

Confucianism and America's Future

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Benefits of Confucianism

America is going through big changes now. Some of these changes are ricocheting around the world and will cause even more changes when they come back full circle.

Which changes ricochet? Investing American money in Chinese factories and workers instead of American factories and workers builds the Chinese economy instead of the American economy. One change is that China gets stronger as America gets weaker.

A stronger China will use the wealth we give it to compete directly against America in Europe, Africa, and South America. This is the ricochet. China will compete economically, politically, and militarily against the US and we will pay for it, in more ways than in money. The consequences for America are uncertain, but could easily be a further weakening of our economy and military.

This is not our only challenge, but it serves as one example. Unfortunately, America seems less capable now than in the past. Hurricane Andrew hit Florida in 1992, and FEMA dealt with it. Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans in 2005 and FEMA was a resounding failure. America is losing its ability to deal with challenges.

We need new resources to meet the new challenges. Confucianism can help America meet the challenges of the future. America needs Confucianism.

Confucianism can help America in many ways, but I'll focus now on competence and integrity, the problems leading to the Katrina debacle. Michael Brown, the FEMA director, was unqualified for that position and his performance was incompetent. He lacked integrity when he accepted the position.

Confucians believe in advancing by competence. They instituted an examination system that provided the Chinese government with competent administrators based on a series of tests. True Confucians did not study only to advance professionally, they loved scholarship and culture. Their love of Chinese culture sustained China through numerous barbarian invasions. Even if it took hundreds of years, the Confucians maintained Chinese culture, outlasted the invaders, and revived China. They successfully repeated this cycle over thousands of years because they loved their culture.

Confucians believe in integrity. A Chinese lord was troubled by thieves, so he asked Confucius for advice and in Analect 12.18 he said, "If you were not so covetous, people wouldn't steal even if you paid them to steal." One of the Ming Emperors was a usurper, taking the throne away from his nephew. When the usurper told his Confucian minister to issue a proclamation saying he was a legitimate Emperor, his minister accepted death rather than put his name to a lie.

If all we do is revive competence and integrity in our leadership, then that alone can turn America around. Confucianism can do much more for America, and we will

look more closely at a number of ways America can benefit from Confucianism. But what is Confucianism?

Confucianism is a philosophy that sympathizes with the human condition. It expects leaders to set good examples. It measures the success of leaders by the prosperity of the common people and the harmony within the nation. Confucianism says world peace is the ultimate goal of human endeavors. It encourages morality and sincerity. Confucianism calls all people to look critically within themselves to live a life of continuous self-improvement. The concept of continuous improvement has helped Toyota become a world leader in automobiles. Continuous improvement is a Confucian virtue.

Confucianism believes good families are important for the success of a nation, and that education is more than the memorization of facts. We should love learning because it ultimately should help us grow as humans. Learning is an exploration of what is best in the world's culture, an exploration of the world around us, and an exploration of human relations and history. Learning is also an exploration of the human heart with the goal of developing total sincerity so our thoughts and desires and actions are in harmony with the natural law we call the Way.

Confucians believe morality is the root of education because nature is imbued with moral principle. Confucians believe when we look deeply into the workings of the universe, we learn something about morality.

I have found nothing in Confucianism that contradicts Christian teaching. There are no pronouncements about an afterlife. There is neither sin nor salvation in Confucianism. One can embrace Confucianism and Christianity. The advantage of having a moral discourse based on Confucian ethics is in avoiding the divisiveness of religious differences.

Confucianism will be a part of America's future because it will provide a moral common ground for our religiously diverse society, and because Confucianism will be an important tool for solving the problems facing America.

An Overview of Confucianism

I have described Confucianism in broad terms. I believe you will enjoy hearing some details.

Confucius lived from 551 to 479 BCE. He taught young men to become administrators for the Chinese Emperor, but his focus was on teaching them benevolence, sympathy, and nobility. Confucius and the teachers who followed him sought to develop ethical leaders. His students recorded his lessons and the collection of his sayings is called *The Analects*. He was an exceptional teacher and his lessons have resonated in the hearts of men for thousands of years.

The name, Confucius, is a Latin form of Kung fu Tzu, meaning Master Kung. This name was given to him by the Jesuits. The Chinese call him Kongzi. Some Chinese dislike the name Confucius because that is not his real name.

