai even enlarges Kuang's Triple Method to a ten-item method, but emphasizes that even it would not be sufficient to evaluate Confucius. According to Cai, Confucius' »main direction» lay in the fact that his highest ideal was the restoration of the Western Zhou society and that his most respected sages were Kings Wen and Wu, as well as the Duke of Zhou. Cai concludes by reminding us that as his generation lived partly under the old society, it was important not to forget to employ genuinely Marxist perspectives and methods in analyzing and evaluating Confucius.¹⁰¹

Pei Fei discusses Confucius' relation to Chinese literature. He notes that the earliest form of literature in any nation is lyric poetry. That was the case also in China where the *Book of Odes* (*Shijing*) is a collection of lyrical poetry from some 2,500 years ago, as such a rarity in the world. Confucius himself taught that if one did not study the *Book of Odes*, one would not be able to talk properly. Pei claims, however, that lyrical poetry disappeared from Chinese literature after Confucius. Confucians began emphasizing human society. There was no longer much room for legends about superhumans, natural phenomena, etc. in their original form, as legendary heroes were now given a human outlook. It became impossible to pass on legends in their original form — they became history, and they were written in historical style, not in the form of poetry. In this sense ancient legends became falsified and destroyed. Thus Confucius (or later Confucians) had both a constructive and destructive function in the history of Chinese lyrics, Pei concludes.¹⁰²

Hu Jichuang, an economic historian, discusses the role of Confucianism in general. To him the basic question is, why Confucius' thought was for more than 2,000 years accepted by the ruling class and believed in by the »underclasses». Whenever barbarian tribes invaded the North China Plain they soon began adopting the Confucian system of thought. According to Hu, a common explanation for this is that Confucianism suited the desire of these rulers to cheat the common people. This is, of course, not an acceptable explanation, because it remains unclear why the Chinese people should have accepted cheating for 2,000 years. Furthermore, Confucianism has spread not only to East Asia but even to modern capitalist countries such as France and the U.S.A., and in Singapore it almost occupies the position of a state ideology. Hu answers his own question by saying that, with the exception of some norms ruling individual behaviour,

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Pei Fei, »Kongzi yu Han minzu wenxue chuantong» (Confucius and the Literary Tradition of the Han People), *Guangming ribao*, 9 August 1987.

the majority of ideas in Confucius' thought were rules directly or indirectly meant to serve the government, to help to rule the country. Since Confucius' thought had such a close relationship with the social life of mankind, it was able to prevail for such a long time, Hu maintains.¹⁰³ In Hu's opinion, Confucius' thought formed a complete set of political standards for ruling a *tianxia* state. For example, in foreign relations the typical Chinese ideal was not to resort to military force »in the style of Western nations«, Hu claims. Confucius' system served all classes: even the ruled felt satisfied. Hu mentions that when a book was published in 1950 in France to commemorate the 2,500th anniversary of the birth of Confucius, the publisher compared Confucius' historical role to that of Shakyamuni, Mohammed, or Jesus Christ. In Hu's opinion, the political influence of Confucius was even greater than that of any of the above three. Hu maintains that »the so-called Eastern culture is in fact Chinese culture, or to put it more concretely, the thought of Confucius«. Hu concludes by forecasting that it would not be any miracle if a »Confucian fever« would erupt any time in the same fashion as Chinese culture came to be greatly admired two centuries earlier in Europe.¹⁰⁴

In contemporary China a »Confucian fever« did in fact occur in the mid-1980's with the establishment of the Confucius Foundation of China and its quarterly *Kongzi yanjiu*. The latter began appearing on 25 March 1986 and during its first year it published 87 articles out of 596 manuscripts submitted (among these, 395 specifically on Confucius). The news about the inauguration of the quarterly was published in 18 national newspapers and by the end of 1986 subscriptions to the magazine exceeded one thousand. A scholar wrote to the editor: »For thirty years I have been involved in research on Confucius, but it is only now that I really feel that I am able to do research on him.« A Japanese scholar, professor Susumu Takahashi, even expressed his willingness to assist in publishing a Japanese edition of the magazine — an idea which, at least so far, has not materialized.¹⁰⁵

Conference activities grew also in scale. From 31 August to 4 September 1987 an »International Conference on Confucian Studies« was held in Qufu with the Confucius Foundation of China and the Institute of East Asian Philosophies, Singapore, as co-organizers. As background to a joint conference with Singapore it may be mentioned that Singapore was at this time developing its education on the basis of Confucian ethics, and, moreover, Southeast Asia in general was experiencing a »fervor of Confucian studies«. More than 130 participants from 12 countries took part in the conference, the motto of which was »Confucianism — its transformation and influence«. The conference divided into four submeetings: (1) the content and evaluation of Confucian studies, (2) the transformation of Confucianism in different periods, (3) the influence of Confucianism in East Asia and its transmission to the West, (4) Confucianism and modernization.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Hu Jichuang, »Guanyu Kongzi sixiang de xin pingjia« (Concerning the New Evaluation of Confucius' Thought), *Wenhui bao* (Shanghai), 26 May 1987.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Wang Shilun, »Yi nian lai Kongzi yanjiu laigao qingkuang jianjie« (A Short Introduction of the Situation as Regards Manuscripts Submitted to *Kongzi yanjiu* During the Past Year), *Kongzi yanjiu*, 1987:3, pp. 127-128.

