

The Life and Work of Confucius, from a Conscientiological Perspective

Kevin de La Tour & Simone de La Tour

ABSTRACT: This article examines the life and work of the Chinese thinker Confucius, as seen through the prism of conscientiology. It first presents the *raison d'être* for the authors' current research on China within the subdiscipline of conscientiology termed *para-history*. Some highlights of the clarification task already performed in the People's Republic of China (PRC) – The First and Second Scientific Educational Excursion on Conscientiology in China – are also related. A description of the sociopolitical and educational context of Confucius' time is provided, after which some points of his life and work are analyzed, including an evaluation of some of the facets of his personality. The end result of his existential program is then examined. Finally observations on recent archeological discoveries in the field of Chinese philosophy are presented.

SUMARIO: Este artículo examina la vida y obra del pensador chino Confucio, bajo el prisma de la concienciología. Primero, presenta la *razón de ser* de la pesquisa en curso de los autores sobre China, dentro de la subdisciplina de la concienciología denominada *para-historia*. También se hacen aclaraciones sobre la tarea de esclarecimiento llevada a cabo en la República Popular China (RPC) Primera y Segunda Excursión Educativa Científica en Concienciología realizada en China. Además, se presenta una descripción del contexto sociopolítico y educacional en la época de Confucio, después de analizarse algunos puntos de su vida y obra, incluyendo una evaluación de algunos aspectos de su personalidad; y se examina el resultado final de su programación existencial. Por último, se presentan observaciones pertinentes sobre los recientes descubrimientos arqueológicos en el campo de la filosofía China.

RESUMO: Este artigo examina a vida e obra do pensador chinês Confúcio, sob o prisma da conscienciologia. Apresenta

primeiro a *raison d'être* da pesquisa em curso dos autores sobre a China, dentro da subdisciplina da conscienciologia denominada para-historia. São também feitos alguns destaques sobre a tarefa de esclarecimento já levada a efeito na Republica Popular da China (RPC) – Primeira e Segunda Excursão Educacional Científica em Conscienciologia feita na China. É também apresentada uma descrição do contexto sócio-político e educacional na época de Confúcio, após o que são analisados alguns pontos da sua vida e obra, incluindo-se aí uma avaliação de alguns aspectos de sua personalidade. O resultado final de sua programação existencial é então examinado. Por último, apresentam-se observações pertinentes sobre descobertas arqueológicas recentes no campo da filosofia Chinesa.

INTRODUCTION

The “conscientiology-China-next lifetime” prospect has been discussed at great length within the conscientiological community for well over a decade. Although the subject has continually generated a great deal of interest, a more practical approach to this issue has been lacking.

The multifaceted rationale behind the authors’ decision to develop research on China involves their intention to:

1. Foster academic and cultural exchanges between East and West
2. Present their research findings on Chinese culture and history, and personal experiences in China to the public
3. Provide a clearer understanding of Chinese culture and China’s current reality to the conscientiological community
4. Produce a *retrocognitive* stimulus for those who have spent previous lifetimes in China
5. Reconnect (*religere*) the conscientiological team with its intraphysical roots
6. Provide a *precognitive* stimulus for individuals who may undergo resoma in Asia in the near future
7. Contribute to the multidimensional reurbanization of China

8. Reinforce the thosenic signature of conscientiology within China
9. Promote the reurbanization of China in the here and now

China represents one of the oldest cultures in the world, as well as one-fifth of the current planetary population. If the conscientiological community is going to work toward the goal of the reurbanization of China it is essential that the Chinese reality be understood. In order to perform the clarification task in China, it is necessary to understand the Chinese culture and mentality.

Confucius is considered the epitome of Chinese culture. Confucianism has, on and off, been the official ideology of the Chinese government for over 2000 years and a constant theme in Chinese culture since approximately 200 B.C.

The Chinese mind-set has been formed over a period of millennia by Confucianism. Regardless of China's current official ideology, at their core, the Chinese are still, to a large degree, a Confucian people. Thus, to understand Confucianism is to largely understand the Chinese.

While researching Confucianism, the authors have encountered great disparities in the information published on this subject in terms of dates, translations and the interpretations of concepts and have endeavored to arrive at a consensus. The reader should therefore not be surprised to find differences between this article and other research material he or she may have access to. The reason for these discrepancies are understandable given the following factors: (1) the *Analects*, the main text of Confucianism, was compiled up to 70-75 years after Confucius' desoma by his disciples or their disciples; (2) the tradition at that time was largely an oral one, thus Confucius' words were mainly written down as brief keyword-styled phrases, which is a great challenge to translate into other languages, from Ancient Chinese to Modern Chinese and then to English, for example; (3) Confucian texts – those which survived – have suffered innumerable modifications over the centuries, often in order to

better suit the governments that utilized them as official ideology.