The next major Confucian teacher was called Mencius by the Europeans. His Chinese name is Mengzi and a collection of his lessons is called *The Mencius*. He lived from 372 to 289 BCE. His lessons are episodes from his life that his students found

educational. Many of his lessons deal with leadership and *The Mencius* is probably the most accessible of the Confucian classics.

The Four Classics of Confucianism are *The Analects*, *The Mencius*, *The Great Learning*, and *The Doctrine of the Mean*. These four works were selected by the great scholar Zhu Xi (Chu Hsi) as the most important works for beginning students to learn. The Five Books are another set of important Confucianism works, and they are The Book of Rites, The Book of History, The Spring and Autumn Annals, The Book of Poetry (The Odes), and The Book of Change (The I Ching). These nine works form the foundation of Confucian culture.

In addition to his influence as a teacher when he codified the Confucian classics, Zhu Xi (1130 to 1200) took the Confucian philosophy through a major step when he reformulated the Confucian virtue of Li from “rites” to “moral principle.” This was a major philosophical change and the school of Confucianism based on this change is called Neo-Confucianism.

Wang Yangming (1472 to 1529) taught that all people had an innate, intuitive knowledge of good and evil. He also taught the unity of knowledge and action, believing one gained knowledge through action. Wang believed the concept of acquiring knowledge first and then applying it was false since knowledge is obtained simultaneously with practice. Wang also believed objects do not exist independently from the mind because the mind shapes them.

These are the key Confucian works and philosophers. For comparison, imagine that I described Western philosophy in less than five minutes by talking briefly about Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Descartes. Obviously, I have given you a very broad picture with names you could use to start your own study. My real purpose is to discuss the future of Confucianism in America, not to discuss the history of Confucianism.

I am not alone in believing Confucianism has a place in Western civilization. The Jesuits studied Confucianism in the 16th and 17th centuries, translating Confucian writings and making them available to Europeans. Christian Wolff, the German philosopher, gave a lecture, "On the Practical Philosophy of the Chinese", in 1721, praising the teaching of Confucius.

The American poet Ezra Pound (1885 – 1972) recommended Confucianism to Westerners, translating a number of important works. Herman Kahn (1922 – 1983), a founder of the Hudson Institute, linked the economic success of East Asia to Confucian values. In 1957, a number of Chinese scholars in Taiwan recommended the West study Confucianism. Their paper is popularly called "The Confucian Manifesto." A number of contemporary American scholars study and write about Confucianism: William Theodore de Bary, John Berthrong, and Robert Cummings Neville are a few of these scholars. Robert Neville's book, "Boston Confucianism," convinced me Americans can be Confucians.

There are many reasons we should look more closely at Confucianism. Its enduring appeal proves it touches something permanent in our psyche. The recommendations from Western intellectuals over hundreds of years are testimony that Confucianism has a place in the West. The utility of Confucianism in solving contemporary American problems will make it a part of America's future.

Practical Applications of Confucianism

We will examine now seven areas where we can benefit from Confucianism: religious strife, education, culture, families, communities, economics, and management.

I began writing my book after the Twin Towers tragedy of 9/11. My experience as a public school teacher had already set me on the path of researching universal ethics. I had run across so many unhappy children in the classrooms that I needed ways to explain to them how to have a happy life. The unhappy lives of terrorists that lead them to kill innocents are not far removed from the unhappy lives of school children that lead them to harm innocents.

All strife is rooted in unhappiness. Religious strife is also rooted in unhappiness, but looks to religious differences to legitimize hatred. Yet, we cannot repair religious differences by talking about religion because the differences are irreconcilable. Since the West has welcomed hundreds of thousands of Muslim immigrants, we must find some moral common ground. Looking for common ground in our religions will never work, but we can build a common ground outside of religion.

Confucianism is a moral system that can bridge the gap between Islam and the West because it is not a religion. The first step is for the West to understand Confucianism. With Confucianism we can build common ground with East Asia, then we can invite the Middle East to join a world-wide dialog. The future of Confucianism in America has international implications.

America has lost the ability to successfully educate its children. In changing graduation exams from TAKS tests back to the end-of-course exams that were the original failed system, the Texas state legislature has shown the world it is confounded. Texas has identified failed schools and failed school systems, but Texas leaders have no idea of how to fix the schools. Constantly changing the tests is futile and only enriches the testing companies.

