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CHAPTER 12

What Christians Can Learn from Chinese Religions

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CHINESE RELIGIONS

The term “Chinese religions” is often used as generic shorthand to encompass the various religious traditions that emerged in China more than 2000 years ago. Throughout China’s long history, these religious traditions have interacted with and transformed each other such that the boundaries between them have become fluid and porous, with significant mutual interactions and sharing that have resulted in hybridities, multiple belongings, and multiple border crossings. The traditional Chinese term *sanjiao* (Three Ways), which refers to the three great Chinese religious traditions of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, best epitomizes this complex reality. More often than not, multiple belonging and multiple border crossings are exemplified by the ability of many Chinese people to practice any one or more, or even all three, religious traditions at the same time. For example, one could be a Confucian in public life, a Daoist practitioner searching for good health and immortality, offer sacrifices to local deities for good fortune, and call on Amitabha Buddha to be rescued to the Pure Land to begin one’s dharmic journey toward enlightenment.

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More importantly, these multiple belongings and border crossings highlight the complex realities that are, at best, inadequately captured and described in the term “religion.” Strictly speaking, the category of “religion” (*zongjiao*, literally “ancestral traditions”) is a “Western” neologism that was first introduced into the Chinese lexicon in the nineteenth century via Japan, where the term was coined by the Japanese to categorize the “Western” religion of Christianity as a separate legal entity.¹ Historically, the Chinese used terms such as *dao* (way), *jiao* (teachings), and *jia* (house or family) to label various “indigenous” Chinese “religious” traditions, reserving the formal term *zongjiao* (religion) for “Western” religion in general, and Christianity in particular. For ease of discussion, we will use the term “religion” as convenient shorthand to discuss the indigenous Chinese religious traditions in this chapter.

HISTORICAL ORIGINS

The Chinese civilization arose contemporaneously with the Egyptian, Babylonian, and Indus Valley civilizations, and before the birth of the Greek civilization, the cradle of European philosophy. For thousands of years, the Chinese civilization has prided itself as the *Zhongguo* (Middle Kingdom), the center of the inhabited world, “a civilized oasis surrounded by what was thought to be a cultural desert.”² This civilization traces its earliest beginnings to the primitive Chinese settlements that first emerged during the Neolithic period (ca. 5000 BCE) and evolved in sophistication during the Bronze Age (ca. 3000 BCE). Archaeological excavations of burial sites from these periods have uncovered graves arranged hierarchically, with primitive amulets and statues found at some sites and remains of sacrificial offerings found at others, highlighting the emergence of rudimentary rituals for the dead.

By the Shang Dynasty (ca. 1766–1046 BCE), these rudimentary rituals evolved into rituals of divination involving *jiagu* (oracle bones) that were performed by shamans who inscribed questions to the spirits on pieces of tortoise or oxen bones using the earliest form of the Chinese script. Although some of the questions were addressed to either the supreme deity *Shangdi* (the Most High Lord) or other lesser deities of the wind and grain, celestial bodies, mountains, and rivers, the majority of the questions were directed at the ancestors of the Shang ruling family, complementing the Shang ruling house’s sacrificial offerings to their ancestors and *Shangdi*.³ This state-sanctioned religious framework that was built upon ancestor veneration and sacrificial offerings was continued by the Zhou

dynasty (1046–259 BCE), which introduced a cult of ancestral offerings and sacrifices to *Tian* (Heaven).

The foundations and major features of Chinese religions emerged during the tumultuous period of the *Baijia* (Hundred Schools), straddling the latter part of the Spring and Autumn Period (722–481 BCE), the twilight years of the Zhou dynasty, and the Warring States period (481–221 BCE), when Zhou rule collapsed and feudal states vied for power. This was a period of terrible suffering for the ordinary folk caught in the cross fire of marauding armies. The old cultural-religious order had collapsed and created a spiritual vacuum. Philosophers and scholars from rival schools, the so-called Hundred Schools, offered competing solutions to the existential questions on human suffering and social disorder. Promoters of the two emerging traditions that came to be called Confucian and Daoist debated with each other and with other rivals such as the Legalists, Mohists, and the Naturalists.⁴ During this chaotic period, classic texts such as the Confucian Analects *Lunyu* and the Daoist classics *Daodejing* and *Zhuangzi* were written.

