

Balanced Discourses? China's Ancient and Modern Confucian Heritage

Reflected in Historical and Contemporary

Chinese Foreign Economic Policies

David A. Jones, Hanzhen Liu
(University of Warsaw, Warsaw, PL 02653, Poland)

Abstract: What is called “Confucianism” in its myriad of combinations and permutations has dominated China’s foreign economic policies across 2,500 years. It is enigmatic, has changed across time, gained then lost then regained popularity, and has left its hallmarks upon Chinese foreign economic policies from the Han to the Qing Dynasties and into the 20th and 21st centuries throughout the Ming Guo (Sun Yishen), Kuomintang (Jiang Jieshi), Gongchantang [Mao Zedong], and Gaige Kaifang [Deng Xiaoping] periods. Some Original Confucian principles were spread during the 12-year trip of 100 diplomats under Zhang Qian (138-126 B.C.E.) from Kyoto, Japan to Venice, Italy across Central Asia and Eastern Europe during the Han Dynasty. Neo-Confucian principles were expanded during the seven vast naval explorations of the Chinese Muslim admiral Zhang He (1405-1433) during the Ming Dynasty. When Neo-Confucian behavior was criticized for amounting to Western appeasement in the aftermath of the Treaty of Versailles that gave Chinese territory to Japan in 1919, it made a robust return as “New Confucianism” in the 1920s and transformed into what is called “Contemporary New Confucianism” since the late 1950s, leaving its footprint on contemporary Chinese domestic and international management culture and management structure as “balanced discourses”, and particularly in 21st century China’s public administration where it is most visible in China’s current foreign economic policies.

Key words: China; Confucianism; Neo-Confucianism; New Confucianism; foreign policy; balanced discourses

JEL codes: B1, B2, B3, F5

1. Introduction

At the forefront of an emerging debate early in the 21st century is what some have called “the inception of Chinese theories of international relations” as they purportedly link together “ancient Chinese thought” with “modern Chinese power”, two concepts that form the title of a recent book published by Professor Yan Xuetong of Tsinghua University in Beijing (Yan, 2011). This link between ancient Chinese thought and modern Chinese

David A. Jones, Ph.D., D.Jur., M.B.A., Professor of International Law, International Management, Foreign Policy, Institute of The Americas and Europe and Institute of International Relations, University of Warsaw; research areas: international law and management, comparative American and Euro-Asian foreign economic policies, global healthcare. E-mail: david.jones@uw.edu.pl.

Hanzhen Liu, M.B.A., Ph.D., Fifth Year Doctoral Student and Erasmus Mundus Exchange Scholar from the People’s Republic of China at the Institute of International Relations, Faculty of Journalism and Political Science, University of Warsaw; research areas: international management, Chinese domestic and foreign economic policies. E-mail: janeliuphd@gmail.com.

power has been categorized as the “Tsinghua Approach” (Zhang, 2012), perhaps unfairly, because of its author’s professorship at Tsinghua University in Beijing. A persistent critic of Yan, who is editor-in-chief of the Chinese Journal of International Politics, and of the “Tsinghua Approach” is Professor Qin Yaqing of China Foreign Affairs University, who has inquired why there is no Chinese theory of international relations (Qin, 2007), thereby presuming that none exists. This debate casts implications for the development of what some do call a “Chinese School” of international relations and the significance, if any, that such a Chinese school might exert, or even be exerting, on what are termed “the policy problems of China’s rise” during the 21st century (Zhang, 2012, p. 73).

This article extends beyond theory or the relationship between theory and practice and into China’s historical and current foreign economic policies. Yet, this theoretical base with its debate over a “Chinese School” of international relations obviates the significance of this topic, as well as its limitation. Some contemporary international relations critics attempt to apply one or more “levels of analysis” to ancient Chinese thinkers: Mo Tse and Lao Tse on the “system level”, Guan Tse and Hanfei Tse on the “state level”, and Kong Tse (Confucius), Mencius, and Xun Tse on the “individual level”. As Zhang points out, “[m]ost classical thinkers in the East as well as in the West made no firm distinctions between international and domestic politics, or among system, state, and individual levels” (Zhang, 2012, p. 84). Here, we will presume there are four traditional levels of analysis used routinely in the literature of international relations: System, State, Agency, and Individual (Rourke, 2008, pp. 63-100), although to be sure the Agency Level is used less frequently than the other three levels, and some scholars have labeled the three main levels “Upper”, “Middle”, and “Lower” levels of analysis (Romanova, 2011, pp. 1-16). This is not to concede that there are only four levels of analysis. Kong Tse, his successors and especially the Neo-Confucian thinkers were not really at the individual level of analysis at all, as Professor Yan appears to argue, but were at the state level more than anywhere else along the continuum of traditional levels of analysis in international relations, although to be sure the Confucian state of Lu was small compared to current provinces of China or to most current European Union member states. As Zhang has noticed, levels of analysis in international relations are “modern” and were unheard of in ancient (“classical”) times (Zhang, 2012, p. 84), largely being the product of a 1961 article by J. David Singer (Singer, 1961). The authors of the within article argue that two additional levels of analysis are required to fully describe Confucian thought: the “Family Level” pertains best to Kong Tse himself, and the “Business Level” or “Company Level” pertains best to the Neo-Confucians, New Confucians, and Contemporary New Confucians.

The 21st century has ushered in an increase in global concern for organizational research conducted from the Chinese perspective in sharp contrast to the traditionally purely Western viewpoint (Li & Tsui, 2002). This reinforces the argument that organizational culture together with organizational structure, leadership, and the overall management of Chinese enterprises and policies are different in China from the West because the cultural and philosophical history of China differ from Anglo-American history, having been molded by a collective rather than an individualistic orientation, governed by a paternalistic approach and the acceptance of hierarchy in which social relations reign supreme (Pun, Chin & Lau, 2000). Some Western scholars have identified particular elements of culture and philosophy in Chinese styles of leadership and management: “(a) the importance of having leadership models, watching and listening to other people; (b) the need for reflection and self-judgment; (c) the need for balancing stability and rejuvenation; (d) the ambivalent value between useful Western experiences and irrelevant Western know-how; (e) the awareness of social positions and time dimensions; and (f) the importance of the whole community”, but have conceded this impression could be clouded because the researchers themselves are Western (Alvez, Manz & Butterfield, 2005, p. 18).