Who is most successful in education? The Asians! Singapore taught Confucianism in their schools and twenty years later their children were leading the world in mathematics testing. Confucianism teaches a love of learning. When the entire family recognizes education as a virtue and values academic achievement, then you have what is missing in failing American schools: the love of learning that fuels academic success.

The very first analect says, “It is a great pleasure to learn something and then apply this knowledge successfully, at the right time. It is a joy to have a friend willing to travel far to see you. It is wonderful to be cheerful even when your good qualities are ignored.”

The love of learning, the love of friends, and perseverance are important Confucian virtues. Because Confucianism is not a religion, wisdom like this can be used in the schools to build those qualities which can lift up the underclass from a culture of failure to a culture of success.

We have a culture crisis in America and Confucianism can help us. When I taught in underprivileged schools I discovered children in fourth grade were already embracing failure. Intelligent children would refuse to try in school. Their parents had negative attitudes. Older children would refuse to learn algebra because their parents said they never needed it. Children will not value education if their parents do not.

The schools can do more than teach facts, they can encourage a love of learning and the arts. Confucians have studied poetry and music appreciation for thousands of years. The Chinese have embraced classical Western music because they value culture.

American society generally places more importance in money than in culture, but there is money to be made everywhere, including the arts. If Confucianism makes an impression in Texas, we will see our education improve and a greater appreciation for the arts. We can have a Texas renaissance. And if we recognize the power of the arts and invest in media infrastructure, then movie production, music production, and publishing will blossom in Texas. A cultured Texas will consume cultural products. A thriving, profitable media infrastructure in Texas can propagate a new Texas culture across America and around the world. Confucianism blended with Texan grit will give us a culture to make the whole world take notice.

A great Texas will be built upon the foundation of great families. There are, however, weak families at all levels of Texas society. I started thinking about writing my book when I saw the weakness in the families of economically disadvantaged children. No amount of testing in the schools – TAAS, TAKS, or whatever – can improve the education of the children if their parents do not care about education.

Confucians believe in the importance of strong families. They teach obligations among the family members. If children do not understand respect, duties, and obligations within the family, they will never understand them within the greater context of society. Confucians believe a strong and healthy community depends upon strong and healthy families. Confucianism will help Texas strengthen its families.

Confucians believe in prosperous, harmonious communities. The "greed is good" philosophy is not going to be found among Confucians. They believe good families help build strong communities. Confucians measure the success of their leaders by the prosperity and harmony within the community. Confucian economics looks to the greatest good for the greatest number. The creation of wealth is good, but not for its own sake or for strictly selfish purposes. Wealth is for the betterment of the community.

Even Joseph Schumpeter, the prophet of entrepreneurialism, worried capitalism would lose connection to morality. Capitalism cannot exist without people, people cannot thrive when stripped of their humanity, and Confucianism can help us cling to our humanity and add balance to our capitalist society.

Kongzi and Mengzi both have many lessons on leadership. For years there has been a new scandal every week in American from business or political leaders. We must make our leaders measure up and we must hold them accountable to high standards. When we look at all the poor leaders selected to serve our country – Michael Brown, Alberto Gonzalez, and Paul Wolfowitz for example – we can see that promoting the appropriate people is an important leadership skill. *The Mencius* says (III.A.4), "to find the right man for the Empire is benevolence." Confucianism addresses the promotion of good people on many occasions. Confucianism will be a tool to improve ethical behavior in our business and political leaders.

There are many practical applications of Confucianism within our lives.

Confucianism and the Problems of Modernity

America has many contemporary problems where Confucianism can contribute to practical solutions. Western society also has cultural problems rooted in Western philosophy that can be addressed by Confucianism. I mean the problems rooted in Modernity.

Modernity can mean many things. What I mean by modernity are elements of our society based on capitalism, industrialization, science, political science, economic theory, rational thought, and epistemology. In short, I mean the repercussions of the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution.

Aristotle gave us rules for logic. The Enlightenment gave us the freedom to apply rational thought to our lives and our society. Rational thought spread throughout Western societies, changing the way we view the world, changing our hopes, and unleashing the potential of humans to master their world and to rise in society by the power of their minds instead of the privilege of their birth.

Superstitions and despots shackled men's minds for thousands of years. When religious leaders could no longer restrict our thoughts by persecuting independent thinkers as heretics, the sciences flourished. The sciences begat new technologies, which begat new economic and military power, and led us to the globalization we see today.