CONFUCIANISM

Undergirding the Chinese civilization and shaping the worldview of the Chinese people for more than two millennia is the *ru* (literati) or “Confucian” tradition. The term “Confucianism” was first coined by the Jesuit missionaries as a neologism for the venerable, all-encompassing tradition rooted in the socio-ethical precepts and philosophical norms governing human conduct and social relations in Chinese antiquity that the Jesuits took for granted as having been taught by the historical *Kongzi* (Confucius) (551–479 BCE). Beginning with its preeminent position as the officially sanctioned philosophical-religious and sociopolitical system during the Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), the impact of Confucianism has been felt far beyond the borders of China, shaping the worldviews of diverse East Asian societies over the course of two millennia.

Strictly speaking, there is no exact Chinese equivalent of the term “Confucianism,” which is used to translate the *ru* or “literati” tradition of China. Unlike the Jesuit missionaries, the Chinese never saw fit to coin a single term to describe the diversity of competing schools that have been referred to as *rujia* (literati family), *rujiao* (literati teachings), *ruxue* (literati learning), or simply as *ru* (literati). While the *ru* tradition itself predates Confucius, the ethical vision of Confucius and his followers has come to define and enrich the *ru* tradition, with Confucius being

honored within the Chinese tradition as *zi* (Master), *zongshi* (Ancestral Teacher), *xianshi* (First Teacher), and *zhisheng* (Great Sage). The efforts of the Jesuit missionaries to canonize Confucius as the “founder” of Confucianism had more to do with missionary strategies than being an accurate description of the *ru* tradition in its sociohistorical setting. In the absence of other more appropriate terms, the terms “Confucian” and “Confucianism” will be used in this discussion as convenient labels for the *ru* tradition accordingly.⁵

The many schools of thought within Confucianism converged around the existential quest for the ultimate values that shape human living from emperor to peasant. The responses that Confucius and his successors articulated reveal a focus on authentic relations that form the cornerstone for familial harmony and social cohesion. Confucius and his disciples idealized a person who is adept at relating to others and able to trust in the validity of these relations for familial and social harmony. According to Confucius, the perfected Confucian is always and everywhere fully human in relation to others within the wider world of humanity seeking to embody the ultimate and highest virtue of human living. In the Analects, Confucius called this ideal person a *junzi* (exemplary person) and the highest existential virtue that this exemplary person embodies *ren* (humanness). The Confucian *wulun* (Five Relations) expresses succinctly the kernel of the interconnected webs of familial, communal, and social relationships that undergird the foundations of a Confucian society: parent–child, ruler–subject, husband–wife, elder–younger sibling, and friend–friend (Mencius 3A:4). The first four relations are hierarchical relations, while the fifth is a relation of equals. Within the Confucian conception of society, there are no strangers in society. Indeed, the most basic relation is friend–friend, which is a relationship among equals. The Five Relations reveals that the hierarchical ordering of familial relations is the principal foundation upon which complex interlocking human relations in the Chinese society are constructed. Before a person is able to do great things in society, that person must first be a proper spouse, parent, child, sibling, subject, or friend to another.

The Incipient Goodness of Human Nature

Unlike Christianity, which takes the fallen human nature in need of redemption as its starting point, the Confucian tradition, beginning with Mencius, begins with the premise that *benxing* (original human nature) at one’s birth is good but underdeveloped. While Confucius himself

never delved into *renxing* (human nature), Mencius asserted that at birth the *benxing* comprises the four virtuous tendencies of commiseration, shame, deference, and preference that are incipient, underdeveloped, and fragile. For him, an infant is not born as an “individual,” but rather into a framework of familial and sociocultural relations, which shape and nurture that infant’s *benxing*. With proper education and self-cultivation, these original tendencies can mature and blossom into the four cardinal virtues of *ren* (humanness), *yi* (appropriateness), *li* (propriety), and *zhi* (wisdom) in a fully developed *renxing* (human nature) (see Mencius 2A:6).