CHINA BOUND

The authors first visited China in April of 1998 for a two-week period in order to gain some exposure to the Chinese culture and probe the Chinese reality. During this trip, they visited 5 major cities, Shanghai, Jinan, Qufu, Suzhou and Beijing and were able to get a more concrete appreciation of the PRC.

They returned to China twice thereafter – once for a period of 15 days in November of 1998 and then for 30 days in April of 1999 – in order to hold lectures and workshops on conscientiology and projectiology, both on the mainland and in Hong Kong. The First and Second Scientific Educational Excursion on Conscientiology in China had the following results:

Total hours of educational activities: 51
Total students: 1,052

Besides the educational activities held, the authors were invited by several research institutions – including the National Academy of Chinese Traditional Medicine, the Beijing University of Chinese Medicine and Pharmacology, and the Chinese Academy of Somatic Science – to realize research exchanges with a total of almost 40 researchers. As well, the entire stock taken to China of 47 copies of the book *Projections of the Consciousness: A Diary of Out-of-Body Experiences*, by Waldo Vieira, M.D., were either donated or sold – it being clear that an even larger stock would have run out had it been at hand.

The warm, enthusiastic reception during these excursions on the part of the Chinese illustrated their interest in conscientiology. A fuller report on these scientific educational excursions on conscientiology in China, published in English, Portuguese and Spanish, can be found in the October-December, 2001 issue of *Conscientia* magazine, a publication of the Center for Higher Studies of Conscientiology (CHSC).

After thoroughly whetting their appetite for performing the clarification task in China, the authors decided to move there in December of 1999 in order to have a more profound, firsthand experience of China and its people.

By that time, however, the political climate in the PRC had changed markedly. The authors, coincidentally, had been in Beijing in April of 1999, at the time that 10,000 members of the now banned *Falun Gong* organization (an eclectic blend of *Qigong*, Buddhism and Taoism) held a peaceful demonstration in front of the government building in Tiananmen Square. From that point on, the official government policy regarding any matters even hinting at parapsychic issues became more restricted than before.

Although they were aware that the political climate at that time would not allow them to hold further lectures or courses on conscientiology and projectiology while residing in the PRC, they ended up spending a total of three years in China. One-and-a-half years was spent in China's capital city of Beijing and almost an equal amount of time residing in the city of Qingdao, located in Shandong province – Confucius' home state. During two years of their stay in China, the authors spent almost the entirety of their time in the midst of piles of reference books and partial printouts, translating the treatise *Projectiology: A Panorama of Experiences of the Consciousness Outside the Human Body* by Waldo Vieira, M.D., from its original Portuguese to English.

The greatest benefit of living in China, however, was to be able to interact with ordinary Chinese people on a day to day basis, making friends, sharing experiences and beginning to understand the Chinese reality on a grassroots level. One of the richest resources for researching any culture is to be in direct contact with that which is being researched. What proved essential for this to occur was learning to speak the language. To this end, the authors enrolled in a Chinese language university and “hit the books” in order to connect with their Chinese counterparts. Happily, the authors were able to make friends in the academic

community as well. They were able to meet with a number of renowned Chinese researchers and attend conferences on Chinese philosophy in the PRC. In the process, they had the opportunity to travel to various Chinese cities, including Qufu, the hometown of Confucius.



*Confucius University in Qufu city
(hometown of Confucius), China*

SOCIOPOLITICAL CONTEXT

Context. When analyzing a thinker's ideas, objectives and results, it is useful for one to look into the historical background or context in which that individual lived. In order for this to occur, one needs, as much as possible, to mentally place him or herself into that period to avoid interpreting past events through the prism of modern reality. To this end, the authors have included below a brief overview of certain facets of the times in which Confucius lived.

Period. Confucius (551-479 B.C.) lived in what was called the state of Lu (modern Shandong province) at the end of the Spring and Autumn period (722-481 B.C.), so-called as a result of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* which recounts the history of the state of Lu during that period.

Feudalism. The governmental system of the late Spring and Autumn period was a feudal system that was in a process of disintegration. The duke of Zhou (Western Zhou Dynasty: 1121-770 B.C.) had established a noncentralized feudal system that

depended upon family ties in order to govern the more distant areas – unlike the European feudal system which was entirely centralized upon the rule of the king. Consequently, hundreds of duchies, baronies and townships began to demand independence and this multitude of new states were at constant war with each other in an ongoing power struggle.

Rites. Confucius thus lived during a time of general chaos and a system of government termed *militarism*, characterized by each state spending enormous quantities of money on military might, at the expense of the well-being of the population. Legends spoke of ancient kings who had ruled with virtue and the use of rites (rituals, rules of behavior) during an extended period of peace. The time of Confucius, however, was one in which the rites had been all but forgotten and virtue had been replaced with avarice on the part of the dukes of the various states.