The Age of Reason seems to have led to a triumphant West. But if we are so reasonable, how could Lenin and Stalin have murdered so many people? You might say Russia is more an Eastern country than a Western country, but Lenin and Stalin are the step-children of Karl Marx, whose economic theories are a product of the Enlightenment.

Germany is the homeland of Gauss, Leibniz, Bach, Beethoven, Goethe, Rilke, Kant, and Hitler. Germans were cultured and educated, yet they embraced murder on a massive scale. We thought reason would ennoble us and lead us to a better world, but it has not. We have embraced reason and our societies are as dysfunctional as ever. This is one of the problems of Modernity.

Confucianism can help the West because it has never subscribed to the instrumental reason that allows Westerners to crush people like bugs. What is instrumental reason? You see it when politicians refer to citizens as voters. You see it when businessmen refer to people as consumers. When the powerful refer to us as consumers or voters, they have reduced us to objects for manipulation. The powerful relegate us to roles in service to their needs. They diminish our humanity by renaming us and then exploiting us.

Human relations are one of the pillars of Confucianism. Leaders have the responsibilities that a father has towards his children, to protect them and see to their well being. Fathers do not exploit their children, but our leaders do exploit us, and instrumental reason is their excuse. Reason is impersonal, which can be a strength and a weakness. Confucianism is not impersonal and can provide the balance we need to use reason without losing sight of our humanity.

Here is another problem. Science, especially after Newton, gave us the hope of knowledge and mastery of the world. The universe appeared as one big machine. We could predict the movements of the planets. It seemed as though we could calculate everything. Mathematics and physics were unraveling the mysteries of the universe.

Let us think about this. From the beginnings of recorded history we used myths, oracles, and a pantheon of gods to explain what we could not understand. Now it seemed science would reveal everything to us. Eventually, we could know and understand everything. All mysteries would vanish.

Then physics told us light was sometimes a wave and sometimes a particle. That is a mystery. How can this be? Then Heisenberg said we could never know both the location and momentum of subatomic particles. Scientific knowledge does have limits.

Mathematicians were developing proofs and we thought all mathematics could be proven. In mathematics we believed could have certain knowledge. Russell and Whitehead in their *Principia Mathematica* tried to prove the foundations of mathematics. Then Kurt Gödel published his incompleteness theorems and demonstrated we could not prove everything. Certainty seemed within our grasp, then it slipped away.

How can we fulfill our destiny to master the universe if there are limits to our knowledge, if the universe has impenetrable mysteries? The Confucian answer to this problem of Modernity lies in viewing the universe as a partner instead of as a collection of objects to master.

Confucians see the patterns in the universe and look for patterns in human relations and behavior. Confucians believe in bending nature to serve the interests of the people. Building dikes, dredging canals, and cultivation have been practiced by the Chinese for thousands of years, but they believe in a connection to nature. Confucians believe in being a partner with nature in the process of creation, and believe they cannot be true partners if they are insincere. Confucians look to the patterns of nature and seek to master themselves, not to master nature.

Epistemology has led to another problem with Modernity. After David Hume, skepticism rose to new heights. We have reached the point where some people doubt the existence of reality. Writers like Jean Baudrillard have said technology has created a hyper-reality that has surpassed reality. We can see his influence in the movie, *The Matrix*. Our problem of losing faith in reality is rooted in Descartes' dualism. The belief we can be logically reduced to a body carrying an independent mind has been proven false by medical science, and I will refer you to the book, *Descartes Error*. The Confucians never made that division, and they instead refer to the heart-mind. They believed the heart and mind to be inseparable, and science has proven them right.

Many of the problems in epistemology stem from the viewpoint of an isolated person. Confucians do not think that way. A major contribution Confucianism will make to America is a vision of the self that is intimately connected to the community. American culture has glorified the lone cowboy, the individual hero. The problems at WorldCom and Enron prove that unbridled selfishness can cause huge damage to the community. This change in the way we view ourselves will change the way we interact with nature and with each other.

Adam Smith published *The Wealth of Nations* in 1776, creating an economic force still driving the world's economies. Much of our dynamic growth has come from his theories, but his theories have been misapplied. The British used free trade as an excuse to wage the Opium War against the Chinese when the Chinese government tried to keep opium out of China. The invisible hand of the market Smith proposed does not work when the powerful use weapons or monopoly to suppress the market. British Imperialists are an example in the past. Enron and Microsoft are examples in the present.