Mencius’ rationale for his understanding of human nature was simple but elegant: he argued that the spontaneous and instinctive impulse of every person, however morally reprehensible, to save a child about to fall into a well is evidence of the presence of latent goodness inherent in that person, suggesting the presence of goodness in human nature (Mencius 2A:6). Correspondingly, Mencius insisted that selfish desires do not constitute the essence of *benxing*, explaining his position in the parable of “Ox Mountain” (Mencius 6A:8). In this parable, the Ox Mountain is a metaphor for the totally evil person, devoid of any virtue. Just as it is natural for trees to grow on a mountain, so it is natural for incipient moral shoots to develop into moral virtues even in an evil person. Just as the constant felling of trees by axes and eating away of young shoots by cattle reduces the mountain to a hopeless barrenness, so too the preoccupation with selfish thoughts and deeds destroys the incipient moral shoots in a person, precluding them from blossoming into virtues. Just as new shoots spring up if the mountain is left alone by woodcutters and livestock to rejuvenate, so too new moral shoots spring up and blossom into virtues in an evil person when given an opportunity to do so. Insofar as axes and livestock are not essential to the original nature of the mountain, selfish desires too do not constitute the *benxing* of a person.

This Mencian idealism would come to define the optimism of the Confucian tradition that celebrates education as a means of developing human nature to its full potential. It perceives the human being not in terms of static ontological essentialism, but as a dynamic “becoming” striving toward wisdom and sagehood. In other words, the Confucian tradition rejects an essentialist understanding of personhood in favor of a relational perspective that celebrates the progressive maturing of human nature within an interlocking matrix of “reciprocal relations” that, over a lifetime, defines one’s character.

Within the Confucian tradition, the concept of *ren*, often translated as “humanity” or “humanness,” refers to the attribute of “being

fully human,” in contrast with barbarians or animals acting on instincts. The *Shuowen jiezi* (second-century Chinese dictionary) suggests that etymologically the Chinese character for *ren* comprises the character for “person” and the number “two,” indicating perhaps a relational quality that marks the “human” character of persons in community.⁶ Herbert Fingarette expresses this succinctly as follows: “For Confucius, unless there are at least two human beings, there can be no human beings.”⁷ Confucius himself defined *ren* as *ai ren* (loving people) (Analects 12:22), emphasizing the “interrelationality” and “intersubjectivity” of human living, where one is always “one among many” and seeking to achieve full humanity in one’s relations with others. For him, *ren* is the highest moral virtue and the totality of all moral virtues embodying an ideal moral life. In practical terms, *ren* embodies *yi* (appropriateness), *li* (ritual propriety), and *xiao* (filiality).

Yi (*Appropriateness*)

The term *yi* is commonly translated by Western scholars as “benevolence,” “morality,” or “moral.” However, traditional Chinese dictionaries, for example, the *Ci Hai* (Sea of Words), translate this term as “right,” “fitting,” or “proper.” Etymologically, the word comprises the ideograph of *yang* (a sheep) above the ideograph for *wo* (the first person pronoun), which can be translated both in the first person (“I” or “me”) or the third person (“we” or “us”). Sinologists think that the ideograph for *yi* represents a community doing something proper or fitting by sacrificing a sheep (see, e.g., Analects 3:17).⁸ On this basis, the term *yi*, “appropriateness” or doing something “proper” or “fitting,” undergirds other virtues such as propriety and filiality, enabling one to do what is proper and fitting in relation to others: The Master said, “*Junzi* (exemplary persons) understand what is *yi* (appropriate), petty persons understand only what is of personal advantage” (Analects 4:16). It also forms the basis for the Golden Rule in the Analects: “Do not impose upon others what you yourself do not want” (Analects 12:2, cf. 15:24).