RELIGIOUS CONTEXT

Superstition. It was also a time of a great deal of superstition. The Chinese of that era felt they lived under the influence of various factors besides the interests of their government: they believed that heaven, spirits and deceased ancestors all had to be appeased, as these influences could all create problems in physical life (intrusion). Rulers, for example, would often spend great amounts of money, time and energy on ritualistic sacrifices and ceremonies in order to gain the favor of these forces, often at the expense of the effective governing of their state. Confucius saw a need for a more “down to earth” approach to governance, as will be seen below.

EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

Intellectual freedom. Paradoxically, the Spring and Autumn period is considered by many to have been the time of the greatest *intellectual freedom* in China’s history. As the feudal system was disintegrating, ambitious rulers sought counsel in order to enrich, strengthen and stabilize their state. A variety of social classes, including new landlords, free citizens and even

poor people, became interested in making themselves scholars in order to satisfy this need.

Monopoly. Up until this time, the nobility had maintained a monopoly on learning. In the turmoil of the times, this monopoly had effectively been broken. Scholars well-versed in the ceremonial rites would offer their services to those who needed to hold sacrificial, wedding or other types of ceremonies. They also opened their own schools for those with a desire – and the funds – to learn the “six arts” that were the mark of a learned person at the time: rites, archery, charioteering, calligraphy, music and mathematics.

Classics. The educational texts used in those times were the so-called “Classics.” They are:

1. ***Book of History*** – a collection of historical documents; the earliest work on Chinese history and political science
2. ***Book of Odes*** – A collection of 305 ancient poems
3. ***Book of Rites*** – describing guidelines for appropriate behavior and ceremonies regarding almost any imaginable activity.
4. ***Spring and Autumn Annals*** – A chronicle history of the state of Lu from 722-479 B.C.
5. ***I Ching (Book of Changes)*** – Originally a system of divination, it is a work on metaphysics that addresses the relationship between humankind and the universe
6. ***Book of Music*** – Now part of the *Book of Rites*, possibly a separate classic in the past.

Interpretation. In the turbulent era in which Confucius lived, many historical works had been destroyed in whole or in part. One of the roles of scholars was to gather the remnants of classic works together in order to edit them for educational purposes. An aspect which set Confucius apart from other educators is that he strived to gather as much of the classics together as he could and then gave them fresh interpretations.

CONFUCIUS' YOUTH

Qilin. The qilin, or Chinese unicorn, was an auspicious mythical animal in ancient China with the body of a deer, a bushy ox tail, cloven hooves, scales, and a single horn. This differs from the Western unicorn, which has the body and head of a horse, the hind legs of a stag, the tail of a lion, and a single horn. Legend has it that, before Confucius was born, a *qilin* left a letter (or a book, depending on the source) at his parents' home that said, "This child is very intelligent. He is going to make a great contribution and be admired by his people as a sage." The *qilin* represents virtue, longevity, loyalty and perfect goodness. It inhabits both intraphysical and extraphysical dimensions. The *qilin* is said to appear when a promising (male) child or a virtuous ruler is born, or can portend good government, among other things. The reader may find an interesting synchronicity in this legend and the fact that the *serenissimus* in China was nicknamed "*kilin*" (an alternate spelling of *qilin*) by Dr. Waldo Vieira years ago.

Appearance. Confucius was ungainly (bucktoothed, with a lump between his bulging eyes) and ended up a physical giant by the standards of his time (anywhere from 2m 30cm to 2m 65cm, depending upon the source).

Family. He was born into a family in China's lower aristocracy. His father was a renowned soldier and mayor, and his mother had been born into a family of scholars. His father died when Confucius was two or three years old, which prompted the family to move to the city of Qufu, where his maternal grandfather lived. The family of three (Confucius' half-brother was the crippled son of the father's former concubine), which had fallen into poverty, was supported by Confucius' mother. She also served as his earliest tutor by teaching him Chinese and some of the rites of that period.

Studies. From age 12-18 Confucius is said to have earnestly studied the six arts from his grandfather in Qufu, after which he graduated as a "man of knowledge." His mother died when he was 17 years of age and he married at 19 (the accepted age of

marriage at that time was 30). At the age of 20 he began to teach and was appointed a minor official of the state of Lu in charge of granaries and the collection of land tax.

Existential program. At thirty years of age he is quoted as saying, “At thirty I stood firm.” (*Analects*, 2.4). This could be taken to mean, according to conscientiology, that the foundation of his existential program had been established. By that time he had already determined many of his fundamental concepts and had attracted a number of disciples.

IDEOLOGY

Golden Age. Confucius was convinced that the solution to the problems plaguing the Chinese society of his time was to reinstate the values of the previous “Golden Age,” when the legendary “sage kings” ruled. It was allegedly a time during which all people were treated fairly, everyone had a function, those in need were cared for, and peace lasted for hundreds of years while these wise rulers governed. They ruled not through laws but with virtue, combined with a system of rites or rules of social behavior. By serving as living examples, they allegedly fostered a virtuous and consequently peaceful, prosperous and stable society. Confucius thus promoted achieving social order by advocating moral reeducation, which he felt would lead to self-development and subsequent societal reform.