Either fraud or monopoly usurp the invisible hand of the market. As Adam Smith's theories break down, another tenet of Modernity falls.

Confucians do believe patterns exist in nature. Adam Smith's theories are a good interpretation of nature's patterns for commercial trade. But Confucians look to virtue, not profit, as the ultimate measure of success. World trade, globalization, needs a universal system of ethics if it is to serve humanity. Without a moral basis, globalization can crush humanity.

The breakdown of economic theories is another problem with Modernity, and Confucianism can help by providing a non-religious, universal system of ethics.

One reaction to the problems of Modernity is to reject the concepts of truth, knowledge and reality, and this is sometimes called Post-modernism. Another reaction to the problems of Modernity is to look for answers within our humanity, and Confucianism can help light our way down that path.

Winding Spring Process of Education

I say Confucianism can help America solve its problems. Can it help solve America's most intractable problems, poverty, and poor education? Yes, to the degree that good education can reduce poverty, Confucianism can contribute to solving these problems.

A proper education will improve our society by strengthening our humanity. The goal of education is not to produce better engineers, but to create better citizens, better people. Viewing our schools as education factories, staffed by business minded administrators in order to supply businesses with trained employees is applying instrumental reasoning to our education system. We cannot reduce our children to components for an industrial system.

Confucians say you should learn for your own sake, not the sake of others. We should educate our children for their sake, not for the sake of business interests. Within the Confucian classic *The Great Learning* is a blue-print describing the interaction of education and society. I call that blue-print the Winding Spring Process of Education.

You wind spring action clocks, storing energy in the spring. Then the energy is released by the clock mechanism and you get back something useful: the time. The Winding Spring Process of Education has a learning phase where we build potential, as though we are storing energy. Then there is an application phase where the potential is released and we receive back something beneficial.

This is an American application of Confucianism. America will develop its own interpretation of Confucianism. The Winding Spring Process of Education is an example of how we can interpret Confucianism. First let us consider the two phases of the process.

The learning phase has eight steps:

1. Enlightened leadership
2. Supportive community
3. Nurturing family
4. Self-cultivation
5. The orderly mind

6. Extending knowledge
7. The investigation of things
8. The sincere heart

The application phase also has eight steps:

1. Sincerity
2. The investigation of things
3. Extending knowledge
4. The orderly mind
5. Self-cultivation
6. Nurturing family
7. Orderly society
8. World peace

Let us briefly go through these steps.

The first step: education begins with enlightened leadership. We must start with the right goal for education, which is developing human potential for the sake of the child. Knowledge and skills have a place in education, and we will discuss that later, but in order to prepare our children for a future beyond our imagination, we must prepare our children to think capably. They must have a broad store of knowledge to apply in problem solving. Enlightened leadership will prepare our children to cope with a complex world, not to serve some short term needs of business.

The second step: education needs a supportive community. If the majority of families in a community do not believe in education, then that community will have failing schools. This is why so many schools are rated academically unacceptable from failed TAKS tests, because there are communities that do not care about education. We do not have a homogeneous society. Our towns and cities are a mix of different communities. Each community must support education for its children to succeed. Children tend to blend with their peers.

The third step: each family needs to value education. The parents must be involved with their children's education. Children might care less than their parents about education, but they are unlikely to care more than their parents. The parents must set an example. They must show a love of learning and a respect for education.

The families also must nurture their children by providing a loving and healthy environment. Parents must rear their children to get along with others and to contribute to a harmonious society by providing moral training for their children. Schools can support moral training, but the source of morality in society is within the family.

Dysfunctional families are a serious problem for education and for all of society. Dysfunctional families contribute to crime and poverty. Texas cannot solve the problem of failing students and broken schools by changing tests. Only by changing the human heart can broken families be healed, broken communities can be repaired, and broken school systems fixed.

The fourth step: self-cultivation means children are taught at home and at school to review their actions and accomplishments, and to consider where they need to improve. Children are taught to be responsible for becoming the type of person they ought to become. This is not a lesson taught once and mastered immediately. This is

lesson for a lifetime. The Winding Spring Process of Education teaches self-cultivation as a virtue. We should always be growing in our humanity and wisdom.