Li (*Ritual Propriety*)

The term *li* refers to the ritualized norms of proper conduct regulating all aspects of human interactions according to relations of position and rank in family and society. For Confucius, *li* is the proper expression

of sincere emotion, distinguishing the civilized person from barbarians who give free and undisciplined vent to their emotions. He condemns empty and formalistic displays of rituals (see Analects 3:12), insisting that *li* must combine the “external” aspect of performing the proper ritual form with the “internal” disposition of heartfelt inner attitude. Indeed, Analects 2:7 criticizes empty and insincere ritualized displays of filiality toward one’s parents. There is no separation or contradiction between external propriety and inner disposition. The goal of propriety is social harmony:

Achieving *he* (harmony) is the most valuable function of observing ritual *li* (propriety). In the way of the Former Kings, this achievement of harmony made them elegant, and was a guiding standard in all things large and small. But when things are not going well, to realize harmony just for its own sake without regulating the situation through observing ritual propriety will not work. (Analects 1:12)

Xiao (Filiality)

For Confucians, the proper relational ordering of society as a human macrocosm takes the family as its inspiration and starting point. Society is ordered and harmony is promoted at all levels based on *xiao* (filiality), the source of order and harmony within a family. Filiality is defined as the primacy of the parent–child relations in the indivisible personal, social, and religious realms of one’s life. For Confucius, filiality undergirds one’s obligations of reverence, obedience, and love toward one’s parents when they are still alive, venerating them with the proper rituals when they are dead, and perpetuating this veneration by producing descendants (see Analects 2:5). At the same time, filiality is more than merely giving material support to one’s parents. It also involves one’s cultivation of proper respectful and reverential inner dispositions toward one’s parents that Confucius described as follows:

Ziyou asked about *xiao* (filial conduct). The Master replied: “Those today who are filial are considered so because they are able to provide for their parents. But even dogs and horses are given that much care. If you do not respect your parents, what is the difference?” (Analects 2:7)

It does not mean an uncritical obsequiousness: The Master said, “In serving your father and mother, remonstrate with them gently. On seeing that they do not heed your suggestions, remain respectful and do not act contrary. Although concerned, voice no resentment.” (Analects 4:18)

Ancestor Veneration

Ritually, filiality is expressed through ancestor veneration offered by son to father, by scholar-gentry to Confucius as ancestor par excellence, and by emperor to his ancestors and to *Tian* (Heaven) for the well-being of the nation. The practice of ancestor veneration as a ritualization of filiality became a defining characteristic of Chinese culture and the cornerstone of the Chinese family. Ancestor veneration rites in China have a long unbroken historical tradition supposedly dating from as far back as the Xia Dynasty (ca. 2090–1600 BCE), although much of the ritual repertoire first emerged during the Shang Dynasty (ca. 1600–1100 BCE), developed during the Zhou Dynasty (1122–256 BCE), and was further refined during the Han Dynasty.⁹ These ancestor veneration rites involve a complex interplay of deep-rooted religious, spiritual, and sociological factors across all levels of society. At the domestic level, ancestor veneration rites were performed by living family members in honor of their deceased family members. At the village or city level, the village chieftains or city officials would perform rites in honor of the *chenghuang* (God of Walls and Moats), the local patron deity of that village or city. Confucian literati performed ancestor veneration rites in honor of Confucius as *zongshi* (ancestral teacher) par excellence in *wenmiao* (Confucian shrines of learning). At the highest level, the emperor, as *tianzi* (the Son of Heaven), and his court performed the official rites to *tian* (Heaven) for the well-being of the whole nation.