The authors herein are Western and Asian,¹ having worked together in Asia and Europe over the first 12 years of the 21st century. The present research will explore an example of China's cultural and philosophical history: Neo-Confucianism as an approach to the manner in which modern Chinese conduct domestic and international public and private sector activities generally, but will focus primarily on China's foreign economic policy including such important factors as international trade with the rest of the world and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in strategic geographical locations. It appears also to apply to Chinese acquisition of Western companies such as Sinopec's effort to purchase a stake in Devon Energy Corporation, an Oklahoma oil refinery, for USD 2.2 Billion in 2012. Chinese Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI), a topic much less frequently explored in the literature than FDI, is considered to be very important to expansion of Chinese trade with the West (CFR, 2012). Before exploring Neo-Confucianism, however, it is necessary to set a foundation with Confucianism itself, which may be termed "Original Confucianism". Before even doing that, it will be helpful to identify a few points in the Pre-Confucian period, the first 500 years of the Zhou Dynasty, upon which Confucius appears to have drawn in formulating what have come to be known as his original Confucian principles.

2. The Duke of Zhou

The Zhou Dynasty (1046-221 B.C.E.) lasted 790 years, longer than any other Chinese dynasty. Its original monarch, King Wu, died in 1042 and his throne passed to his four year old son, whose precarious inheritance was safeguarded from other rival uncles by his uncle, Duke Wen of Zhou (Loewe & Shaughnessy, 1999, p. 311), historiographically portrayed as being a man of extraordinary ethical standards (Keay, 2011). The Duke of Zhou is credited as having authored the classic work, *I Ching* (*Zhou Yi*, or *Book of Changes*), and also the *Book of Songs* (*Shijing*, or *Book of Poetry*), China's oldest collection of poetry (Hinton, 2008), plus the *Book of Etiquette and Rites*, known as *The Rites of Zhou*, that is divided into six chapters: The Offices of Heaven, a treatise on governance or state leadership; The Offices of Earth, a guide to education; The Offices of Spring, a biblical testament of social and religious foundation and morality; The Offices of Summer, a mandate for the institutions of the armed services; The Offices of Autumn, a bill of civil rights; and The Offices of Winter, an almanac on agriculture, population, territorial expansion and, within its subchapter known as the Record of Trades, a manual that has served as the core of Chinese architecture, technology, and city planning ever since (Chin, 2007).

The Rites of Zhou are central to much of original Confucian thought, and appear to have influenced Kong Tse (551-479 B.C.E.), known as Confucius in Latin, who lived about five centuries after the Duke of Zhou. *The Rites of Zhou* are core also to the ministry system of China that began in the Qin dynasty (221-207 B.C.E.) when Qin Shi, credited as having been China's first emperor who ruled as Qin Shi Huangdi, conquered the warring states and during his short 14 year reign redefined China from many kingdoms into one empire. Subsequently, the Rites of Zhou became transformed as The Offices of Zhou during the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.E.-220 A.D.), and from them emerged the six ministries of the Chinese civil service system: the Ministries of Personnel, Households, Rites, Military, Justice, and Public Works. It should be pointed out that the Ministry of Rites supervised tribute paid by neighboring countries to the Chinese emperor, and administered examinations for the civil service system, a key component of Confucian standards.

¹ The first author is an American male who has studied China from a European perspective since 2000, having made 14 research visits to China. The second author is a Chinese woman who has studied Europe from a Chinese perspective, living mainly in Europe since 2001, except for accompanying the other author on each of his research trips to China, sometimes functioning as his interpreter as she is fluent in Chinese and English.

3. The Age of Confucius

Kong Tse (Master Kong), known to the West in Latin as Confucius, was born Kong Qiu and given the courtesy name Zhongni. He lived at the end of the third quarter of the Zhou dynasty, having been born 495 years after it was founded, and died 223 years before it fell. It is impossible to pinpoint exactly when Confucius began to publicly proclaim the basic elements of his ethics. We know that he married at age 19 and that his first child, a son, was born the next year, and so we can surmise that Confucius had matured by the age of 20 and required work to support his growing family. Most historiography reports that Kong earned his living as an itinerant advisor and teacher, frequently to government officials at different levels, particularly in the state of Lu where he was born and lived. Also, we know that he was appointed governor of a town in 501 B.C., at age 50, in part at least because of his reputation as an ethicist. Consequently, it is possible to project that Confucius' early period as a teacher extended from 531-501 B.C., or during the 30 year period of time when Kong Tse was between 20 and 50 years old (Chin, 2007). In contrast, Kong Tse held office as minister of justice of the state of Lu from 500-495 B.C.E., in his early fifties, after which he went into exile for 12 years following a *coup d'état* in which he ended up on the losing side, returning home in his late sixties (Dubbs, 1946). According to Chinese Spring and Autumn Period contemporary historical work written by Zhu Zhuan, Confucius returned home to Lu and founded his lyceum with 60 to 70 students at age 68, which means that much and probably most of what we know about his thoughts today came from the last four years of his life when Kong Tse was 68-72 years old (Yang, 1990).

No manuscript is known to exist that is documented to have been written by Kong Tse himself, although some historiographers have suggested he did author written publications that were lost or destroyed during political upheaval times (Creel, 1949). What we think we know of Confucius comes from accounts written by his students, much as what we think we know of Socrates comes from his student, Plato. To our present knowledge, Confucius argued that two points are essential to his requirements for an ethical life: being a true gentleman, and engaging in proper conduct. To Confucius, being a true gentleman meant possessing five virtues: integrity, righteousness, loyalty, altruism, and goodness. Proper conduct meant respecting relationships, four of which are hierarchical: master and servant, father and son, husband and wife, elder siblings and younger siblings. The fifth was friendship, akin to more modern day *guanxi*. Hierarchy is based on a need to respect those who are older and those who are higher in social rank, and this is the central element of Confucian ethics (Van Norden, 2001).

Original Confucianism is a system of ethics in governance aiming at a balance between the upper or ruling classes and the middle classes, but with the four upper classes exercising almost all control over government and policies. Above everything else, Kong Tse devoted his life to the fulfillment of two basic objectives. He wanted to provide legitimate rulers with the wisdom to rule wisely and effectively, and he desired to improve literacy by enabling common people born into families below the highest four noble classes to be able to read and write. Kong Tse was born into the fourth and lowest noble class, known as shi (士), which meant that his most important asset was literacy. Unlike the higher three classes, he lacked wealth and power, but the privilege to read and therefore to study and learn was his birthright, and this was an enormously precious privilege.

Because of his father's bottom level aristocratic social class and position as military officer in the state of Lu, Confucius enjoyed some access to the powerful. He could get himself in the door to the halls of power, so to speak. His burden was to make the powerful rulers listen to what he had to say. Many times they did not, sometimes they listened. This happened only rarely in Kong Tse's own lifetime, but more often during the lifetime of his most famous early successor, Meng Ke (372-289 B.C.E.), referred to more frequently as "Mencius" or as the "second

sage” duke of Zou, the title inscribed on the temple at Zoucheng, his home. Meng Ke was born 107 years after Kong Tse died. Similar to Kong Tse, Meng Ke was an itinerant philosopher who is reported to have travelled across China over more than 40 years to give advice to whomever he found who would listen. Between 319 and 312 B.C.E., however, during much of his fifties, Meng Ke lectured at the famous Jixia Academy (Academy at the Gate of Chi), China’s most famous institution of higher learning during the Warring States Period, located at Linzi, state of Qi, inside modern Shandong Province, not far from Confucius’ home at Qufu.