The fifth step: children must work to develop an orderly mind. This is part of the process of developing self-control. It is also part of developing logic and rational thinking. Even young children can be taught the fallacy of ad hominem attacks. Clear thinking is an important skill for all people. An important side effect of teaching clear thinking is teaching respect for clear thinking.

The sixth step: the extension of knowledge. For children, this is the acquisition of knowledge and skills deemed necessary by our society for educated people. This is history, science, geography, and mathematics. Obviously, there is acquisition of knowledge from the beginning of education when children first learn the names of colors. But as they get older they can absorb more complex facts, especially facts that need context and that lend themselves to interpretation.

The seventh step is the investigation of things. For children in secondary schools, this is independent research and the interpretation of facts. This might seem like college prep work, but the ability to dig below the surface and think for oneself is useful for all citizens if they wish to participate in our democracy.

The eighth step is the sincere heart. We do not leave this for last. We discuss it throughout the child's education. We are social creatures and we function best when we have a sense of morality. Sincerity is a basic virtue that should always be encouraged. It is the final step in this process to emphasize its importance. It is the final step to indicate to the young that they should continue working on their sincerity. The goal of growing in our humanity is never complete. No one can teach sincerity, nor grade it, but we can value it and encourage our young to seek it in themselves and others.

These eight steps tie together many parts of our society and many aspects of education. I suggest they are worthy of your consideration. So far, we have examined the learning phase of education. Now let us consider the application phase of education.

The first step in the application phase of education for an adult is to manifest sincerity in thoughts and deeds. If a young person starts professional life believing in deception, then his life is built on a bad foundation and bad consequences will fall upon those who trust this person. Jeff Skilling, Enron CEO, had a degree from Harvard. Ken Lay, the chairman of Enron, had a Ph.D. We all know how much harm they caused at Enron, but when did they lose their sincerity?

An education that skirts morality is an incomplete education. Our society is most likely to prosper when technical competence is blended with moral competence.

The second step for an adult is the investigation of things. Every person must discover the world for oneself. We cannot stop reading history when we leave school. We cannot take at face value what we see on TV or read in newspapers. We must question and probe. Professionals need to extend their professional skills beyond school. This is a part of growing.

The third step is the extension of knowledge. This is most evident in professionals who write books. They share what they learn as they grow. But this can be true of all people. Everyone can think and experiment on how to do things better and then share that with their peers. You can see this in some of the Asian car companies. Society needs to provide people with the opportunity to grow in their work.

The fourth step is the orderly mind. As adults we should continue to examine the working of our mind. Is our thinking clouded by prejudice? Is our thinking limited by lack of knowledge? When we interact with others, are we articulate? Can we gather our thoughts and present them convincingly? Can we explain or teach? If you have mastered your craft, learned something new, and you can teach others, then you are becoming a leader. As a leader you can contribute to society.

See how this Winding Spring Process helps us to develop as people, and consequently helps us to become contributing members of society. This process develops leaders.

The fifth step is self-cultivation. Adults examine themselves introspectively, looking for character flaws to diminish and virtues to strengthen. We need to be open to criticism. Leaders can surround themselves with yes-men, so it is vital that leaders listen carefully to criticism. You may have heard people say "pride goeth before a fall." Successful adults must be on guard against arrogance and overconfidence.

The sixth step is the nurturing family. Both parents have an obligation to provide moral guidance to their children. Some parents confuse love with indulgence. Learning parenting skills is not easy. Adults need to learn parenting wisdom before they have children.

Business and political leaders must recognize the importance of families for a good society. Leaders must allow parents the time at home with their children to be effective parents. It is wrong for a business to encourage workers to neglect their families to advance at work.

The seventh step is the orderly society. Families are foundation of an orderly society, but there is more. A healthy political dialog is important for an orderly society. Political divisiveness diminishes harmony within the community and diminishes our democracy. Politicians should recognize that a healthy political discourse is more important for society than the win or loss of an election.

Good infrastructure and prosperity for the people, not only for the wealthy, are also important for an orderly society. Moral leaders will work naturally for an orderly society, which is why morality is so important in educating our young.

The eighth step in the Winding Spring Process is world peace. If all societies are orderly, prosperous, filled with nurturing families, and lead by people of true virtue, how can world peace elude us? The Confucian scholar Zhu Xi said morality is the root of education. Perhaps the correct education is the root of world peace.

Confucianism in America's Future

Respect for education is one of the most telling signs of a Confucian. The goal of education for a Confucian is not straight A's nor perfect SAT scores. The goal of education for a Confucian is to create a better world by helping people fulfill their potential.