Traditionalism. He was, generally speaking, a traditionalist. This is evidenced when he says:

“I was not born a wise man. I am merely one who loves ancient studies and works very hard to learn them.” (*Analects*, 7.20)

However, he was endeavoring to resurrect a prior paradigm while introducing some innovations that he thought would make it more suitable to his time, as will be seen below. Being a very practical person and feeling that he had a time-tested formula, Confucius sought to convince the rulers of the late Spring and Autumn period to adopt these values. Following is a summary of

some of the main concepts that he tirelessly taught his disciples:

仁 REN

Definition. This term has been variously translated as *virtue*, *benevolence*, *humanity*, *goodness*, *kindness* or *altruism*. Confucius entreated people to:

“Love others.” (*Analects*, 22.22).

Ren is the most central concept in Confucius’ ideology. If everyone had *ren*, society’s problems would be solved.

Innovation. Confucius’ use of the term *ren* represents a notable innovation. It originally stood for concern for others, especially as shown by the nobility. Confucius infused it with new meaning to represent the moral profile of what he called the “superior man” (*chunzi*).

Parallel. A parallel can be made between *ren* the conscientiological concept of maxifraternity, as exemplified in the following quote:

“To love another is to make him or her feel better than you do.” (Waldo Vieira)

孝 XIAO

Definition. This is another very central concept which is typically translated as “filial piety” or “filial obedience.” It represents the duty and obedience that is expected from the subordinate and the obligation to be nurturing that is expected from the superior in The Five Relationships, as shown in the following passage:

What are "the things which men consider right?"

1. Kindness on the part of the father, and filial duty on that of the son.

2. Gentleness on the part of the elder brother, and obedience on that of the younger.
3. Righteousness on the part of the husband, and submission on that of the wife.
4. Kindness on the part of elders, and deference on that of juniors.
5. Benevolence on the part of the ruler, and loyalty on that of the minister.

(Book of Rites, Bk. 7, Ch. 19, Sec. 2)

Innovation. Although this concept already existed in the Chinese feudal system, Confucius established another innovation by allowing a degree of flexibility that did not previously exist, as shown by the following passage:

“In serving his parents, a son may gently reprove them. If he sees that they are not inclined to follow his suggestion, he should resume his reverential attitude, but not abandon his purpose.” (*Analects*, 4.18)

Stability. Confucius held that if filial piety was observed with regard to the five relationships, it would result in stability at the level of family, society, the nation and the world (in other words China, which was their world at that time).

忠 ZHONG

Definition. Translated as “conscientiousness,” “meticulousness” and “loyalty,” *zhong* is often also taken to mean “obedience” and “conformity.” Confucius, however, provided another innovation by introducing the element of “truthfulness” to its meaning, as exemplified by the following:

Zilu (a disciple) asked how to serve a prince. Confucius said, “Never cheat him; withstand him to his face.” (*Analects*, 14.22)

恕 SHU

Definition. Translated as “reciprocity,” “altruism” and “consideration,” *shu* is considered Confucianism’s counterpart to Christianity’s “golden rule.” It is illustrated in the following passage:

"Do not do to others what you would not have them do to you." (*Analects* 15.24)

礼 LI

Definition. Translated variously as “rites,” “ceremony,” “propriety,” “norms” and “rules of behavior,” *li* was considered by Confucius to be an effective regulator of Chinese society. This system of *rites* was alleged to have been formulated by the legendary sage kings of ancient China in order to maintain social norms. The rationale was that if every element of society, from the king down to the lowliest subject, followed *li*, society would remain in order, with everything in its proper place.

Unwritten laws. The system of rites adopted by Confucius, from the Zhou Dynasty, outlined the norms not only for interpersonal interactions – which would vary according to status, age and gender – but for dressing, eating, sitting, and almost every conceivable action in life. It also laid out the proper way to conduct such things as weddings, funerals, sacrifices to the spirits and ancestors. *Li* was thus a system of *pattern-behavior* that would serve to prevent crimes and encourage good conduct throughout the realm. This system of appropriate behavior, when conjoined with virtue – and implanted in the kingdom from top to bottom – made up a system of *unwritten laws*. That is, if this system of “*ren + li*” were to be used, as it had been during the legendary “Golden Age,” there would theoretically be no need for laws, as people would behave appropriately on their own accord.

Confor. The *confor* of this system of government involved virtue (*ren*) as its content and the rites (*li*) as its form.