Kongzi yanjiu carried also an article about the International Conference on Confucianism held on 12-17 November in the Central Library in Taipei. Optimism run high at the conference: *Kongzi yanjiu* cites Chen Lifu, the secretary-general of the Confucius-Mencius Society of the Republic of China, as saying that the 19th century was the century of the British, the 20th century was that of Americans, while the 21st century will be the century of the Chinese.¹⁰⁷

The largest conference so far held in Confucian studies in the People's Republic of China, the Conference Commemorating the 2540th Birthday of Confucius, was jointly organized by the Confucius Foundation of China and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on 7-10 October 1989 in Beijing and Qufu. More than 300 participants from 25 countries and regions were present in the conference, the main theme of which was »The historical position of Confucius and the Confucian school of thought, and their impact on contemporary society«. According to *Guangming ribao*, the participants generally shared the view that Confucius' teachings formed a complete system of doctrines covering the whole society based on human values. The object of Confucianism was man: autonomy, independence, and the self-consciousness of man. In Confucian doctrines self-cultivation (*xiu*), uniformity (*qi*), order (*zhi*) and peace (*ping*) were seen as personal ideals and aims for struggle, loyalty (*zhong*), and forgiveness (*shu*) as the practical principles of life. As examples of the basic spirit of Confucianism, the following elements were mentioned: the idea that »the world is for all« (*tianxia wei gong*), the equality of all human beings (*renge pingdeng*), the strict obedience to humanity (*renge zunyan*), individuality (*gexing duli*), morality as the basis for reason (*daode lixing*), democracy (*minben zhengzhi*), positive accomplishment (*jiji youwei*), feelings of social responsibility and historical mission, and affection towards people. Some scholars pointed out in the conference that ethics, pragmatism, relativism, and flexibility were reasons for the openness and adaptability of Confucianism. Confucianism, however, did not usually suit times of social turmoil and revolution, but rather periods of economic wealth and decreasing social contradictions. That Confucianism had been able to continue for so long was »one of the wonders of the world«: the reason for this was to be found in its ability to develop continuously. Generally the participants of the conference regarded Confucianism as having had historically a positive function through its contribution to the formation of »Chinese thought« and »national psychology«, »culture«, »spirit«, »character«, and so on. Some of the Western participants held that Confucianism still continued to make positive inputs to contemporary society via its humanism, creativity, and economic views based on moral values. This opinion was also supported by a Taiwanese scholar.¹⁰⁸

Mainland Chinese participants, however, had different opinions about the relation

¹⁰⁶ You Ji, »Ruxue guoji xueshu taolunhui jiyao« (A Summary of the International Conference on Confucian Studies), *Kongzi yanjiu*, 1987:4, pp. 12-13.

¹⁰⁷ Liu Zhaoyi, »Taibei juxing 'Guoji Kongxue huiyi'« (»The International Conference on Confucianism« Held in Taipei), *Kongzi yanjiu*, 1988:1, pp. 126-127.

¹⁰⁸ Fang Jiangshan, »Kongzi danchen jinian yu xueshu taolunhui zongshu« (A Summary of the Commemoration of Confucius' Birth and the Academic Conference), *Guangming ribao*, 8 December 1989.

between Confucian ethics and economic development. Some claimed that although Confucian doctrines were worthy of study, they had no pragmatic value in contemporary society: conservatism weighed heavier than progress in Confucianism. Confucianism supported feudal society, which, for example, destroyed individuality. To these scholars Confucianism is hardly more than the product of »non-prospering natural economy» with little to do with equality, progress, modern industry, or competitive trade. Confucianism was only one rung of the ladder in the development of the world, and not the uppermost rung. Even if some see values of democracy, freedom, equality, and individualism in Confucianism, it still cannot explain China's history. Most Chinese scholars at the conference, however, agreed that meeting points between Confucianism and modern economic development must be found through industrious research, and that Confucianism had promoted economic development in other countries such as Japan. Modernization was not simply mechanization, science, and urbanization, but also included a human content such as improvement of human relations.¹⁰⁹

An article by **Gao Jian** in *Guangming ribao* on 21 December 1989 opened up a new aspect in our search for the role of Confucius in Chinese history. The Chinese people lack, in Gao's opinion, sensitivity to difficulties, their vitality does not burst forth, and their spirit excels in apathy. Therefore, in his opinion, the Chinese think that Chinese theatre has no art of tragedy, and that Chinese culture on the whole has no spirit of tragedy. This according to Gao is due to the poisoning effect of Confucian doctrines. As his ideas did not suit the rulers of the time, Confucius' life was filled with difficulties, which again became reflected in his thought. A theatre group from Shandong Province, Shandong Sheng Huajutuan, therefore opened a new page in the history of the Chinese drama by performing a play on Confucius' life under the title »Confucius the Commoner» (Buyi Kongzi). Gao quotes the Russian literary critic Vissarion Belinski (1810-1848) who wrote that the main actor in a tragedy embodies the perpetual and real force of the human spirit. The purpose of the modern drama was to show that Confucius' life was not quite as glorious as it is popularly believed to have been, and thus for its part can help the Chinese people regain their vitality.¹¹⁰

It has frequently been pointed out how every period, every social layer and almost every generation had its own view on Confucius. Even portraits of the great master show these differences. **Luo Chenglie**, who works at the Research Institute of Confucius at Qufu Normal University has collected 50 different images on Confucius. According to Luo, the picture of Confucius which has influenced posterity most is the »Portrait of Confucius Lecturing» by the Tang painter Wu Daozi. Luo notes that after the Song dynasty, Confucius' rank was elevated and as a result his portraits also began to show royal traits. Images worshipped by powerholders are stern and formidable, while images which appealed to scholars and commoners, look genial and familiar. Japanese images of Confucius are short and stout, while, American ones are tall. Every class and layer of