The Chinese are looking at what they think is best in American education and they are working to incorporate our best into their best. We should also learn from them.

Having taught in the public schools, I have seen that the improvements we must make in our schools are not understood by our politicians nor by our school administrators.

The future of Confucianism in America rests within our leadership. America is suffering from a leadership crisis. Confucianism can help us develop better leaders. Exactly how this will come about remains to be seen.

I believe some young people will be drawn to Confucianism and as they mature, they will become effective leaders. Part of the leadership crisis comes from bad leaders selecting the wrong people for leadership roles, so our leaders go from bad to worse. Confucianism is our best hope for halting this downward spiral.

John Dewey published *Democracy and Education* in 1916, almost a hundred years ago. The educational philosophy in America is old, dogmatic, and out of touch with reality. Business and political leaders are also out of touch with reality: consider Enron and Iraq. We are headed for a paradigm shift as the gap between reality and understanding widens. Perhaps we are headed for a fall.

We are living in the time span where Oswald Spengler, in his *Decline of the West*, predicted the West would begin its decline. Can Confucianism, an Eastern philosophy, help America avoid a decline? I do think so.

Robert Pirsig in his novel, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, insisted through his protagonist that we need something he called Quality. If you know Confucianism you will recognize many facets of Confucianism in his descriptions of Quality. Pirsig was crying out for Confucianism, although I do not believe he knew that. Pirsig had a sense for what we lack in our society, and I say what we lack can be found in Confucianism.

Some people will say that only Chinese can be Confucians because parts of classical Confucianism are intimately bound to Chinese culture. Confucianism does change. Confucianism did go through a change that created Neo-Confucian. America will adapt Confucianism as it is adopted here. One of the strengths of Confucianism is that it is flexible because it is not holy writ.

Perhaps a better name than Confucianism is Ru Jia, which means "school of scholars." Remember that Confucius is a European name, not a Chinese name. The same is true of Confucianism. American scholars sometimes refer to Confucian ministers as literati. In ancient China the literati represented five percent of the population, yet they have been influential for thousands of years.

The future of Confucianism in America might be that only five percent of Americans become true Confucians, yet they will be leaders and scholars and will have great influence over the course of affairs.

James Frey wrote a pack of lies he called *A Million Little Pieces*. It sold like hotcakes even after he was exposed as a liar. The public is quick to buy lies, and slow to adopt truth, especially if there is some complexity within it. Thomas Kuhn published *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* in 1962. I saw his ideas becoming popular around 1989, 27 years after publication. I predict it might take fifteen to twenty-five years to see Confucianism begin to make a noticeable impact in American society. I believe we will see changes sooner than that, but they might not be very noticeable.

Even if only a small percentage of Americans become deeply involved in Confucianism, I believe all Americans can benefit from some exposure to Confucianism, especially in context of education.

I believe we are seeing the beginnings of big changes in the world around us. I believe there are impending threats to world peace and we have to work hard for peace. I

believe Confucianism has a place in America's future because it will be a great help in adapting to a changing world. Confucianism will contribute to America's success.

Postscript

Because this presentation considered Confucianism and America's future, the important topics of Li and Jen were omitted. If the reader pursues study of Confucianism, Li and Jen should be a part of those studies.

Suggestions for Further Study

Chan, Wing-Tsit, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton, 1963.

This book includes selections from the *Analects* and the *Mencius*. It contains the *Doctrine of the Mean* and the *Great Learning* in their entirety. I highly recommend this book. It covers all aspects of Chinese philosophy, including Buddhism and Taoism.

Creel, H.G., *Confucius and the Chinese Way*, Harper, 1949

de Bary, William Theodore, *The Liberal Tradition in China*, Columbia University, 1983

de Bary, William Theodore, *The Trouble with Confucianism*, Harvard University, 1991

Ivanhoe, Philip, *Confucian Moral Self Cultivation*, Hackett, 2000

Tu Wei-ming, *Centrality and Commonality, An Essay on Confucian Religiousness*, State University of New York, 1989. I would describe this work as Dr. Tu's thoughts on Confucianism, looking through the prism of the *Doctrine of the Mean*. However, this book does not contain a copy of the *Doctrine of the Mean*, so the reader needs to read the *Doctrine of the Mean* from another source, like the Chan book