DAOISM

The other principal religious tradition that emerged during the *Baijia* (Hundred Schools) period is the Daoist tradition, representing a contrasting approach, which advocated a naturalistic philosophy that emphasized the artificiality of human institutions, and promoted the abandonment of worldly pursuits in favor of an accommodation with the natural flow of things in the world. The starting point of the Daoist tradition is the *Daodejing*, which is traditionally attributed to Laozi (literally, Old Master).

According to the Han Dynasty historian Sima Qian, Laozi was weary of living and heading Westward in search of wisdom, so he penned down his philosophy in a work that would be later known as the *Daodejing* at the request of the frontier guard, the “Keeper of the Pass.”

The *Daodejing* begins by waxing lyrical about the *Dao* (Way) as a nameless, infinite, spontaneous, eternal, cyclical, and ever-changing cosmological essence. The *Daodejing* presents the *Dao* as the matrix of potentialities and actualities that encompasses all actualities that exist and all possibilities that could happen, but excludes all impossibilities (*Daodejing* 1). It asserts that the *Dao* simultaneously embodies both “being” and “nonbeing” in a constant, cyclical, and evolutionary flux of production and destruction, rather than a static, once-for-all production (*Daodejing* 42). It understands the *Dao* as the unnamable ultimate reality that defies all attempts at categorization, the source for everything that existed, exists, and will exist (*Daodejing* 25).

The *Daodejing* also advocates as the principal goal of living the attainment of *wuwei* (actionless action), which it links with the *Dao*, the beginning and end of one’s existential quest. It suggests that *wuwei* is not understood as the total lack of activity, but “active inactivity,” that is, spontaneous, nondeliberate, and nonpremeditated activities that would enable the *Dao* to run its course and unveil all potentialities to their fullest without deliberate human interference. The *Daodejing* perceives *wuwei* as modes of living that seek to flow with the *Dao* in bringing manifest forms into actuality from the primordial flux of potentiality. Hence, *wuwei* is the opposite of “calculated or intentional action” that limits the fullest range of potentialities (cf. *Daodejing* 38).

This quest for *wuwei* is also emphasized in a later Daoist classic by Zhuangzi (ca. 370–286 BCE). Like the *Daodejing*, the text of *Zhuangzi* champions a naturalistic lifestyle of harmony with the *Dao*, the impermanence of *wanwu* (myriad things), and therefore the insignificance of all human action in the world. Rather than wasting time chasing after fame, wealth, or power, Zhuangzi challenges one to focus instead on the harmony of oneself with the *Dao*. For example, Zhuangzi claimed that he would rather be a living tortoise dragging its tail in the mud than a gilded but dead tortoise venerated in an ancestral shrine (*Zhuangzi* 17:11). This exemplifies what Zhuangzi was concerned with, that is, doing what comes most naturally and spontaneously—*wuwei*—in harmony with the *Dao*, and a tortoise dragging its tail in the mud best exemplified that natural ordering.

Moreover, within the Daoist cosmology, *yin-yang* are two opposite but complementary energies that make manifest and differentiate the *wanwu* (myriad things) that emerge into existence from the undifferentiated,

primordial *Dao*. The popular symbol of *yin-yang* reveals the cyclical nature of the Chinese worldview—life undergoes cycles of production and destruction. The dynamic interaction of *yin* and *yang* gives rise to cycles of production and destruction, from which the universe and its diverse forms of life—*wanwu*—emerge. At the height of the cycle of production of one phase, and before the cycle of destruction begins, the seeds for the next cycle of production of the complementary phase emerge. From the constant intermingling of *yin* and *yang*, the myriad things—*wanwu*—emerge in space, time, and history (cf. *Daodejing* 42). In general, the Daoist cosmological thought maps all phenomena in pairs of bipolar complementary opposites according to the *yin-yang* matrix, for example, male–female, odd–even, active–passive, sun–moon, hot–cool, and production–destruction.