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Gao Jian, » Fajue Zhongguo wenhua chuantong zhong de beiju jingshen — guan huaju 'Buyi Kongzi'» (Excavating the Tragic Spirit in the Tradition of Chinese Culture — Watching the Play »Confucius the Commoner»), *Guangming ribao*, 21 December 1989.

society had its own image of Confucius, and likewise every image of Confucius reflects a particular class or layer of society, Luo points out.¹¹¹

Already since 1978 already several hundred articles have been published on Confucius. **Mo Minzhe** outlines the scholarly discussion on Confucius in the following way. The political thought of Confucius can be divided into four categories of opinion. (1) Confucius was a representative of a backward slave-owning class and not a revolutionary (Cai Shangsi). (2) Although Confucius represented the views of a backward slave-owning aristocracy, his thought also included positive, progressive elements (Ren Jiyu, Feng Youlan, Yan Beiming). (3) Confucius supported enlightened aristocratic politics: on the one hand he supported feudal hierarchy, and on the other hand, he worked for the interests of the common people. He wanted to reform the contemporary situation, but not by means of revolution. (Kuang Yaming) (4) Confucius represented the newly-born landlord class which was progressive in that historical situation (Qiao Changlu, Zhong Zhaopeng).¹¹² Mo notes that Confucius' ethical thought had recently received many favourable evaluations, which was a phenomenon new in China. At the same time it was also generally pointed out that there existed a need to evaluate and develop further rational elements in Confucius' ethics.¹¹³

With regard to an over-all evaluation of Confucius, Mo notes that in general all scholars agree that Confucius played not merely a positive role in China's history but also a negative role, while opinions about the degree of the latter vary. The highest credit to Confucius is given by Feng Youlan, according to whom, Confucius' »figure and advocacy played a very great positive role in the formation process of the Chinese people.«¹¹⁴ Concerning recent Confucian studies, Mo makes three general observations. First, the sphere of research has become broader, and the methods more objective and deep-searching. The study of Confucius is no longer merely historical or philosophical, but it has also spread to such fields as psychology, law, economics, politics, music, dance, and painting. Second, the study of Confucius had become interdisciplinary: various categories of Confucius' thought are taken into consideration simultaneously. Third, more attention should be given to the methodology in Confucian studies — because of methodological misunderstandings unnecessary divisions of opinion still exist among scholars, Mo maintains.¹¹⁵

Whether the general ideological tightening, which followed the suppression of the students' democracy movement in Beijing on 4 June 1989, has had its impact also on Confucian studies, is still too early to judge. Scholars are on the alert, uncertain about the future. Nevertheless, there is no sign that Confucian studies would be going back to the Marxist position in which they were before 1978. The atmosphere is still much less

¹¹¹ Luo Chenglie, »Kongzi xiang zhongzhong« (Different Images of Confucius), *Renmin ribao (Hawai ban)*, 27 December 1989.

¹¹² Mo Mingzhe, »Jinnian lai Kongzi yanjiu de zhuangkuang he jinzhan« (The Situation and Development of Recent Studies on Confucius), *Kongzi yanjiu*, 1986:3, p. 125.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 127-128.

¹¹⁴ Mo quotes Feng Youlan's *Zhongguo zhhexueshi xinbian* (A New Edition of the History of Chinese Philosophy), vol. 1, p. 41.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*; 128.

ideologically oriented than at any time in the 1950's or 1960's. If there is to be a halt in the discussion, it will most likely be a temporary one. For example, a recent article from January 1990 quoting **Peng Zhongde's** periodization of Chinese ancient history bears no mention of »slave society» or »feudalism». According to Peng, ancient China's historical thought and historical recording divides into four periods:

- (1) The period of divine thought (*shenyi sixiang*) from the earliest times to the era of the Warring States. During this period history developed under ideas of divine purpose. The main type of historical writing of this period was the chronicle (e.g. *Zuozhuan*). Confucius belonged to this period.
- (2) The period of heroic thought (*yingxiong sixiang*) which included the dynasties of Qin, Han, Wei, Jin, and the Southern and Northern dynasties. During this period history progressed through the struggle of heroes. Biographies depicting heroes were the main form of writing (e.g. *Shiji*).
- (3) The period of admonitory thought from Sui to Qing. *Jishibenmo* (accounts on important events) were the main form of writing (e.g. *Tongjian jishibenmo*).
- (4) The period of evolutionary thought, from the late Qing to the May the Fourth Movement. The historical writing of this period already resembled the modern style of dividing works into sections and chapters.¹¹⁶

Confucius is being restored in China. After the 1911 Revolution the 76th generation descendant of Confucius, Kong Lingyi, issued as the head of the Kong clan the following public statement, which is today as opportune as it was eight decades ago:

Confucianism takes human kindness as its guiding principle, a principle that cannot be abandoned for even a second. For thousands of years, China has built its government, culture, customs, and beliefs on Confucianism, and even though our system of government has now changed, human moral principles have not. If China abandons Confucianism, it abandons its very life.¹¹⁷

V CONCLUSIONS

Mao's instruction to »reject the feudal dross and assimilate the democratic essence» of China's traditional culture was the only general guideline available for future Confucian studies in 1949 when the People's Republic of China was inaugurated. In the minds of Chinese scholars, this instruction probably raised more questions than gave answers concerning the desired future tendency of Confucian studies. Feudalism, for example, was still an alien concept to many a Confucian scholar at least, and what Mao meant with democracy may not necessarily have been self-evident, either. Confucian studies was not yet a modern, academically well-established discipline. In its traditional form it had consisted of Confucian learning (the more or less reading and memorizing of classics by

¹¹⁶ »Zhongguo gudaishi xueshi fenqi xinshuo» (A New Theory Concerning the Periodization of China's Ancient History), *Renmin ribao* (*Haiwai ban*), 18 January 1990.