Although Kong Tse himself has been faulted for directing too much praise to the ruling classes as if their legitimacy rested exclusively upon inheritance, Meng Ke was keen to impose a qualitative necessity, even appearing to condone insurrection and regime change when rulers failed to meet the legitimate expectations of their subjects, observing that benevolence is essential to good stewardship in governance (Chan, 1969, p. 62). From him is derived the assumption that, although an individual subject owes a duty of loyalty and respect to a sovereign, the collective body public has the same right to expect the same loyalty and respect from their sovereign. Confucius drew distinctions between “gentlemen” and “pettymen” that in reality separated Confucius’ own class (alongside classes above his) from those below him.

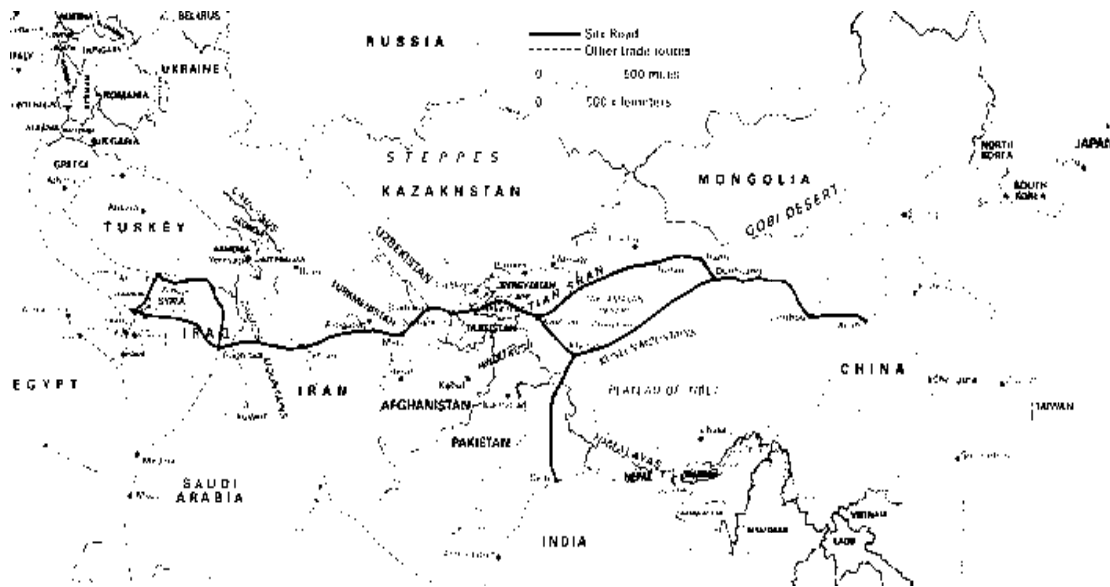
Has what became known as “Neo-Confucianism” changed significantly from Kong Tse’s original thoughts? It has multiple meanings, but in this paper it is a term given to philosophical thought process and way of life that draws upon the teachings of Kong Tse (Confucius) himself, but expands beyond what Confucius had said and includes an assortment of refinements added by a subsequent cadre of Kong Tse disciples some of whom lived at the same time as Master Kong and studied together with each other under his guidance, and others of whom followed generations, centuries, even millennia afterwards sequentially. What is important is that their approach to a way of life, particularly in government and trade, was similar, and it is that approach that concerns us the most here: it is hierarchical and it demands obedience to elders and to other superiors, in return for which it expects that officials will possess and reflect high character and display balance in their official and personal approaches to those they supervise, to suppliers and customers in business relations, and to sister states in international relations.

4. Balanced Discourses: Confucianism’s Rise and Fall

As mentioned, Kong Tse lived at a period of time just before the Zhou dynasty entered decline, and died 223 years before the Zhou dynasty fell. The period known as the Spring and Autumn Period in Chinese history was the period in which Kong Tse lived, but within four years of his death the period of the seven “Warring States” or “Zhanguo” began in 475 B.C.E. that was to last another 254 years until 221 B.C.E. when Qin Shi, leader of the state of Qin, conquered the other warring states and formed the Qin dynasty. Although considered to be China’s first imperial dynasty, the Qin dynasty lasted for only 14 years (221 B.C.E.-207 B.C.E.) and was succeeded by the Han dynasty (206 b.C.E.-220 A.D.). Many changes took place during the Han dynasty, including the beginning of international relations between China and its neighbors, especially those beyond its Western border in the area known today as Chinese Xinjiang. The most pronounced changes occurred during the 54 year reign of Han Wudi (141-87 B.C.E.), the seventh Han emperor who came to the throne at age 15. Widely expanding China’s territorial control, Wudi was China’s longest-reigning emperor until that record was surpassed in 1716 by Kangxi.² This

² His Late Imperial Majesty, Kangxi, the Qing Emperor (1654-1722), reigned over China for 60 years, 1662-1722, a record that was never broken, only equaled by his grandson, H.L.I.M. Emperor Qianlong (1711-1799; reigned 1735-1795), who would have reigned 64 years except that he abdicated when he equaled his grandfather’s record of 60 years on the Throne of China, to keep a promise he had made to himself on the day he ascended to the Throne of China 60 years earlier, out of filial piety, itself a main element of Confucian philosophy.

was an era of pronounced nationalism in China, when the practice of neighboring states paying financial tribute to the Chinese Emperor was inaugurated into full swing. It was during this era that what we call Neo-Confucianism today (the term was used first during the Ming dynastic period 1,600 years later) emerged for the first time in principle in foreign economic policies of China. Here is evident a close relationship between the state and commerce, particularly international trade across Asia and into the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC) as we know them today.



Map 1 The Silk Road, Han Dynasty, Extending from Kyoto, Japan to Venice, Italy

Source: Millard, Megan. "The Han Dynasty." Map courtesy "Creative Commons" from [davidehetre](http://handynastybymeganm.weebly.com/silk-road.html)

Emperor Wudi sent Zhang Qian (Chang Chien, 200-114 B.C.E.) from China to Central Europe across Central Asia on a 12 year journey from 138 to 126 B.C.E., with 100 men, directing that explorer to open trade missions with many foreign countries along the way. This diplomatic mission was of mixed success, but Zhang is credited with opening what came to be called the "Silk Road", and paved the way for China's conquest of its present Northwest autonomous district, Xinjiang (Wood, 2004). In reality, Wudi learned from what information Zhang brought back some details of how foreign countries were ruled, an important element of knowledge to an enlightened Chinese emperor who was a confirmed Confucian (Hobson, 2004). The popularity of Confucius soared during the Han dynastic period, evidenced by the conferral of his first honorary title in the year 1 A.D., posthumously, upon which he was referred to as "Laudably Declarable Lord Ni" (褒成宣尼公). The word "Confucius" has been attributed to one of the founders of the Jesuit Mission to China, Fr. Matteo Ricci, S.J. (1552-1610), who is believed to have Latinized the honorary title "*K'ung Fu-tzu*" given to Kong Tse once he was declared to be the "Extremely Sage Departed Teacher" (至聖先師) in 1530 (Phan, 2012).