Anti-bellicosity. It is worth noting that this system of unwritten laws proposed by Confucius was diametrically opposed to the military system of government in place during that time. This is exemplified by Confucius' words in the following passage:

“If the people are guided by law and kept in order by punishment they may try to avoid crime, but will have no sense of shame. If they are guided by virtue, and kept in order by the rules of propriety (*li*), they will have a sense of shame and, moreover, will become good.” (*Analects*, 2.3)

Innovation. Although the use of rites was not a new concept, Confucius added an innovation by allowing a certain degree of flexibility. He recommended that they should not be followed in a rigid manner, but in accordance with circumstances.

Reeducation. It is also important to point out that Confucius saw the use of the rites as a means to an end: he advocated the use of rites in order to help reeducate society and eventually beget his ultimate goal of a utopia in which these same rites would no longer be necessary, since appropriate behavior would have become second nature for all.

EVOLUTIONARY MODELS

Confucius spoke of two different evolutionary models: the *sage* and the *superior man*.

Sage

Unattainable. The sage, likened to a saint by some, appears to the authors to be on par with an *evolutiologist* or even a *serenissimus*. Confucius did not mention the sage at great length except to remark that he had not and did not expect to encounter one in his lifetime. He apparently felt that the goal of sage hood was too distant a goal for the people of his time.

Characteristics. Confucius attributed the sage with the following characteristics:

1. Confer benefit on all the people of the world

2. Assist them in all difficulties
3. Afford universal relief
4. A “savior of the world”

Superior Man

Attainable. A more attainable evolutionary level, and one that is often mentioned in the *Analects*, is the superior man. This would lie somewhere between the common person and the sage. Could the superior man be likened to the status of a *cosmoethical petifree individual*? The superior man was apparently modeled after China’s earlier virtuous rulers and is a status that Confucius felt could be attained in one’s current lifetime.

Characteristics. Some of the characteristics of the superior man are listed below:

1. Has achieved a stage of high development by practicing correctitude, treating his parents with love, respecting those senior to himself, being honest with his friends, etc.
2. He is not in favor or against anything; he follows what is right
3. Inner tranquility: absence of anxiety and fear
4. Seeks virtue (*ren*)
5. Seeks discipline
6. Democracy: Is liberal with the opinion of others, but not always in agreement (*respect-disagreement* binomial)
7. Positivism: Sees the strong-traits in others
8. Leadership: Utilizes people according to their capacities
9. Demanding: Is easy to work for, but difficult to satisfy, because he is satisfied with what is right (correctitude)
10. Assertiveness: Is firm, but does not fight
11. Mediocrity: Accepts a position of responsibility, but refuses a comfortable job
12. Politics: Is sociable, but does not take sides
13. Spontaneity: Is always natural and relaxed with people
14. Self-research: Always remembers the causes of his errors
15. Self-realization: What he seeks is within himself and not in others

16. Verbauxion: Is embarrassed that his words might be better than his actions
17. Sincerity: Blames himself and not others
18. Confidence: Is self-confident without being arrogant
19. Multifaceted: Has mastered the Six Arts
20. Conscientiality: Is not worried about poverty but instead with conscientiality
21. Prudence: Acts step by step according to what is best on any occasion

PARADIGM

Evolutionary intelligence. Although the authors have compared the above evolutionary models to conscientiological evolutionary models, they cannot be taken as direct comparisons. This is because the thrust of Confucius' ideology, as handed down through the ages, was entirely *intrapysical* in nature. One of the greatest contrasts between Confucius' concepts and those of conscientiology is the lack of evolutionary intelligence of the former. According to most authors, Confucius did not consider multidimensionality worthy of his attention. Although he was a strong adherent of making the necessary ceremonial sacrifices to spirits and ancestors – as they were considered to be able to wreak havoc on individuals' lives if not properly appeased – his priority, as previously mentioned, was putting intrapysical life in order. This is clearly illustrated by the following passage:

Zilu asked about serving the spirits of the dead. Confucius said, "While you are not able to serve men, how can you serve their spirits?" Zilu added, "I venture to ask about death?" He was answered, "While you do not know life, how can you know about death?" (*Analects*, 11.12)

Existential program. Interestingly enough, however, he often respectfully referred to the "mandate of heaven." Indeed, the authors feel that he certainly had an *existential program* as he had such a strong sense of purpose, considering his life task to actually be a "mandate of heaven." This is exemplified by the

following passage depicting his personal conviction during an incident in which an attempt was being made on his life:

Confucius said, "Heaven produced the virtue that is in me. What can Hwan T'ui do to me?" (*Analects*, 7.22)

Multidimensionality. Confucius' horizons did broaden, however, when he began to study the *I Ching*. While some researchers feel that Confucius only became interested in the *I Ching* at the very end of his life (he underwent desoma at the age of seventy-three), there is strong evidence that he actually began his interest in multidimensional issues in his mid-fifties (Guo, 2001). In fact, he pored over this classical text to such an extent that the cords holding the bamboo strips together (paper had not yet been invented) had to be replaced three times.