¹¹⁷ *In the Mansion of Confucius Descendants — an Oral History by Kong Demao and Ke Lan*, transl. by Rosemary Roberts, Beijing 1984, p. 85.

heart) and not studies in the modern sense of the word. Therefore it was quite to be expected that in the 1950's many scholars preferred to wait and see what the intellectual trend in the New China would turn out to be. Evaluations on Confucius were thus made quite cautiously: Confucius' merits in the fields of education, ethics, humanism, etc. were applauded. On the other hand, because uncertainty prevailed as to the class structure of the society of Confucius' time Ji Wenfu's conclusion that Confucius worked for »all aristocrats» aptly demonstrates the confusion that prevailed among Confucian scholars in the early 1950's. In the late 1950's, the first questions with the help of class analysis were being asked: was the Spring and Autumn Period an era of slavery or feudalism, and was Confucius a reactionary or a reformer? Differences between Confucius' own thought and Confucianism were also treated.

The debate around Confucius began seriously in the early 1960's in an optimistic atmosphere of socialist romanticism. Marxist approaches were referred to as being »the most scientific, the most revolutionary», and it was claimed that »only the proletariat is the honest follower of historical culture». Marxism-Leninism was the guide, and historical materialism the method to judge whether Confucius, for example, was a materialist or an idealist. As no general agreement existed yet about the periodization of ancient Chinese history, opinions divided as to whether Confucius' time still belonged to that of slavery or to that of feudal landownership. Those who saw Confucius as representative of slaveowners, evaluated him either as a reactionary or as a reformist; others regarded him as a representative of the broad masses of people and therefore as a reformist or even a revolutionary. Still another viewpoint held that Confucius represented the landlord class, which at this historical juncture was a progressive force and, consequently, Confucius was also progressive. Discussion was not, however, limited to class analysis: many scholars evaluated the progressiveness or backwardness of Confucius from the viewpoint of his own thought. Confucius' demand for the unification of the country, the creation of central authority, his concern for the sufferings of the people, his ideas on morality and education were mentioned as positive features of his thought, while negative features included discrimination against commoners and women and the belittling of physical labour. With regard to technical conditions for research, not a few scholars pointed out the need to annotate classics, compile dictionaries and other study aids. They also reminded readers of the need to maintain skills of textual criticism and etymology in carrying out research on the Confucian classics.

Confucius and Confucianism were so seriously downgraded during the mass campaigns of the Cultural Revolution and its aftermath that Confucian studies could hardly have got off the ground again before an official rehabilitation which came about 1978 when the Communist Party of China called for »socialist modernization with Chinese characteristics». This in time led to a wider official acceptance of Confucianism and traditional culture in general than had been the case in the 1960's. In addition to historical materialism, now came dialectical materialism: evaluation of Confucianism could be neither completely positive nor completely negative. Criticism was expected to be constructive and based on an understanding of Confucius against his own historical and

social background. Only a minority of scholars claimed that Confucianism was not of any use in contemporary society at all. At the other extreme, several enthusiastic scholars advocated that the thought of Confucius was needed in socialist construction. Feng Youlan noted that the new socialist society would be constructed on the basis of traditional Chinese culture, it was going to be a new creation and would therefore take several generations or between 100-200 years to achieve. In overall evaluations Confucius rose far above the evaluations of the 1960's. He was seen as a giant who more than anyone else had contributed to the formation of China's culture and national psychology, even more than the famed emperors Qin Shihuang, Han Wudi, and Tang Zong.

The 1978 Party instruction on socialist modernization with Chinese characteristics marked the beginning of a general discussion on China's traditional culture and not merely on Confucianism. The discussion Confucianism, however, inevitably became the centre of attention because of its central position in Chinese culture. Some even went so far as to equate Confucianism with Chinese culture and even with the culture of the East. »Confucian fervor« occurred in mid-1980's when scholarly organizations and institutes were established in order to promote Confucian studies, an academic journal (*Kongzi yanjiu*) began to be issued, and the *Critical Biography of Confucius* by Kuang Yaming was published. Several national and international conferences of unprecedented scale were also held in Confucian studies in China at this time.

If one wished to outline the portrait of Confucius in present-day China, one should first list the following as his merits. He contributed to China's national culture by editing and reorganizing the Six Classics. The fact that China has abundant historical literature, which no other civilization can compete with, is partly due to Confucius' own respect for history transmitted through his teachings to posterity. Thanks to Confucius, education, and within it especially moral education, became such a high priority in China that the country has long been known as »the Country of Etiquette«. The content in Confucianism was so human and universal, flexible and pragmatic that it not only survived in China for more than 2,000 years but even spread to several other Asian countries. Confucius is credited as having created not only the concepts of benevolence and propriety, but also individualism, democracy, and the public-minded idea of *tianxia wei gong* (the world is for all). Confucianism suited both rulers and the ruled. Due to its non-religious nature it was successfully used as a defence against Buddhism and Christianity. Drawbacks attached to Confucius included Confucius' passive role in carrying out reforms, lack of adequate attention to the military, lack of initiativeness which later resulted in a similar lack of initiativeness in Han classicism, Song Neo-Confucianism, and Qing »unadorned learning«, misuse by feudal rulers of Confucius' demand for loyalty and respect towards the ruler, the oppressiveness of the Doctrine of Social Order and of the Three Cardinal Bonds. Many of these drawbacks are more related to later Confucians than to Confucius himself. Therefore Hou Wailu, for example, has demanded that studying Confucius as an actual historical person would do him more justice. This would be a reasonable claim if new sources on Confucius' life could be found. Otherwise it is an extremely difficult if not an impossible task to try to separate Confucius completely from Confucianism — the two have already become so intermingled during the course of the past two millenia.