The emperor Han Wudi revived original Confucianism after it had slipped into a dormant period, and became influenced heavily by his prime minister, Dong Zhongshu (179-104 B.C.E.), who expelled all non-Confucian officials from government service. One could contend as some have done that "Neo-Confucianism" began under Han Wudi, although Neo-Confucianism really took root in China much later during the Soong dynasty (960-1279 A.D.), to be discussed below. What Dong Zhongshu did was to merge original Confucian ethical principles with

principles of the Yinyang. The Confucian distinction between heaven (*Tian*) and earth (*Ren*) was revisited, such as in the sense that natural disasters including droughts and floods became seen as heavenly punishment for worldly faults of the emperor, in contrast to plentiful harvests that were viewed as heavenly rewards for the emperor's good behavior. Darkness (*Yin*) or matters considered to be negative or feminine came to be perceived as being balanced by light (*Yang*) or righteousness symbolized by masculinity (Arbuckle, 1995). Dong Zhongshu turned his attention back to the *Chunqiu* or "Spring and Autumn Annals", thought to have been edited by Kong Tse, but provided his own reinterpretation of its contents. Dong suggested that natural spectacles such as solar and lunar eclipses, "showers" of star light, as well as droughts, floods, earthquakes and landslides were heavenly omen that were intended to warn the emperor of the future perils to be encountered should the emperor or his government fail to abide strictly by Confucian ethical standards. In a sense, Dong's strict interpretation of the *Chunqiu* reflected the emergence of what we might call a fundamental Confucianism, a dogmatic ethical philosophy the Chinese have felt compelled by superstition to follow across the past 2,000 years.

The seven scholars of the Jian'an Period (建安七子), 196-220 C.E., included Xu Gan (177-217 C.E.), author of the *Zhonglun* or *Balanced Discourses*, a work in which Xu argued that Confucian principles of balance are applicable to social and political equilibrium (Xu, Deng & Makeham, 2003). The authors of the within paper contend that this actually formed what should be called a Chinese school of international relations 1,800 years ago, that has lingered on ever since.

5. Challenges of Foreign Religions

The Han dynasty attracted foreign religion to China, primarily in the form of Indian Buddhism. One reason for this was China's growing internationalism, marked by the exchange of diplomatic envoys with neighboring states. This trend continued and expanded during the Three Kingdom period of Six Dynasties (220-280 A.D.) that heralded the decline of the Han dynasty. When the Han dynasty fell, it was succeeded by the two Jin dynasties (265-420), one in the West (Xi Jin) and one in the East (Dong Jin), that attracted and encouraged the spread of Indian Buddhism. In 401, the Jin emperor invited Kumarajiva (334-413), a Kuchean Buddhist monk who was born in Kashmir to Chang'an where, together with 3,000 scholars, he translated 74 sutras. A new class of civil servant, known as the scholar bureaucrats, emerged across Southern China during this time. They were accompanied by the rise of another new class in China, nearly 24,000 Buddhist monks and nuns who inhabited 1,768 Buddhist temples. The Jin dynasty was followed by the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420-589), uneventful in themselves other than that during this 169 year time period Mahāyāna Buddhism became extremely popular across China. The consequences of the spread of this foreign religion included uprisings, such as the rebellion of the followers of Buddhist leader Gai Wu that led to the proscription of Buddhism entirely within Northern China by Emperor Tai Wu on advice of his prime minister Cui Hao in 452. The royals of China began to reconsider the importance of Confucian ethics as a safeguard to their rule. Yet, Buddhism continued to rise.

The Sui dynasty (581-618) reunified most of China, although parts of the Northern and Southern dynasties survived until 589. The major accomplishment of the Sui dynasty was the construction of the Beijing to Hangzhou Grand Canal, the largest artificial waterway in the world, but the Equal Field system of land distribution when implemented reduced the gap between the rich and the poor. The unification force the Sui dynasty used successfully was Buddhism. It gained enormous popularity under Sui rule. As with many dynasties, the Sui turned into a royal family feud. Then on 02 July 626, Li Shimin killed two of his elder brothers in the Xuanwu Gate

Incident, and forced his father, the first Tang Emperor Gaozu (born Li Yuan), to abdicate in his favor, whereupon he became the Tang Emperor Taizong. In ascending to power, Taizong violated principles of Confucian ethics, and he did so with the help of Buddhist monks from the Shaolin Temple near Luoyang, Henan, who saved his life. As emperor, Taizong rewarded Buddhism by constructing many temples. The state religion of China during the Tang dynasty was Buddhism. Yet, it was foreign.

An early form of Neo-Confucianism appeared during the Tang dynastic period in scholarly writings of Han Yu (Tuizhi, 768-824) and Li Ao (Xizhi, 772-841). What they focused on was imperial Chinese political philosophy, largely because both were civil servants who held public office, Han Yu as military governor of Bianzhou and Xuzhou (although exiled several times), Li Ao as governor of DongShanNan circuit, a rather vast territory that encompasses much of modern day Henan and Hubei. In some ways, Han Yu and Li Ao were really revisionist writers on Original Confucianism more than actually Neo-Confucianists themselves, but historiographically they are viewed as being early Neo-Confucianist scholars. Han Yu is considered to have been the foremost writer of prose in the Tang dynastic period, and the second greatest in all of Chinese history, after Han historian Sima Qian (Shiji, 145-86 B.C.E.), author of the Records of the Grand Historian of China (Watson, 1993).

6. Neo-Confucianism as a Nationalistic Reaction

Neo-Confucianism rose again during the Ming dynastic period, and kept rising thereafter, primarily as a nationalistic reaction among the Chinese people to the insecurity they felt they faced with the rise of foreign religions, primarily Buddhism from India. This meteoric rise of foreign religious fervor was bound to create a backlash, and it did so in the form of what came to be known as Neo-Confucianism, the “new” philosophical thought peculiar to the Song dynasty (979-1279), a reaction towards the worries of “foreign” religion such as Indian Buddhism that many Chinese felt had played a much too important role in the governmental and mercantile affairs of the Tang dynasty. De Bary and Bloom have defined it as follows:

“Neo-Confucianism” is a general term used to refer to the renaissance of Confucianism during the Song dynasty following a long period in which Buddhism and Daoism had dominated the philosophical world of the Chinese and also to the various philosophical schools of thought that developed as a result of that renaissance. Neo-Confucianism had its roots in the late Tang, came to maturity in the Northern and Southern Song periods, and continued to develop in the Yuan, Ming, and Qing periods. As a whole, Neo-Confucianism can best be understood as an intellectual reaction to the challenges of Buddhist and Daoist philosophy in which avowedly Confucian scholars incorporated Buddhist and Daoist concepts in order to produce a more sophisticated new Confucian metaphysics (DeBary & Bloom, 1999, pp. 704-705).

