# Chapter 1

## Confucian Democracy?

### Divining the Future

With the end of the Cold War, many have foreseen a new world order. Have we reached "the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government"?[1] Even as Francis Fukuyama's announcement of the end of history stirred up a fierce storm of controversy in 1989, events in China moved rapidly to shatter any belief that China would become a liberal democracy any time soon. How could we talk about the "unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism" as we watched a government turn its guns and tanks against unarmed citizens in the streets of Beijing on June 4, 1989?

While not claiming the immediate end of history, Fukuyama proclaims the *inevitable* end of history.[2] He supports Alexandre Kojève's defense of Hegel's claim that the inevitable end began in 1806, but the end is not so much a point as it is a long, drawn-out process, with no terminus in sight. Quite apart from being impossible to prove, any claim of historical inevitability undermines active advocacy to work for that end: if nothing we do could change the outcome, neither do we need to do anything to ensure it.

At times Fukuyama doubts the inevitability of liberal democracy for some countries. His 1989 (17) article places the Soviet Union "at a fork in the road: it can start down the path that was staked out by Western Europe forty-five years ago, a path that most of Asia has followed, or it can realize its own uniqueness and remain stuck in history." In *The End of History and the Last Man*, Fukuyama is no longer even sure that "most of Asia" will follow that

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path staked out by Western Europe, as he acknowledges the serious challenge some recent Asian views posed to liberal democracy. Nor is it clear that the only other alternative is to "remain stuck in history." More and more Asians are becoming convinced that economic prosperity does not require, and in some circumstances may even preclude, blindly copying Western nations, that their very different cultures are the key to economic success with political stability and protection against Western social malaise. Asian countries are looking for their own paths. Contrary to his initial claim that the end of history lies in "a universal homogeneous state," the content of which is "liberal democracy in the political sphere combined with easy access to VCRs and stereos in the economic," Fukuyama acknowledges subsequently that "the existing state system will not collapse anytime soon into a *literally* universal homogeneous state," and he even conceded that "in the end . . . the contours of Asian democracy may be very different from those of contemporary American democracy."[3]

The "end of history" claim has two parts: what will happen and what should happen. Part of the distinctiveness and power (some critics would say the "fatal flaw") of Hegel's philosophy lies in synthesizing the two. Fukuyama, despite his adoption of Hegel's teleological framework, separates them and emphasizes the latter: "at the end of history, it is not necessary that all societies become successful liberal societies, merely that they end their ideological pretensions of representing different and higher forms of human society."[4] Fukuyama's contention that liberal democracy is the only universally valid norm because it resolves fundamentally the "contradictions" involved in the human struggle for recognition by ensuring universal and equal recognition is unpersuasive. His conception of a universal human nature underlying his claim that the struggle for recognition is the basic driving force of history is open to challenge. Even if there is a general human desire for recognition, it could take many forms, some of which (e.g., the desire to be superior instead of equal to others) may find better fulfillment in an undemocratic society.

Fukuyama's claim notwithstanding, no consensus has developed in the world concerning the legitimacy and viability of liberal democracy. Instead, voices of doubt and outright challenges are getting louder. Asians have been defending their departure from the liberal democratic model on *normative* grounds. They need not lay claim to "higher forms of human society" or an alternative "universal" model; all that they need to establish, and to reject Fukuyama's thesis, is that their particular historical and cultural circumstances make Western-style liberal democracy inappropriate, even harmful, for their societies, and nonliberal alternatives offer better solutions to their problems. Such normative arguments are being advanced with increasing frequency and assertiveness as various Asian countries are enjoying unprecedented economic growth and political stability while retaining their cultural distinctiveness.

Japan and the four "little dragons" of Asia—Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan—did not start out with any conscious determination to preserve their cultures in their modernization efforts. The biggest challenges for them, as they still are for most of Asia, were poverty, disease, ignorance, and technological backwardness. In the years following World War II, Western examples offered a way out. In learning from Western countries to solve their problems, Asian countries have not, however, become completely Western but retain to different degrees their distinctive cultures. Moreover, some began to notice that other countries had tried emulating Western countries but had not had equal success in improving their economic plight, and for some time, Asian economies were doing even better than advanced Western economies themselves. In the 1980s, commentators began to suggest that their common Confucian culture was largely responsible for the economic success of these countries, and the possibility of a Confucian alternative to economic development, of an Asian development model, attracted considerable attention.[5] The luster of Asian development has since been tarnished by economic crises. Some have turned the tables on Asian exceptionalism by arguing that the troubles also were due to whatever unique factors had created the temporary success, while others, probably for equally ideological motives, argued that Asia's problems lay at the door of Western speculators.