Most Chinese historians now consider that the end of the Spring and Autumn Period in which Confucius lived, was either a period of transition from slavery to feudalism or clearly a period of feudalism. This still does not prevent a minority of Confucian scholars from considering that Confucius represented the thought of slaveowners. Once again supporters of this view can be divided into those who regard Confucius as a reactionary and those who also see progressive elements in his views. The majority of scholars, however, maintain that Confucius' thought served the classes of his own day. According to one view, he both supported enlightened aristocracy and looked after the interests of the common people, and according to another opinion, he represented the interests of the newly-born landlord class.

The study of Confucius has become broader in scope and interdisciplinary. Traditionally it was mainly scholars of philosophy and history that dealt with Confucius and Confucianism, but now scholars of almost any field may show an interest in the influence of Confucianism on their particular fields. For example, historians of law have found that Confucius' concept of benevolence (*ren*) was also a principle in legislation and the execution of law in ancient China.

The official authorization of Confucian studies has made them prosper so that the atmosphere certainly is more liberal than before the Cultural Revolution. Confucius' ethical and educational views are highly praised nowadays. Critics of this tendency even claim that there is a drive to beautify the ancient sage.

Gu Mu, the honorary chairman of the Confucius Foundation of China and also a member of the State Council of China, noted in his preface to the first issue of *Kongzi yanjiu* that »for a fairly long period people regarded research and evaluation of Confucius as a dangerous road«. He also welcomed to the research community scholars using other approaches than Marxist ones. Confucius and China's traditional culture were to be made an object of science. This meant that slandering of Confucius for political purposes, hopefully, will become a thing of the past. Confucius is returning from the dead — if he ever truly died.

孔 子 歌

天高兮！无不覆；
地厚兮！无不载；
日月之明兮！无不照；
河海之大兮！无不容；
巍巍荡荡兮！莫之能名；
惟我父子兮！道集大成；
明明德於天下兮！
道世界於大同；
師表万世兮！
長留不死之精神。

ODE TO CONFUCIUS

(Sung by all Chinese today on the birthday
of Confucius, August 27th)

How lofty is Heaven! It leaves nothing uncovered;
How deep is Earth! It leaves nothing unsustained;
How bright the Sun and Moon! They leave nothing unlighted;
How great the Seas and Rivers! They leave nothing
unreceived;
How sublime and vast are they! No words can ever express
them.
O my Master! His Tao is the culmination of all wisdom.
He spreads rays of Bright Virtues under Heaven!
And moves the world towards the State of Great Harmony,
He is the Pattern of Teachers for myriads of ages!
And transmits forever his undying spirit.

From Chen Jingpan, *Confucius as a Teacher*, Beijing 1990.

APPENDIX 1

Notes on Confucius' Home Town

The intellectual revival of China, which has included Confucian studies since 1978, also opened up the native town of Confucius, Qufu in Shandong Province, for wider attention. As has become part of the new general reappraisal of Confucius, it will be introduced below.

In ancient times Shandong was known as the »Great East«. The state of Lu was established there approximately in 1060 B.C. when Duke Dan of Zhou made his eldest son Boqin the Duke of Lu. The capital of Lu, Qufu, is known to have existed already during the Shang dynasty (about 1700-1066 B.C.). Lu had a close connection with the Zhou court throughout its history. Large-scale constructions took place there, and as a result Lu was, in the beginning at least, more advanced than other states. Unlike other states, Lu never moved its capital from Qufu. Qufu served therefore as the Lu capital for eight centuries until 249 B.C. when it was conquered by the southern state of Chu. At that time the city was of an irregular rectangular shape, about 10 square kilometres in size, with a 10-meter high city wall outside of which lay a 30-meter wide moat. The city had 12 gates. The modern Qufu is only 1/7 of the ancient city in size. The central city axis of Qufu became a model for Chinese capitals.¹¹⁸

When Confucius died in 479 B.C., the Lu monarch, Duke Gun, named him posthumously »Father Ni«, which was the most respectful title at that time. The disciples of Confucius built a temple in his memory in the second year after the death of their master. In 154 B.C., the Han emperor Jing enfeoffed his son Liu Yu as the prince of Lu. Liu constructed a magnificent palace in Qufu. Its Hall of Spiritual Brilliance was renowned as one of China's three great edifices. Qufu became virtually a sacred city when the Han emperor Wu (140-87 B.C.) canonized Confucianism as the official state philosophy. Beginning with the Han dynasty, emperors of every dynasty enlarged and embellished Confucius' temple and tomb in Qufu, and also gave special treatment to his descendants by way of positions of high rank and magnificent official residences. In 539 the temple complex was renovated and a statue of Confucius erected in the temple for sacrificial purposes. Gradually the complex grew in size so that it came to be regarded as one of the three great architectural complexes in China (together with the Imperial Palace in Beijing and the Summer Resort in Chengde, Hebei Province). Over the course of 2,000 years the temple underwent 15 major and 31 minor reconstructions. The present temple was rebuilt during the Ming and Qing dynasties. It has the same design as the Imperial Palace: nine courtyards arranged on both sides of a north-south axis, with buildings to the right and left of it arranged in symmetrical pairs. The complex contains 3 major halls, 1 major pavilion, an altar, 3 shrines, 2 side halls, 2 minor halls, 2 studies, etc. In all, there are 466 rooms covering an area of 22 hectares. In addition, there are 54 archways in the grounds.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Cai Xiqin, *A Visit to Confucius' Home Town*, China Spotlight Series, transl. by Rosemary A. Roberts, Beijing 1986, pp. 12-14.