By putting indigenous religions such as Taoism together with Confucius philosophy, the Chinese of the Soong dynastic period (960-1279) as Confucian revisionists sought to construct China's own identity in governance, moral ethics, and trade. Even since, Neo-Confucianism has impacted China across political, cultural, socio-economic, and regulatory spheres by deeply impacting the behavior of Chinese in global business.

The Soong dynasty is divided into two parts by time and space. The first part is the Northern Soong dynasty (960-1127), with its capital at Bianjing (modern Kaifeng) and control over most of inner China, was defeated by the Second Jin dynasty. This led to formation of the second part, the Southern Soong dynasty (1127-1279), with its capital at Lin'an (modern Hangzhou) that survived until overrun by the Mongols under Kublai Khan who formed China's first foreign occupation that became known as the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368). The Northern Soong dynasty reached a population of 50 million persons, the Southern Soong 100 million. The “multiplication table” that explains the growth of the United States across the 17th and 18th centuries explains the growth of

China between the 10th and 14th centuries when China's population doubled then doubled again then doubled again after that. The explanation for this is at least twofold: introduction of early-ripening rice into China from trade with Southeast Asia and huge food surpluses made possible from improved agricultural technology. This burgeoning population required China's central government to delegate administrative responsibilities to local scholars and gentry. In turn, such transfer of authority needed to be accompanied with a set of firm standards, clearly derived from the reinstitution of Confucian ethics, hierarchical as they were. Very quietly, there began to occur the transfer of governmental power from an aristocratic elite who had inherited status at birth to a bureaucratic elite whose legitimacy to govern stemmed from intellectual performance as measured by scores from civil service examinations. Thus began Neo-Confucianism, or the return to principles of governance that Kong Tse had established 1,500 years earlier.

Li Theory is prominent in the Neo-Confucianism of the Soong dynastic period, championed by five scholars from the Northern Soong period: Zhou Dunyi (Chou Tun-I, 1017-1073), Fan Zhongyan (989-1052), Sima Guang (1019-1086), and the Cheng brothers, Cheng Hao (Ch'eng Hao, 1032-1085) and Cheng Yi (Ch'eng Yi, 1033-1108), founders of the Cheng Zhu school of Neo-Confucianism. They were followed by Zhu Xi (1130-1200) in the Southern Soong period, along with Liu Jiuyuan (Liu Chiu-Yuan, 1139-1193), also known as Master Xiangshen, founder of the Idealist school of Neo-Confucianism (Huang, 1999).

Zhou Dunyi explained the YinYang as the interface of heaven and earth, heaven being masculinity (Tian, Ch'ien) and earth being femininity (K'un) from which are derived the five agents or elements: Earth, Fire, Wood, Metal, and Water. What this explains is natural balance, or harmony with nature, from which emerge in turn the five moral principles: Humanity (*Jen*), Righteousness, Propriety, Wisdom, and Faithfulness (Chan, 1969, pp. 460-480). Cheng Hao explained that Righteousness, Propriety, Wisdom, and Faithfulness all are expressions of *Jen*, or Humanity, which in effect is the product of a regression toward the mean. Cheng Yi explained that *Jen* may be defined in one word: impartiality, but that impartiality is a principle of *Jen* rather than being *Jen* itself, so that *Jen* is both altruism and love, altruism being an application of *Jen*, love being its function (Ibid., pp. 544-571). Fan Zhongyan is remembered for his statement: "One should be the first to bear hardships and the last to enjoy comforts," a core principle of Chinese government service ever since that Fan Zhongyan deemed essential to one's reaching "*Tian Xia*" (the Universal). Sima Guang authored the *Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance*, in which he recalled detailed conversations former emperors such as Taizong had enjoyed with their staffs including the Confucian principle that even rulers must acknowledge their shortcomings and accept criticism (Guang, 1999, p. 656).

Zhu Xi is recalled as a great synthesizer of Buddhism into Confucianism by combining the principle of Li (理), or rational principle of nature, with Qi (氣), or material force, to construct the interface of nature and matter with Li and Qi together, known as Taiji or "diagram of the Supreme Ultimate" (Watts, 1971, p. 32). The concept of Li in Neo-Confucianism is similar to Rationalism as a principle of Western philosophy, but Zhu Xi is considered also to have been a naturalist, having drawn this component of his philosophy from Taoism. Zhu Xi interfaced the "Four Books" with the requirements of both education and family ritual and as the author of the book, Preface to the Great Learning by Chapter and Phrase (Zhu, 1999, pp. 722-725) and The Nature as Principle, central to the themes of "Li Theory" or *Lixue* form of Neo-Confucianism known also as the Cheng-Zhu school, named after Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi.

The Ming dynastic period was exceptionally interested in foreign trade, as had been the Han dynastic period earlier. Just as Han Emperor Wudi had dispatched the diplomatic explorer Zhang Qian across Central Asia 1,600 years earlier to the area nowadays occupied by the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC), the Ming

Emperor Zhu Di, ruling as Yongle (1360-1424; reigned 1402-1424) sent the eunuch admiral Zhang He (1371-1433) to some of the same ports of call, and many new ones, this time by sea. It is by no means a coincidence that both Wudi and Yongle were fascinated by some elements of Confucianism, such as its central source of ruler legitimacy, primogeniture. Yongle was the fourth son born to the founder of the Ming Dynasty, and he became its third emperor upon having his nephew killed. Emperor Yongle blended Neo-Confucianism with Taoism, although ironically in some respects, in that Zhang He was a Muslim, and Emperor Yongle was killed in battle against the Mongols.