LEARNING FROM CHINESE RELIGIONS

There is much that Christians can take to heart from the practitioners of Chinese religions, Confucians and Daoists alike. For the longest time, Christians of all persuasions and stripes have fought pitched battles over which side possesses the Truth with a capital T, vis-à-vis the others who are branded “heretics.” It goes without saying that the obsession for Truth with a capital T has resulted in religious wars, persecutions, and bloodshed in defense of what is perceived to be the true essence and substance of Christianity, the ontological integrity of the divinity and humanity in Jesus, as well as the singular and normative path to salvation.

In his characteristic blunt style, the late Angus C. Graham argued that the crucial question for the Chinese “is not the Western philosopher’s ‘What is the truth?’ but ‘Where is the Way?’”¹⁰ David Hall and Roger Ames have coined the terms “Truth-seekers” and “Way-seekers” to describe the Western and Chinese philosophical worldviews respectively. According to them, Western Truth-seekers “want finally to get to the bottom line, to establish facts, principles, theories that characterize the way things are,” while in contrast, Chinese Way-seekers “search out those forms of action that promote harmonious social existence,” because “for the Way-seekers, truth is most importantly a quality of persons, not of propositions.”¹¹

While it seems that Confucianism and Daoism are polar opposites, there are common themes that could offer lessons to Christianity. First, the major existential, philosophical, and religious questions for both Confucians and Daoists always center on discovering the ultimate values which shape human living: “What does it mean to be human as opposed

to barbarians or animals?” “What makes life worth living as humans?” “What are the ideals and virtues that are needed to inspire everyone from ruler to ordinary citizen to participate in the creation and maintenance of a harmonious and civilized society?” “Where are these ideals and virtues to be found?” “What is the way [*dao*] to these ideals and virtues?” “How does one seek and attain the way [*dao*]?” Both the Confucian and Daoist traditions may answer these questions in their own way, but these existential questions are just as pertinent for all Christians as they are for practitioners of Chinese religions. The responses to these questions that Confucius and his successors, on the one hand, and Laozi, Zhuangzi, and their followers, on the other, formulated reveal a common and shared dynamic, relational understanding of “knowing” in Chinese thinking that is not concerned with discovering the truth via the abstract, essentialist conceptualizations of the natural world that have undergirded the Greek philosophical quest that became part of Christianity.

In their own ways, practitioners of Chinese religions, be they Confucians or Daoists, strive to “know” [*zhi*]¹² the “way” [*dao*] of living one’s life adeptly, negotiating around obstacles and challenges, as well as seizing opportune moments. While the *Analects* and the *Daodejing* may debate on the specifics, they perceive human living as a constant striving in the *dao* (way), calling for a dynamic and relational approach to “knowing” [*zhi*] that is not concerned with discovering the Truth via abstract, essentialist, and metaphysical conceptualizations, but with knowing how to be adept in one’s relations with others. For Confucians, this refers to one’s relations with the universe and natural order; for Daoists, it means how to make use of the possibilities arising from these relations, and how to trust the validity of these relations as the cornerstone for familial, social, and, ultimately, universal harmony.

David Hall and Roger Ames explain it succinctly when they point out that “in the West, truth is a knowledge of *what* is real and what represents that reality,” while “for the Chinese, knowledge is not abstract, but concrete; it is not representational, but performative and participatory; it is not discursive, but is, as a knowledge of the way, a kind of know-how.”¹³ For example, for Confucians, knowing how to be a ruler or a parent is not knowing the proper behavioral qualities that define an ideal-type ruler or parent in the abstract, but knowing how to relate genuinely to one’s subjects or one’s children, to fulfill one’s responsibilities toward them, and in turn to earn their respect, deference, and their trust. Likewise, for Daoists, knowing is letting go in the spirit of *wuwei*, so as to achieve the fullest opportunities and surprises that the *Dao* might bring. When

Confucians speak of realizing the fullness of *renxing* (human nature), they challenge Christians to live up to Jesus' injunction to do unto others what one wants to be done to them (Matt 7:12, cf. Luke 6:31), the very point that Confucius makes in Analects 12:2 and 15:24. The call to achieve the highest virtue of *ren* (humanness) is as applicable to Christians as it is to Confucians, that is, Christians are also challenged to be fully human in relation to others, and seeking the ultimate, existential values within human living, even to the extent of loving one's enemies and giving one's life for others.