Beside the temple of Confucius lies »the most sumptuous aristocratic mansion in the whole of China«, the Kong Mansion or the Mansion of the Yansheng Dukes (Yansheng means »continuing the line of the sage«). Seventy-seven generations of Confucius' descendants have lived in the mansion. As the appreciation of Confucius rose in the course of history, his descendants were also elevated in rank. Liu Bang (256-195 B.C.), for example, named Kong Tang »Lord of Sacrifices«, the Han emperor Yuan gave Kong Ba the hereditary title of »Marquis of Guanwei«, in 739 the Tang emperor Kaiyuan named the 35th generation descendant of Confucius »Duke of Literary Excellence«, and in 1055 the Song emperor Renzong gave Kong Zongyuan (46th generation) the hereditary title of Yansheng Duke. In 1935 Chiang Kaishek awarded the 77th generation descendant Kong Decheng the title of »State Master of Sacrifices to the Exalted Sage and the First Teacher«. The Yansheng dukes enjoyed also real power. By the early Ming dynasty, the duke was a first grade official in China, second in status only to the prime minister, and after the position of prime minister was abolished he became the head of civil officials. Kong Demao has recalled:

From my earliest childhood I can recollect family elders speaking of the Mansion as the residence of the Duke, the family of the Sage, 'the first family under heaven', a family even more highly respected than the emperors' families. Imperial families retained their noble status only until the fall of a dynasty, but for the last two thousand years every generation of the family of Confucius had been high ranking aristocrats. By the Ming and Qing dynasties, the Yansheng Duke was even permitted to walk beside the emperor along the Imperial Way within the Imperial Palace in Beijing, to ride a horse inside the walls of the Purple Forbidden City, and to accompany the emperor on inspection tours of institutions of higher learning.¹²⁰

Moreover, locally the Kong Mansion was autonomous. The Kong family was exempt from taxation and corvee labour. The Mansion had the right to sell official posts and titles, to preside over its own court of law and to intervene in local administrative affairs. The Mansion was built on an area of 16 hectares and it consisted of 463 rooms, containing even a *yamen* of its own. It had six administrative departments modeled after the ministries of the Imperial Government: the Department of Rites (in charge of ritual ceremonies and books presented by the Imperial Court), the Department of Music, the Seals Department (jurisdiction, edicts), the Department of Letters and Archives, the Hundred Households Department (corvee labour, peasant households, the private army of the Mansion), the Department of Crossing the Register (the collection of rent and taxes from the Mansion's 70,000 hectares of land).¹²¹

The last family to live in the Kong Mansion was Kong Lingyi (76th generation descendant of Confucius) and his wife, Madam Tao. His secondary wife, Concubine Wang, gave birth to two daughters, Kong Deqi and Kong Demao, and to a son, Kong Decheng. Deqi died in 1937 in Beijing, Demao is still alive and lives in Beijing. She is a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. Kong Decheng is also

¹¹⁹ Ibid, pp. 15, 19-22.

¹²⁰ *In the Mansion of Confucius Descendants*, p. 3.

¹²¹ Ibid., pp. 40, 41, 44-46.

alive and has lived in Taiwan since 1949. Seventeen days after the birth of the heir, Madame Tao poisoned Concubine Wang.¹²²

What happened to the Temple of Confucius and the Kong Mansion after 1949? No open discussion has yet started, except that the destruction done during the Cultural Revolution has been openly admitted in China. What is certain is that they suffered in the same way as other traditional Chinese institutions.

The Qufu population is now about 450,000, of which some 130,000 are surnamed Kong. As a symbolical gesture of the new age, the Administrative Committee for Cultural Relics (Wenwu Guanli Weiyuanhui) of Qufu County has published the *Analects*, with simplified characters and in a red cover, for sale in the Temple of Confucius. In Jinan a restaurant called Kong Shantang was recently opened at Yingxiangshan offering some 60 different dishes in the style of the Kong Mansion.¹²³

APPENDIX 2

Documents on the Confucius Foundation of China

(Translated from *Kongzi yanjiu* [Studies on Confucius], 1986:1)

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE CONFUCIUS FOUNDATION OF CHINA

Confucius (551-479 B.C.) was a great thinker, politician and educator in Chinese history, the founder of the Confucian school of thought as well as a cultural celebrity in the world. Confucius' doctrines of thought are an important part of China's traditional culture which not only played a significant role in the historical development of China, but also internationally had an extensive and profound influence. To sum up and assimilate this precious cultural heritage, to discard the dross and to select the essential, to make the past serve the present, would not merely produce a positive impact on China's Four Modernizations but even make a due contribution to world culture.