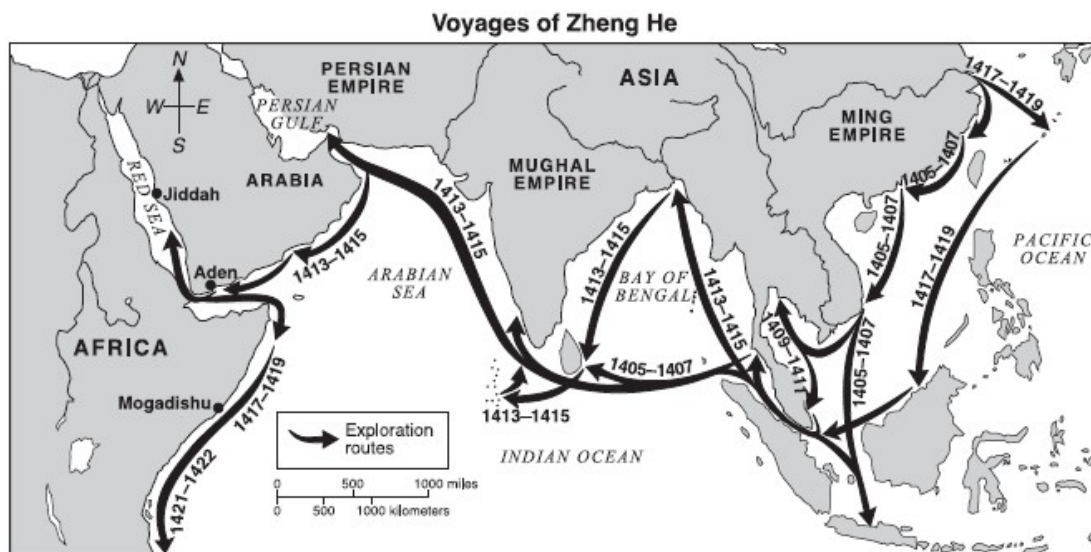
One perspective in historiography suggests that Yongle sent Zhang He to many territories, especially to Southeast Asia, because the body of his nephew, Emperor Jianwen (1377-1402; reigned 1398-1402) and predecessor never was found after the *coup d'état* against the legitimate successor to the Yongwen Emperor that brought Yongle to power. This viewpoint holds that Yongle was terrified that, if alive, Jianwen would return to depose him, and for this reason among others Yongle sent Zhang He to capture or kill Jianwen wherever he could be located, even if that were in the far corners of the Chinese world. This led to exploration. It was a time of new beginning for China, because the Emperor Hongwu (Ming Taizu, 1328-1398; reigned 1368-1398) had led the uprising as Zhu Yuanzhang that had driven the occupying Mongols away from China and caused the Yuan Dynasty of invaders to collapse (Brook, 1998).

A century after the reign of Yongle, Neo-Confucianism matured and divided into two major schools of thought: the dominant school became that of Cheng-Zhu, *Lixue*, focusing on learning rational principles; the second school became that of Liu Jiuyuan, *Xinsue*, applying Neo-Confucianism's principles to one's own "heart and mind" rather than merely to external objects. This became the Liu-Wang school of Neo-Confucianism during the Ming dynastic period when Master Xiangshen's work was expanded upon two centuries afterwards with the contribution of Wang Yangming (Wang Shouren, 1472-1529), called Wencheng. Sometimes the Liu-Wang school of idealist Neo-Confucianism is called "Xin Theory" or *Xinxue*.

The Cheng Zhu school's formulation seemed to be obscured by large populations. However he pushes the his theory into favoring Confucian's ethics of Three Guidance and Five Constant Virtues 三纲五常, which he considered to be the gentlemen, similar to German philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche's "*uber menchen*" who were equipped with a good virtue and benevolence in achieving what was undertaken, and the petty men, similar to Nietzsche's "*unter menchen*" who just thought about themselves in being bean counters to enrich and gratify themselves and their family. Coincidentally, Zhu Xi has sorted people in humanity between natural destiny and temperament, the former being kind, obedient, purified and understanding, traits that possibly could lead them to sage status, and the latter who were opposed in mixing with Qi, which caused them to reject deferred gratification in favor of submitting to momentary desire. Zhu Xi believed that desire was that origin of evil in all, so that he asserted people must extinguish all the desirable and uphold the ideal Tian Li.

The Tao restrict people's hearts in order to follow upon the feudal code of honor of three guidances and five constant virtues. In updating Confucius' doctrine of virtue, Zhu Xi claimed to the people "remove the human desires and grasp the Tian Li" (Zhu, 1986, p. 1004). Perhaps this came to be a model for Nietzsche's "Zarathustra" centuries afterwards (Nietzsche, 1883), as such works have overlapping themes clearly intended to distinguish the good from what is evil, and in which Zhu Xi and afterwards Wang Yangming accurately forecasted the conflicts that witnessed resolution with the 17th century Peace of Westphalia (1648) in the West and in the East with the reign of the Emperor Kang Xi (1662-1722), just as Nietzsche accurately forecasted the world wars of the 20th century that would end in 1945 with the birth of a new internationalism from Asia to Europe and beyond.

Eventually, as Neo-Confucianism spread across Asia with Chinese naval expansion during the 16th century, *Lixue* ("Learning of the Cosmic Principle") and *Xinxue* ("Learning of the Heart and Mind") combined with Taoism to form *Taoxue* ("Learning of 'The Way'"), and this is the kind of Neo-Confucianism that China exported abroad, North to Japan and Korea, South to Vietnam and Malasia. Neo-Confucian *Taoxue* became a guiding beacon for the Choson Dynasty of Korea (1392-1897) and the Edo through the Meiji Periods in Japan (1603-1912). China during its Ming Dynasty was the wealthiest country in the world, made so largely from trade with its neighbors across ever-widening territorial boundaries. Famine had contributed to the collapse of the Yuan Dynasty, and Emperor Hongwu had hoped for his Ming Dynasty to bring to China an agricultural prosperity. It did in part, but it brought manufacturing to China as well, particularly in the form of porcelain and silk, and production of tea, all earmarked for export, products that foreign buyers found enormously attractive (Dreyer, 1982).



Map 2 The Voyages of Ming Dynasty Admiral Zhang He, 15th Century

Source: Elisabeth Ellis and Anthony Esler, *World History: Connections to Today*, Prentice Hall (adapted)

Neo-Confucianism can be viewed as having persisted in China at least all the way down to the Opium Wars with Great Britain that began in 1840 and hastened the fall of the Qing dynasty, a regime that collapsed entirely following the Wuchang Uprising in Wuhan during October 1911, and ended with the abdication of Aisin Gioro Puyi, known as the Hsüan T'ung Emperor, on 12 February 1912, 101 years ago. The authors argue that Neo-Confucianism exists in China and throughout contemporary Chinese foreign economic policies with the entire world as well.

Beginning in 1840 with the start of the Opium Wars, British warships knocked the Qing government off its perch as Manchu occupiers of the largely Han Chinese population since 1644. The two Opium Wars resulted in China being weakened economically and militarily and therefore forced to approve a series of 28 treaties between China and 11 powers that included the Eight Nation Alliance of Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Russia, and the United States, plus three more colonial countries: Belgium, The Netherlands, and Spain. All were European nations except for Japan in Asia and the United States in North America. As a consequence of its having been defeated in battle, China signed what became known as the "Unequal Treaties" that ordinary Chinese citizens considered to be "intolerable". China became forced to pay several hundred thousand *taels* of silver as "compensation" to the victorious invaders, cede Hong Kong as a colony to Great

Britain, allow foreign citizens to reside in China independent of Chinese laws, and divide key cities along China's Pacific Ocean coastline including Shanghai and Tsingtao into "sectors", one to each of the victorious foreign powers (Wang D., 2005). This led to the Boxer Rebellion, a domestic insurrection objecting to contamination of the Chinese culture by foreign influences, sometimes hostile, that further weakened the Qing dynasty, leading to its fall. That was just the beginning of the nightmare for China, as it opened its markets to the world without conditions of alliance, allowing foreign governments, foreign companies, cultures, goods and services to enter its markets freely even to the point of saturation.