Consciential gestations. As well as recompiling and editing many of the classic works of his time, Confucius is also attributed with writing the ten appendices, the "Ten Wings," to the *I Ching* which serve as explanations of the *I Ching's* 64 hexagrams. According to Guo Yi, Ph.D., "Confucius had established a complete metaphysics...after he studied the *Book of Changes (I Ching)*." (Guo, 2001) Why, then, do his sayings, as recorded in the *Analects*, not reflect more of his interest in the *I Ching*?

Analects. Most scholars, when studying Confucianism, focus almost entirely on the *Analects*, due to the fact that his ideas are mostly available through this work. The *Analects* is a compilation of sayings by Confucius, as well as dialogues between Confucius and his disciples. It is important to keep in mind that they were gathered *posthumously*. The *Analects* was completed by the disciples and their own disciples up to seventy-five years after Confucius' first desoma – this being a point much debated by scholars. Thus, these sayings – which had remained an oral tradition for over seventy years – were compiled from the recollection of those who had been present

with Confucius and/or those who had received these passages through the oral tradition of that time.

Disagreement. The various disciples often contributed quotations from situations that involved them personally. It is known that some of the disciples, such as Zigong, disagreed with Confucius' fascination with the *I Ching*, considering it to be a simple tool for divination and not grasping it as a work on metaphysics, as Confucius apparently did. Zigong, as well as others, may therefore have omitted instances that involved discourses on multidimensionality. The following passage serves to portray the tone of the *Analects* in this regard:

Zigong said, "The Master's teaching about historical records may be heard [are taught]. But his discourses about man's nature and the way of Heaven cannot be heard [are not taught]." (*Analects*, 5.13)

Cosmoethics. Although the *Analects* is a somewhat random gathering of quotes by Confucius and are removed from the context that could offer them much greater meaning, he is quoted as saying:

"At fifty I knew the Decree of Heaven."
"At sixty I was already obedient [to the Decree of Heaven]." (*Analects*, 2.4)

This is taken by some authors (Fung, 1948) to mean that Confucius was "conscious of super-moral values" by the age of sixty. Can it be inferred that he had become aware of at least a sketchy version of *cosmoethics* by that time?

CONFUCIUS AS A TEACHER

Objective. Confucius' main thrust was a political one. However, education played a pivotal role in the implementation of his ideas. He felt that in order to achieve social order, the people needed to be reeducated in terms of virtue and rites, as mentioned above. Being very practical, he approached the issue from two angles: while he spent most of his adult life

endeavoring to achieve a government post that would allow him to implement his ideals, he also continually taught those who were willing to embrace these same ideals.

Persistence. His dedication to teaching proved to be especially valuable in the long run: although he was not able to convince any ruler to employ him in an official capacity, some of his disciples were able to achieve official positions. They also steadfastly continued his teachings, against some very strong counterflow, and Confucianism eventually came to play a core role in China's political scene for thousands of years.

Democratization. Confucius was not China's first teacher, as many books proclaim. Education was well established by that time, although it was only available to the nobility and to that portion of China's upwardly mobile society that could afford the high tuition. One of the *unique* contributions Confucius did make to education was to *democratize* it: he was the first private teacher in China to make education of the Six Arts, and his ideology, available to anyone with a keen desire to learn and the ability to pay a tuition of "ten pieces of dried meat" – an extremely reasonable request in those days. He even made his teachings available to individuals with a disreputable background.

Discrimination. It is worth noting, however, that Confucius opened the doors of his school to everyone *except* women. Although a notable pioneer, he was still a product of his time. Chinese society in that era – and for a long time to come, even up until today – gave overwhelming importance and value to the male population, as illustrated by these words from Confucius:

"Only women and inferior men are very hard to deal with. If you are close to them, they become unruly. If you keep them at a distance, they are discontented." (*Analects*, 17.25)

Demands. Confucius was an exacting teacher. Although he had a democratic approach, he would only teach those who were

very motivated and had a capacity to grasp his concepts clearly. He is quoted as saying:

“Not until he is eager to know but feels difficulty do I instruct; not until he wants to speak out but fails to express himself do I enlighten. If I present him one corner and he cannot infer the other three from it, I do not continue the lesson.” (*Analects*, 7.8)

He also made several demands of his students. They needed to: be virtuous; understand the mankind-society relationship; have a good grasp of the past; have a clear vision of the future; disseminate and practice the Way (*Tao*). (Ding, 1997)

METHODOLOGY

Confucius also stands out as a pioneering educator by the methodology he employed. The following are some of the techniques he used:

1. **Analogy.** He was fond of using examples from everyday life to exemplify his ideas, such as the following one to illustrate “how men are known in times of adversity”:

“When it gets cold, we see that the pine and the cypress are the last to lose their leaves.” (*Analects*, 9.27)

2. **Verbaction.** He was said to always practice what he thought and promoted this idea:

“The Superior Man acts before he speaks, and afterwards speaks according to his actions.” (*Analects*, 2.13)

3. **Question-and-answer method.** Similar to the technique used by ancient Greek philosophers, Confucius often led his disciples to see a point.