The native place of Confucius, Qufu, is one of the main birthplaces of the ancient culture of the Chinese nation, a famous city with a magnificent culture and also a treasure house possessing a multitude of cultural relics. The Forest of Confucius, the Temple of Confucius, the Kong Mansion, the ruins of the ancient capital of the state of Lu, the Tomb of Emperor Shaohao, the Temple of the Duke of Zhou, the Temple of Yanhui, the Forest of Duke Liang, the buildings of the Nishan Hill where Confucius was born, as well as the Cave of the Master (Cave of the Spirit of the Earth, *Kunling dong*), etc. are all cultural sites from the distant past. The Kong Mansion Archives amounting to several hundred thousand documents, stone tablets of different periods, Han paintings and sculptures, unearthed cultural relics are also national treasures. Qufu thus forms a natural museum for the study of Confucius and the civilization of the East. In order to provide possibilities for scholars of the whole nation and the entire world to carry out research on

¹²² Ibid., pp. 49-50.

¹²³ Rinoie, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

Confucius, Confucianism and China's traditional culture and thought, and in order to promote academic exchange, the Foundation, which has its roots in Qufu, base in Shandong and support from the whole country and the entire world, has decided to establish a centre for the study of Confucius, to publish a periodical *Kongzi yanjiu* (Studies on Confucius), to establish the Nishan Academy, to set up a special fund and awards, to support financially and reward scholarly research and promote education, and to invite both well-known foreign and domestic researchers to participate in scholarly exchange.

In order to realize the desires expressed above, which is neither the wish of one place only or even of one nation, nor the responsibility of a single place or a single nation, what is needed are social groups both domestic and foreign and determined people of all layers of society with lofty ideals along with their common efforts so that their unity of will becomes an impregnable stronghold. In accordance with the needs of work, the Foundation establishes three committees, namely the Academic Committee, the Fund Committee, and the Committee for the Research of the Cultural Relics of Confucius' Birth Place. While sharing the work and cooperating with one another, these committees actively undertake different areas of responsibility. This is an undertaking of historical importance where the desired Chinese and foreign personalities, social groups of every field and especially those of finance and research provide strong support, bringing the cause to a successful conclusion through mutual assistance, and remaining optimistic until the success of the enterprise is achieved. This generous support will always be remembered in the history of mankind. The above is hereby proclaimed.

October 22, 1985

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CONFUCIUS FOUNDATION OF CHINA

I GENERAL REGULATIONS

Article 1. The Foundation is a national academic mass organization supported by the State.

Article 2. The purpose of the Foundation is to unite and organize the scholarly circles of the whole nation to carry out historical, all-round, systematic, deep-searching scientific research concerning Confucius, the Confucian school of thought and China's traditional culture and thought, based on the principles of seeking truth from the facts, discarding the dross and preserving the essential, making the past serve the present in order to make full use of the doctrines of Confucius, the Confucian school of thought and the outstanding traditions of China's glorious ancient culture, and also in order to contribute actively to the enrichment of socialist intellectual culture and to carry out the construction of the Four Modernizations.

Article 3. The Foundation uses Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought as its guide.

II MEMBERS

Article 4. All who agree with the above aims can become members of the Foundation after making a personal application and with the consent of the Board of Directors.

Article 5. The Foundation does not establish filials and does not accept group members.

Article 6. Members are expected to respect the Constitution of the Foundation, to fulfil any kinds of obligations entrusted to them by the Foundation. They may enjoy the rights to vote and be elected to office, the right to criticize as well any other rights stipulated by the Foundation.

III THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Article 7. By consulting representative persons of different groups and factions, several representatives are chosen to form the Board of Directors of the Foundation.

Article 8. The Board of Directors is the highest leading organ of the Foundation.

Article 9. The Board of Directors elects a few members from among themselves to form the Standing Committee of the Board to exercise the function and powers of of the Board of Directors when the latter is not in session.

Article 10. The Board of Directors invites an Honorary Chairman, a Chief Honorary Adviser and several Honorary Advisers to become the leaders and advisers in policy-making.

Article 11. The Board of Directors elects a Chairman to the Foundation to take responsibility for leading the work of the Foundation and several Vice Chairmen to assist the Chairman in carrying out the latter's obligations.

Article 12. The Board of Directors makes important decisions of policy, formulates revisions and changes of the Constitution as well as work procedures.

IV WORK ORGANIZATION

Article 13. The Foundation employs a Secretary-General to assist the Chairman and Vice Chairmen in their work. The Secretary-General appoints several Vice Secretary-Generals, delegating them duties to lead and take care of the daily routines of the Foundation.

Article 14. The Foundation establishes three committees, the Academic Committee, the Fund Committee, and the Committee for the Research of the Cultural Relics of Confucius' Birth Place in order to implement the purpose of the Foundation and to carry out its tasks.

(A) The Academic Committee

1. Consists of a Director and several Vice-Directors, a Secretary General and several members.
2. Is in charge of the organisation, rules and the leadership of all academic activity of the Foundation, including domestic and foreign academic exchanges.
3. Evaluates carefully academic works by the Foundation and those submitted to the Foundation for consideration, and presents to the Board of Directors namelists of persons to be granted awards and academic degrees.
4. Issues the magazine *Kongzi yanjiu* (Studies on Confucius); organizes the publishing of scholarly works.
5. Looks after conditions necessary for the members of the Foundation in carrying out scholarly activities.
6. The general regulations of the Academic Committee are stipulated separately.

(B) The Fund Committee

1. Consists of a Director and several Vice-Directors, a Secretary General and several members.
2. With the condition that the purpose of the Foundation be thoroughly explained, raises funds from domestic and foreign persons, enterprises, and mass organizations.
3. Uses funds in a rational way.
4. Thanks donators of funds with gifts (for the method, see Appendix).
5. The general regulations of the Fund Committee are stipulated separately.