As a consequence of China having been dominated by foreign powers during the first half of the 19th century, China opened its territory and its markets to foreign powers. It did so again in the financial boom of the 1920s creating what some have called "Modern Neo-Confucianism". Even more recently since China "opened" to the world of international trade in 1979, some scholars have identified a Post-Modern or Contemporary "New Confucianism" that emerged when China opened its doors to advanced exotic technologies from the West that indeed has made China cash rich as a nation but that also has polluted its natural environment and severely widened the gap between rich and poor. Since taking up economic reform in 1979, now 35 years ago, China has become the rapidly industrializing nation with the second largest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the world, after the United States. This culminated in China's Foreign Exchange Surplus (FES) reaching USD 3 Trillion, and China's investment in United States bonds exceeding USD 2 Trillion. Overseas Chinese investment expansion has been blooming widely in the world among the European countries since the 2008 financial crisis. China buys commodities as raw materials for its burgeoning manufacturing industries, and also China invests in infrastructure worldwide. Along the way, China spends exorbitant sums of money on exporting its culture, so called "soft power", squandering money without thinking twice, on the pretext of "state" needs. This is the so called "Contemporary Neo-Confucianism" representing China as it endeavors to play an important role in the world alongside the United States in a relationship that China wants to stabilize with a trading partner that it considers to be a giant "hegemon" (Wang J., 2005). This has made Chinese scholars ask and rethink the answers to the questions: Why does China copy the West in many important respects, prop up the West when the West crumbles financially in order to save it from falling, but still lag behind the West in terms of democracy for its people? What is wrong with our culture?

7. 20th Century New Confucianism

New Confucianism that began in the 1920s is somewhat different from historical Neo-Confucianism. Sometimes it is termed "Modern Confucianism". New or Modern Confucianism is the intellectual product of several generations of 20th century thinkers, beginning with Xiong Shili (1885-1968), whose "New Doctrine" generally is credited with reviving Confucianism in China after it was discredited by the New Culture Movement that began on 04 May 1919 when the Western Allies gave Qingdao and other German concessions or spheres of influence in Shandong Province to Japan instead of returning them to China as had been promised and on which promise China had relied in joining the Western Allies in the Triple Entente (Xu, 2011, pp. 1-9³). If Xiong Shili is

³ The Republic of China had been recalcitrant to enter World War I against Germany. On 17 March 1917 the Chinese Parliament authorized the government to sever ties with Germany. Then came the United States decision to provide funding to countries willing to enter the war on the side of the Alliance, announced by the United States Congress on 24 April 1917. Finally, China delivered its declaration war on 17 August 1917 by delivering it to the Dutch ambassador in Beijing who handled diplomatic affairs for Germany following China's withdrawal of recognition. The Treaty of Versailles dated 28 June 1919 awarded most German property in China to Japan under Part IV, section two (Articles 128 to 134) and section eight (Articles 156 to 158).

the “first generation” of New Confucianism with Feng Youlan, the second generation were Xiong’s students who included Mou Zongsan, Tang Junyi, Xu Fuguan, and Zhang Junmai (known also by his courtesy name of Carsun Zhang). In 1958, this group of second generation New Confucianists published <<为中国文化敬告世界人士宣言>> [“A Manifesto for a Re-appraisal of Sinology and Reconstruction of Chinese Culture”], known colloquially and more widely as the “New Confucian Manifesto”, in which they argued that the West misunderstood Chinese culture and values, necessitating action by China to claim its rightful place in world affairs (Mou et al., 1989).

Xiong Shili advanced the argument that Eastern philosophy, particularly the classical elements of traditional Chinese philosophy and ethics inherent within Confucianism and Taoism, must be interfaced with modern Chinese philosophy and ethics. However, Xiong rejected the “daily decrease” of Buddhism, preferring to accentuate the goodness of mankind instead of restricting evil (Xiong, 1994). This major distinction became known as Xiong’s “Separation Theory” when refined after Xiong’s death by third generation post-modern New Confucianist Yu Jiyuan, a Chinese-American moral philosopher (Yu, 2002, pp. 127-146). Much of Xiong’s theoretical “New Doctrine” appears to have found its way into modern Chinese international management and international economic relations. Then Xiong’s disciples went further to assert what they said was their “common conviction” (Ibid., p. 456) that a third generation New Confucianist has characterized as requiring what she labeled to constitute a “post-colonial cultural nationalist discourse for cultural parity between China and the West in the midst of continuing Euro-American dominance”, concluding that the Manifesto “served to move the authors’ Han Chinese cultural nationalist discourse into an imagined global arena for an ideological contest between Chinese and Western Cultures (Chan, 2011, p. 278).

The New Confucian Manifesto went further and it outlined five “lessons” its authors contended the West must learn from China if China is expected to accept Western scientific and technological accomplishments and if the West expects to continue as the world’s “cultural leader,” these five lessons for the West being:

- (1) Need for “authentic communication” to promote a world culture that merges Chinese cultural elements with those from the West.
- (2) Need for an “all-embracing understanding or wisdom” to be more inclusive;
- (3) Need for greater compassion and “mildness” of toleration for opposing viewpoints;
- (4) Need to know how to perpetuate its own culture; and
- (5) Need to understand that the entire world is one family (Mou et al., 1989, pp. 1-52).

Very clearly, the New Confucian Manifesto inspired an expansion of Chinese foreign economic policy right from the start.

This began in December 1963 when Chinese premier Zhou Enlai and vice premier Chen Yi, marshal of China, visited 10 African countries plus Burma, Ceylon, and Pakistan on a trip that lasted through February 1964. On that groundbreaking journey, China divided its messages to the Africans, separating Arab countries from the rest by articulating a separate set of Five Principles for China’s dealings with Arab nations, crucially important to be remembered at the present time:

- [1] China supports the Arab and African peoples in their struggle to oppose imperialism and old and new colonialism and to win and safeguard national independence.
- [2] It supports the pursuance of a policy of peace, neutrality and non-alignment by the Governments of Arab and African countries
- [3] It supports the desire of the Arab and African peoples to achieve unity and solidarity in the manner of their own choice
- [4] It supports the Arab and African countries in their efforts to settle their disputes through peaceful consultations.

[5] It holds that the sovereignty of the Arab and African countries should be respected by all other countries and that encroachment and interference from any quarter should be opposed. (People's Republic of China, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2000).