4. **Heterocritique.** He encouraged his disciples to have views that differed from his and sometimes admonished them when they did not:

“Yan Hui (a disciple) does not help me. He is never displeased with what I say.” (*Analects*, 11.4)

5. **Individualization.** He tailored the way he interacted with each of his disciples, given their individual capacities and needs. Sometimes he would give different answers to different disciples who had asked him the same question, as illustrated by the following passage:

Gongxi Hua (a disciple) said, “When Zhongyou (a disciple) asked, ‘When one hears a maxim, should one at once put it into practice?’ you said, ‘You have a father and elder brother alive.’ But when Ran Qiu (a disciple) asked ‘When one hears a maxim, should one at once put it into practice,’ you said, ‘When you hear it, put it into practice.’ I am perplexed, and would venture to ask for an explanation.”

Confucius said, “Ran Qiu is backward; so I urged him on. Zhongyou is fanatical about Goodness; so I held him back.” (*Analects*, 11.21)

6. **Confor.** Confucius was apparently a dynamic teacher who was also somewhat charismatic. He could allegedly teach the entire day without tiring himself or the students. He is also said to have had a good sense of humor.

7. **Learning + Analysis.** Confucius warned his disciples against learning devoid of analysis, as well as thinking without learning:

"Learning without thought is labor lost; thought without learning is dangerous." (*Analects*, 2.15)

8. **Revision.** He also laid emphasis on reviewing one’s existing knowledge, considering it an important part of being a competent teacher (Chen, 1994).

“A man who reviews what he has already learned and gains some new understanding from it is capable of being a teacher.” (*Analects*, 2.11)

CONFUCIUS' ADULTHOOD

Students. By the age of 30, Confucius had already gathered a number of students, as previously mentioned. It is said that, by the end of his life, he had 3,000 students.

Encounter with Laozi. According to many scholars, Confucius traveled to the state of Zhou to study rites with Laozi when he was approximately 34 years old. Although this is still a point of some controversy, as some scholars feel they were not contemporaries, recent research (Guo, 2001) tends to support this theory. It is interesting to consider that, although Confucius most certainly was exposed to the *I Ching* at that time, it was not until he was in his mid-fifties that he developed a genuine interest in multidimensionality, as previously mentioned.

Official posts. By the age of 55, Confucius had raised up through the ranks of officialdom to become Prime Minister of the state of Lu, as well as being appointed Minister of Construction and the official in charge of sacrificial ceremonies. Nevertheless, when the ruler of Lu began to ignore his official duties, after falling into complacent indifference due to the strategic donation of dozens of seductive dancers from a rival neighboring state, Confucius perceived that the state of Lu was a lost cause in terms of implementing his political ideas.

Itinerancy. He then ventured out of Lu for a total of 14 years, traveling from one state to another in search of a ruler who was willing to put his teachings into practice, while gathering more disciples. Nevertheless, all of his efforts were to no avail. After risking assassination, going hungry and receiving perfunctory welcomes from a series of rulers who had no intention of changing their bellicose *modus operandi*, he returned to his home state of Lu to teach and write until his desoma in 479 B.C.

PERSONAL FACETS

Over the centuries, Confucius has become deified in China, and throughout Asia. This is what turned Confucianism into a

“religion.” What about Confucius the man? The following is a listing of a few of his personal facets for consideration:

Macrosoma. Confucius was a physical giant for his time, as previously mentioned. He was also very intelligent, somewhat charismatic and extremely dedicated to his work. He lived seventy-three years, overcoming the elements, the era’s lack of hygiene, fourteen years of continuous travel using a horse-drawn cart and living outdoors much of the time. All this speaks of an impressive somatic and mentalsomatic capacity. Did Confucius have a macrosoma? The above are indications that he did.

Perseverance. Confucius encountered overwhelming counterflow during his entire professional life. Not only was he refused by every leader he entreated to implement his principles for what he felt was a system of sound government but he was also mocked, chased, physically threatened and starved by some of them. Nevertheless, Confucius remained positive and determined throughout. Not once did he stop his work of seeking acceptance for his ideas, teaching his disciples and editing the classic works of the time, as well as writing new works, such as the appendices to the *I Ching* – the latter written at the end of his life.