Economic successes and failures are not due entirely to cultures, but there is a need to emphasize indigenous cultural factors in view of their frequent neglect in favor of Western contribution to Asian development.[6] The interest in Asian cultures also is fueled by Western criticism of some of the excesses of liberal democracies. Increasingly confident, some Asians hope that they can progress without repeating the mistakes of Western countries, and that their distinctive cultures can provide them ways to do so. China and other countries in and out of Asia have turned to Asian models as alternatives or complements to Western models in their continued quest for higher standards of living and political stability.[7]

Despite the economic success of some Asian countries, most of Asia is still in need of Western aid, and trade with Western countries is critical even to the successful Asian economies. Competition with the Communist bloc for political influence used to be the main consideration in aid and other trade and foreign policies; with the end of the Cold War, the United States appears to have adopted the promotion of liberal democracy as its new guide in dealing with other countries. In the midst of Asia's cultural awakening, there is consternation among some Asians at the trend of tying Western aid and other policies to compliance with liberal democratic political norms, especially human rights. At the regional meeting for Asia, held in Bangkok in March–April 1993, state representatives from Asian countries boldly criticized the prevailing conception of universal human rights as being too Western

and expressed their intention to set their own "Asian standards" for human rights.

Critics of this Asian challenge to the Western conception of human rights frequently stress the lack of homogeneity among Asian cultures and view exceptionalist claims based on "Asian values" as self-interested rhetoric by governments eager to protect their policies and actions from foreign scrutiny and criticism. As a challenge to Western hegemony, Asian values need not be homogeneous or impervious to external influence and change; it suffices that the values of a majority of people in various Asian countries, despite their differences, currently share a greater affinity than they do with Western values.[8] These general similarities and differences could be important to the future of Asian societies.

While conceding that some rights are universal, supporters of Asian conceptions of human rights reject a key foundation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—the ideal of individual autonomy—which they argue has little meaning to Asians who emphasize the primacy of community. There is an increasingly widespread feeling that very often "universality is actually the Western approach in disguise."[9] Nor is this an exclusively Asian view. Henry Rosemont argues that the concept of human rights, for all of its important achievements, is culture specific. At an Amnesty International lecture, among other occasions, Richard Rorty drew attention to the "ethnocentrism" of human rights as a core value of liberalism, though he was unapologetic about promoting human rights from an ethnocentric position. Attempting to rid his theory of justice as fairness of metaphysical entanglements, John Rawls's political liberalism, starting from within a certain political tradition and deriving its basic ideas from the "public political culture" of a specific Western liberal democracy, also admits to cultural specificity.[10]

In 1947, when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was being drafted, despite the participation of non-Western representatives, the American Anthropological Association rejected "the applicability of any Declaration of Human Rights to mankind as a whole. . . . The rights of man in the twentieth century cannot be circumscribed by the standards of any single culture, or be dictated by the standards of any single people." Half a century later, Wm. Theodore de Bary argues that greater political participation and freedom of expression in China depend in part on "agreement that human rights should not be understood or defined solely in Western terms; rather, they are a growing, expandable concept that will be enhanced through shared multicultural learning and experience." There is increasing support for Western and non-Western countries working together to establish "intercivilizational" human rights.[11]

The Bangkok regional meeting did not simply dismiss human rights as tools of foreign oppression. There is a move from a defensive to an offensive

stance: Asian governments intend to assert the legitimacy of Asian norms of social and political order. Some may hear in the 1993 Bangkok Declaration what sounds like the first salvo in the clash of civilizations foretold by Samuel Huntington. According to Huntington, world politics is entering a new phase in which "the great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural."[12] He predicts that a central focus of conflict for the immediate future will be between Western states and several Islamic-Confucian states as the Confucian and Islamic civilizations cooperate to challenge Western interests, values, and power.

Huntington's "clash of civilizations" is no less controversial than Fukuyama's "end of history." Critics question the unity of civilizations and their ability to provide motivations for political action; they argue that Huntington overstates the hostility generated by differences and underplays the mutual influence and interdependence between civilizations.[13] Huntington is aware of the opportunities coexisting with the dangers of increased interactions, but he considers conflict the more likely outcome, since he believes that interactions intensify civilization consciousness, the awareness of differences between civilizations and commonalities within each civilization. His pessimistic forecast may be proven right if too many Western governments continue in their aggressive and often sanctimonious efforts to promote their values of democracy and liberalism as universal values while they maintain their military dominance and advance their economic interests at the expense of others.