Finally, the challenge of the Daoist tradition to seek balance and harmony with the universal natural order is especially apt for Christians in today's world, which is witnessing the rapid breakdown of the earth's fragile ecological and environmental framework.¹⁴ The Daoist's call to seek harmony with the natural order as exemplified in the *Dao* and the balance of *yin-yang* could inspire Christians to realize that the universe and the created order in Genesis 1 are given to humanity who serve as caretakers and stewards on behalf of the Creator, and not for wanton destruction as the result of unmitigated greed and exploitation.

NOTES

1. For an in-depth discussion of how the category of "religion" was created in nineteenth-century Japan, see Jason Ananda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).
2. Julia Ching, *Chinese Religions* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993), 1.
3. For further discussion, see David N. Keightley, *Ancestral Landscape: Time, Space, and Community in Late Shang China, ca. 1200–1045 B.C.* (Berkeley, California: Institute of East Asian Studies, 2000) and his earlier groundbreaking work, *Sources of Shang History: The Oracle-Bone Inscriptions of Bronze Age* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1978).
4. For an overview of the major debates and controversies during this period, see A.C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China* (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing, 1989).
5. For critical discussions on this point, see Paul A. Rule, *K'ung-Tzu or Confucius: The Jesuit Interpretation of Confucianism* (London: Allen & Unwin Books, 1986) and Lionel M. Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism: Chinese Traditions & Universal Civilization* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1997).
6. Cited in Roger T. Ames & Henry Rosemont, Jr., *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1998), 48.

7. Herbert Fingarette, "The Music of Humanity in the Conversation of Confucius," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 10, no. 4 (1983): 331–356, quoted in Ames & Rosemont, *Analects of Confucius*, 48.
8. See discussion in Ames & Rosemont, *Analects of Confucius*, 54–55.
9. For discussions of the historical origins of ancestor veneration, see Emily M. Ahern, *The Cult of the Dead in a Chinese Village* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1973); Maurice Freedman, "Ancestor Worship: Two Aspects of the Chinese Case," in *Social Organization: Essays Presented to Raymond Firth*, ed. Maurice Freedman (Chicago: Aldine, 1967), 85–103; Arthur P. Wolf, "Gods, Ghosts and Ancestor," in *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society*, ed. Arthur P. Wolf (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1974), 131–182, and Wei Yuan-Kwei, "Historical Analysis of Ancestor Worship in Ancient China," in *Christian Alternatives to Ancestor Practices*, ed. Bong Rin Ro (Taichung, Taiwan: Asia Theological Association, 1985), 119–133.
10. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao*, 3.
11. David L. Hall & Roger T. Ames, *Thinking from the Han: Self, Truth, and Transcendence in Chinese and Western Culture* (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 1998), 105.
12. Interestingly, the ideograph for *zhi* (knowing) comprises the characters for *shi* (arrow, which is derived from an arrow pointing upward) and *kou* (mouth, which depicts an open mouth). In other words, *zhi* (knowing) means "speaking which hits the target," a metaphor pregnant with significant relational implications. In the Sinic mind, "knowing" is not a privatized, solitary, or even psychological act of apprehension in the abstract, but a "relational" act. One truly "knows" only when one is able to "speak" aptly or appropriately about the matter to the people around oneself.
13. Hall & Ames, *Thinking from the Han*, 104.
14. For detailed exploration of this topic, see N.J. Girardot, James Miller, & Xiaogan Liu, eds. *Daoism and Ecology: Ways Within a Cosmic Landscape* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard Divinity School, 2001).