Existential program. He was convinced that his personal mission was a “mandate of heaven,” as illustrated by this quote:

“As king Wen (a legendary ruler) has died, is all the cultural heritage not kept in me? if Heaven had desired its extinction, I would not have acquired it. If heaven does not desire its extinction, what harm can the men of Kuang (a feudal state) do to me? (*Analects*, 9.5)

Innate ideas. However, he affirmed that he had no innate knowledge, per se, but that he was simply a diligent student, when he is quoted as saying:

“There may be those who can do without knowledge. I am not one of them. To hear much, pick out the good and follow it; to see much, and keep it in [one’s]

memory: this is [the] next best [thing] to innate knowledge.” (*Analects*, 7.28)

Intermissive course. Did Confucius have an intermissive course? It is generally held that intermissive courses on this planet began in the mid 1600s. Although this rules out intermissive courses as they are understood today, it is quite possible that Confucius may have had some type of sketchy intermissive orientation prior to that lifetime. Given the conditions of that era, of ongoing warfare and general social chaos, one can hypothesize that the priority at that time was a straightforward one: self-education to restore order to society. Confucius sought to do this by reinstating traditional values and rites that had fallen out of use.

Existential completism. Was Confucius a completist? Certainly a man ahead of his time, his ideas were not accepted wholeheartedly by any government during his life. They did, however, become state ideology in China for thousands of years, albeit with some gaps along the way. This could be referred to as “post-desomatic completism.”

The personal achievements realized during his life are also indicative of a completist, as portrayed by the following quote:

- “At fifteen I set my heart on learning.”
- “At thirty I stood firm.”
- “At forty I had no doubts.”
- “At fifty I knew the Decree of Heaven.”
- “At sixty I was already obedient [to the Decree of Heaven].”
- “At seventy I could follow the desires of my mind without overstepping the boundaries [of what is right].” (*Analects*, 2.4)

MISSING LINK

Confucianism, as it has been passed down through the millennia, is certainly a rich resource for understanding Chinese culture. However, it has suffered many alterations along the way, often

by dynastic leaders who preferred to select portions that spoke of submission to authority and other useful tools for managing a country. Also, numerous works essential to an understanding of the early Confucian lineage have remained lost for many centuries.

Discoveries. Recent breakthrough archeological discoveries in China, however, are having a profound influence on Chinese philosophy. Notably, the landmark discoveries made in the Chinese cities of Mawangdui in 1973 and Guodian in 1993 have provided invaluable original versions of Confucian and Taoist texts as well as formerly unknown texts. Especially interesting is the role that these discoveries are playing in providing the missing link between Confucius and the early Confucian thinker Mencius (372-289 B.C.).

Confucius' grandson. This link has proved to be Confucius' grandson Zisi (492-431 B.C., also spelled Tzu-ssu, using the older Wade-Giles system of Romanization). Although Zisi has always been recognized as one of ancient China's *most important philosophers*, few of his works – mostly limited to the *Doctrine of the Mean (Zhong Yong)* and three chapters in the *Book of Rites* – have survived. The term “doctrine of the mean” signifies “universal moral order.” It also stands for “finding the central clue in our moral being which unites us to the universal order” (Lin, 1943). Could this be likened to the conscientiological term “cosmoethics”?

Discoveries. The Mawangdui and Guodian discoveries have unearthed a number of works by Zisi and his disciples that are effectively rewriting Chinese history. An article on the Guodian discovery in the *Harvard Gazette* states:

The genealogy of Chinese intellectual thought is now undergoing revision and Taoist and Confucian texts are being reinterpreted. And because Taoism and Confucianism are very much "living traditions" in China, these slender bamboo strips have the potential to transform daily living. "These are not simply philosophical ideas; they have broad implications for practical living, for the development of polity and society," says Tu

[Weiming, Ph.D., director of the Harvard Yenching Institute].
(Shen, 2001)

In this same article Dr. Tu stresses the importance of the Guodian discovery when he says, "This is like the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls."

CONCLUSION

In the retrocognitive research involved in the sub-discipline of para-history, it is useful to seek out portions of our consciential heritage – our own “missing links.” Confucianism is extremely valuable in this respect. Without intending to serve as apologists for any historical line of thought, the authors find it very instructive to probe the ideological past of our karmic group(s) in an endeavor to shed further light on some of the conscientiological seeds that have been planted during prior millennia on this planet. Since many individuals in the conscientiological community have expressed an interest in a future lifetime(s) in China and since Confucianism plays such a central role in China’s past, present, and quite probably its future, the authors consider this ancient philosophy a good place to begin.

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Kevin and Simone de La Tour have been teachers with the IIPC as implementing volunteers for 13 and 15 years, respectively. They began their participation with conscientiology by lecturing on and teaching conscientiology and projectiology courses in Brazil, after which they established the IIPC New York office in 1994, coordinating that office for five-and-a-half years. They were the organizers of and teachers for *The First and Second Scientific Educational Excursion on Conscientiology in China* (1998, 1999) and subsequently resided in China from 1999 to 2002. They have been participating as volunteer translators and researchers in the conscientiological sub-discipline of para-history at the Center for Higher Studies of Conscientiology (CHSC) since November of 2002. Kevin and Simone are the translators of the treatise *Projectiology: A Panorama of Experiences of the Consciousness Outside the Human Body* by Waldo Vieira, M.D.