(C) The Committee for the Research of the Cultural Relics of Confucius' Birthplace

1. Consists of a Director and several Vice-Directors, a Secretary General and several members.
2. Conducts systematic research on the cultural relics of Confucius' birthplace.
3. Provides in a systematic way research results and research material on Confucius' birthplace to domestic and foreign scholarly circles.
4. The general regulations of the Committee for the Research of Cultural Relics of Confucius' Birthplace are stipulated separately.

Article 15. As this Constitution is not complete, it can be revised and altered by the Board of Directors on the petition of at least ten members of the Foundation.

APPENDIX Means of Rewarding Donators to the Confucius Foundation

1. Anyone donating 100 yuan Renminbi (RMB) or more (or groups donating 1,000 yuan or more) is presented with a commemorative item.
2. Anyone donating 10,000 yuan RMB or more will have their name engraved as a memento on a tablet at the Confucius Research Centre in Qufu and receive a commemorative handicraft.
3. Anyone donating 100,000 yuan RMB or more will have an individual tablet erected to them at the Confucius Research Centre in Qufu as a memento.
4. Anyone donating 1,000,000 yuan RMB or more will get both an individual tablet and a pavilion erected in their honour at the Confucius Research Centre in Qufu as a memento.
5. Anyone donating 10,000,000 yuan RMB or more will have a building named after them as well as an individual tablet erected at the Confucius Research Centre in Qufu as a memento.
6. Persons who have made special contributions to the establishment of the Confucius Research Centre in Qufu, or foreign nationals deemed worthy of it, can be granted the title of Honorary Citizen of Qufu.
7. Those who have donated literature, cultural relics and any kind of research material shall, in accordance with its value, be rewarded along the lines described above.

October 22, 1985.

GENERAL REGULATIONS OF THE ACADEMIC COMMITTEE OF THE CONFUCIUS FOUNDATION

1. GENERAL RULES

The Academic Committee of the Confucius Foundation of China is in charge of organizing activities and leading scientific research, assessing academic degrees and evaluating the results of scientific research. These activities must be carried in accordance with the basic leading principles of the scientific world view and methodology, namely Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought. In other words, one must discard the fake and adopt the true. When restoring and demonstrating the original shape of Confucius, the Confucian school of thought and China's traditional culture and thought, one must also achieve the aim of how to make »the past serve the present« through the method of seeking truth from the facts.

2. THE FORM OF THE ORGANIZATION

- (1) To lead its work, the Academic Committee elects a Leading Committee Member (who at the same time is both the Director of the Confucius Foundation and Vice-Director of Academic Research) and three Deputy Leading Committee Members.
- (2) The Academic Committee elects a Secretary-General to assist the Leading and Deputy Leading Committee Members in carrying out daily routine work.

(3) The Academic Committee invites several Advisers (from among well-known scholars responsible for research on Confucius, the Confucian school of thought and China's traditional culture and thought) to take care of the planning and counseling of the committee's scientific work.

(4) The Academic Committee elects a few Members (mainly from among those middle-aged and junior researchers who have shown scholarly achievement) to act as a collective leading body of the committee's scientific work.

(5) The Academic Committee is based on an appointment system: Deputy Leading Committee Members, Secretary-General, Advisers, and Members are recommended for appointment and issued letters of appointment by the Honorary Chairman and Chairman of the Confucius Foundation.

3. RANGE OF DUTIES

The leadership of the research organization concerned with Confucius, the Confucian school of thought and China's traditional culture and thought, as well as the evaluation of research results, awards, and the assessment of academic degrees all belong to the range of the duties of the Academic Committee in the Confucius Foundation. In addition, the publishing organization and the periodicals of the Confucius Foundation are all under the leadership of the Academic Committee. In concrete terms, its work consists of the following:

(1) To set up long-term programmes and concrete plans for research on Confucius, the Confucian school of thought and China's traditional culture and thought.

(2) To supervise step by step the establishment of the Confucius Research Centre, and to set up under its auspices a) an Academy of Confucius (alternative name the Nishan Academy) to engage in high-level research work and to confer doctoral degrees, b) a library, c) a hall of ancient music, d) dormitories, source material centres, etc. for high-level domestic and foreign scholars.

(3) The Academic Committee encourages creative, explorative research on Confucius, the Confucian school of thought and China's traditional culture and thought. At regular intervals it plans and announces themes for research and asks members and non-members for suggestions. The Academic Committee receives their suggestions and then decides whether a theme is to be accepted or not. Research themes can be presented by scholars on their own initiative to the Academic Committee. All approved themes are then included in the Academic Committee's plan for research topics.

(4) The Academic Committee establishes a system of awards known as Awards for Author, meant for scholars (especially middle-aged and young researchers) undertaking research themes. On application, a successful candidate will receive an appropriate research grant. After the completion of the piece of research, the Academic Committee will examine and evaluate it, and, if it reaches the standard required will arrange for it to be published, and, in the case of exceptionally high quality will grant the author one of its Awards for Author or honorary degrees.

(5) The Academic Committee is responsible for organizing the domestic and international academic exchange activities of the Confucius Foundation of China, including academic symposia on Confucius, the Confucian school of thought and China's traditional culture and thought.

4. THE FORMS OF ACTIVITY

Besides having a regular meeting once a year, the Academic Committee can under special circumstances convene for extraordinary sessions. The Leading Committee Members are along with Deputy Leading Committee Members and the Secretary-General responsible for the functions of the Committee in ordinary times.

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