In this respect, China emphasized that it is rather different from the European colonial powers, namely Britain and France, as well as from the United States and the Soviet Union, in its African ambitions (Jones, 2011). Also, China appears to have had the vision to carve out a foreign policy for Africa that distinguishes the sub-Saharan largely non-Arabic area from the super-Saharan largely Arabic region. In sub-Saharan African countries such as Ghana and Mali, Premier Zhou and Marshal Chen articulated Eight Principles that were to become foundations for Chinese aid to African nations:

[1] The Chinese government always bases itself on the principle of equality and mutual benefit in providing aid to other countries. It never regards such aid as a kind of unilateral alms but as something mutual.

[2] In providing aid to other countries, the Chinese Government strictly respects the sovereignty of the recipient countries, and never attaches any conditions or asks for any privileges.

[3] China provides economic aid in the form of interest-free or low-interest loans and extends the time limit for repayment when necessary so as to lighten the burden of the recipient countries as far as possible.

[4] In providing aid to other countries, the purpose of the Chinese Government is not to make the recipient countries dependent on China but to help them embark step by step on the road of self-reliance and independent economic development.

[5] The Chinese Government tries its best to help the recipient countries build projects which require less investment while yielding quicker results, so that the recipient governments may increase their income and accumulate capital.

[6] The Chinese Government provides the best-quality equipment and material of its own manufacture at international market prices. If the equipment and material provided by the Chinese Government are not up to the agreed specifications and quality, the Chinese Government undertakes to replace them.

[7] In providing any technical assistance, the Chinese Government will see to it that the personnel of the recipient country fully master such technique.

[8] The experts dispatched by China to help in construction in the recipient countries will have the same standard of living as the experts of the recipient country. The Chinese experts are not allowed to make any special demands or enjoy any special amenities. These eight principles fully give expression to the sincere desire of China in seeking to conduct economic and cultural cooperation with the newly-emerged countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America (Ibid.).

The foreign economic policies announced by Premier Zhou and Marshal Chen in the early to middle 1960s remained the foreign economic policies of China, more or less, through the 20th century. Only in the 21st century has China seemed to rethink its African, Southeast Asian, Latin American, and related foreign policies, and it has yet to cogently articulate what changes, if any, it intends to make, and some evidence is emerging to reflect a "competitive convergence" of China's foreign economic policies with the west (Jones, 2011). What remains to be seen is whether this means that China perceives a change in Western thought, perhaps as a consequence of the New Confucian Manifesto, or perhaps on the contrary it may reflect China's reflection upon East and West and decision to align more with the West.

8. Contemporary New Confucian Thought

What we will call "Contemporary New Confucianism" dominates the 21st century intellectual landscape of China, and it is popular among Mainland Chinese, their counterpart thinkers in Chinese Hong Kong, on Chinese Taiwan, and among many notable Chinese *diaspora* in Europe and the United States (Makeham, 2011, pp. 2-3), although it is less clear whether it does or will come to dominate domestic or international Chinese commercial

and governmental economic policies. No longer is this a reaction to foreign religions, much less as a reaction to foreign occupation, unless one regards it as a reaction to the “Americanization” of Chinese culture in terms of cinema, fast food, music, and sports. It has become a negative governmental (but not a popular) reaction to democracy and a market economy. It has become especially a reaction to American “hegemony”, rhetorically the horned archdemon of the Chinese nomenklatura when they speak domestically, but the archangel of the same nomenklatura when they act abroad, such as to send their families to live and study in the United States, where they tend to invest their savings. Neo-Confucianism is hierarchical, with men dominating women, and men of higher position in government or commerce governing those with lower positions. Modern Neo-Confucianism is lateral also, with a representative of the state nomenklatura sitting on the board of directors of most corporations of any size, at home or abroad, on the pretext of protecting the interests of the people, in practice to preserve the authority of the nomenklatura for itself. No aspect of this charade changes the transparent dichotomy between rich and poor across China, nowadays the same as or worse than it was 2,500 years ago during the time of Confucius himself. One striking example of this is the photo journal chronology of 30 primary school children in or under third grade traversing a 500 meter reservoir four times each day on a bamboo raft to attend school in the Zhuang⁴ Autonomous Province of Guangxi, Gulong County, ancient dragon city of Chen Ping Elementary School, Chen Shan (Chen Mountain) Branch, apparently because after constructing this reservoir the government failed to purchase a boat suitable for transporting its school children (“Guanxi elementary students support bamboo rafts”, 2013), it considers their precious lives to be so unimportant. This when Bo Guagua, son of former Politburo member Bo Xilai and Gu Kailai, recently convicted of murdering British Secret Intelligence Service operative Neil Heywood, attended Papplewick School, Harrow School, Balliol College Oxford University, Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, and currently is enrolled at Columbia University Law School, at which he drives around town in either a Ferrari or a Porsche, or both (“Revealed”, 2013). What this corroborates is the rapidly expanding gap between rich and poor in 21st century China as measured by the “Gini coefficient” (0.474 in 2012 for China) according to China’s own state controlled National Bureau of Statistics (“China Reveals Economic Gap”, 2013).

9. Conclusion

Neo-Confucianism lingers on in the political thought of China at home and abroad, from which it migrates into the commercial behavior of Chinese merchants. The idea that what is Chinese is superior to what is Western contradicts the quality of life that one observes when comparing East and West in the 21st century, and continues to function as a reaction, much as it did during the Ming dynastic period, this time as a reaction to the Western democracies rather than to Indian religions. The most significant vestige of Neo-Confucianism is the plight of the Chinese worker, challenged to the point where Liu Shaoqi (leader of China’s workers and president of China, 1959 to 1968) would turn over in his grave, due to poor work conditions, low wages, lack of healthcare, inconsequential retirement benefits. In reality, 21st century China has returned quietly to the era of the KwoMingTang, and is destined to follow in its fate unless it changes course quickly and completely. What China should do is to open its commercial access to more, rather than less, Western influence, embrace more women as chief executives of major

⁴ The Zhuang are China’s largest ethnic minority, numbering just over 16 million people, largely living in Guangxi Province with many other minority groups. Guangxi (West Guang) was created by being subdivided from Guangdong (East Guang) after China’s “liberation” in 1949. Parts of it are among China’s poorest regions.

Small to Medium size Enterprises (SMEs) as well as State Owned Enterprises (SOEs), and open access to high caliber domestic and international education to all Chinese, not merely party and business elites.

China does have its own school of international relations, and it has had this for centuries, long before the current debate between Yan and Qin. What China possesses should be viewed as a “Balanced Discourses” school of thought, an outgrowth of original Confucian thought on which Xu Gan and his disciples drew heavily and the Neo-Confucianists, New Confucianists, and Contemporary New Confucianists all have continued substantially ever since. China's foreign economic policies have changed very little since Zhou Enlai and Chen Yi made their historical 13 nation tour of Africa and South Asia in 1963 and 1964. The widening gap between rich and poor across China may necessitate revisiting “Balanced Discourses” as well as China's foreign economic policies generally.

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