However, the clash of civilizations can be avoided. Western countries would need to develop a more profound understanding of the basic philosophical and religious assumptions underlying other civilizations and the ways in which people in those civilizations see their interests. We could do better than a cultural détente.[14] For a peaceful and progressive world order, all parties, East and West, must participate in constructing a common framework of communication and exchange, which is neither Western nor Eastern but truly global. Western countries should respect the desire of other countries to become modern without becoming Western. They might even be able to learn something from non-Western countries that would help them solve some of their pressing social problems.[15] Non-Western countries have achieved much through modifying what they learn from Western countries and integrating it with their indigenous cultures. The danger of greater awareness and pride in their own cultures lies in closing their minds to outside influence and in adopting a hostile stance to all things Western out of insecurity or arrogance.[16] If both Western and non-Western countries could maintain an open mind while being clear about their own convictions, if they remain committed to dealing peacefully with one another on terms of mutual respect and constantly strive to understand one another better, then the future

could turn out to be one of diverse, flourishing, and mutually enhancing civilizations.

## Whose Confucianism?

While the voices of governments have been jarringly loud in the Asian challenge to the existing conception of universal human rights, the claim that there are valuable Asian cultural and political identities distinct from Western ones has a wider resonance. Asians who have no desire to shield governments from criticisms of human rights abuses and economic protectionism would not necessarily side with Western universalist claims in this debate; nor would Westerners critical of specific human rights abuses and other governmental actions in Asian countries be necessarily unsympathetic to exceptionalist arguments. The debate about culture and human rights is part of a larger "soul-searching" on the part of Asians, part of a wider discourse about the future of Asian countries and their peoples. It is erroneous and unproductive to portray the debate as simply having to do with "whether Western-style democracy or Asian-style authoritarianism is likely to prove the better antidote in the long run." Neither is attractive for most Asians; they prefer Asian democracies—of which Confucian democracy is one possibility.[17]

While he allows that Asian societies may meet "the formal requisites of democracy," Huntington considers these political systems "democracy without turnover. It represents an adoption of Western democratic practices to serve not Western values of competition and change, but Asian values of consensus and stability."[18] Democracy may be possible in a Confucian society, but Confucian democracy is a "contradiction in terms." Such conclusions view Confucianism as inherently collectivistic, patriarchal, and authoritarian. Lucian Pye's analyses of China are among those that focus on its authoritarian aspects, which he attributes mostly to its Confucian legacy. For him, Confucianism's lack of a concept of individual autonomy and this value's conflict with Confucian values prove that Confucianism sanctions oppressive governments.[19] Though more balanced in his assessment of the pros and cons of the Confucian legacy, Donald Munro also opposes the individual and the social and sees "selflessness" as "one of the oldest values in China, present in various forms in Taoism and Buddhism, but especially in Confucianism." Such "selflessness," which makes the individual no more than "a cog in an ever more efficient social machine," allows the state to subordinate individual interests to social interests as defined by the state.[20]

Nor is this reading, some would say *mis*reading, of the tradition limited to Western Sinologists. There is no lack of Chinese, Japanese, or Korean scholars who believe that Confucianism is inherently authoritarian and incompatible

with democracy. At the very least, embracing a Western idea of democracy would mean abandoning the traditional "rule of virtue" for the "rule of law," and this, in Yu Ying-shih's view, "led inevitably to the end of Confucianism as a dominating political force."[21] During the May Fourth movement, the idea of filiality, seen as central to Confucianism, was attacked for "turning China into a big factory for the production of obedient subjects."[22] Confucianism was vilified for obstructing China's modernization and democratization, and "Down with the Confucian shop" became a May Fourth slogan in its quest for democracy and science.[23] Nor has iconoclasm died out among Chinese intellectuals. The controversial 1988 Chinese television documentary, *River Elegy* (*heshang* 河殤), contrasts the stagnation of Chinese culture with the dynamism of Western civilizations. The message of its authors is unmistakable: to be modern, to be democratic, China must stop being Chinese, which includes being Confucian, and must become Western.

Since its establishment as the orthodoxy of the Chinese empire in the Han dynasty, Confucianism frequently has been misappropriated by those in power for their own selfish interests at the expense of those they ruled, so much so that many have viewed those distortions as constituting Confucianism itself. Even when we leave aside the blatant distortions, Confucianism as a tradition has never been homogeneous and monolithic. It is a complex and continuously changing discourse that has transformed itself and other traditions, and it has in turn been transformed by other traditions. It has had significant impact on several East Asian societies; it also has adapted to social changes that occur independent of it. Bruce Nussbaum, arguing against Huntington that culture is too porous to explain anything, asks "What is 'Confucianism' in 1997? Is it the centralized authoritarian collectivism of China's delegitimized elite, which uses extreme nationalism and anti-Westernism to replace a lost communist ideology? Or is it the market democracy of Taiwan? And what about Korea, with its labor unions, free elections, and recent jailing of one-time military dictators?"[24]

Different societies have practiced Confucianism differently at different times. The Confucian society of Qing China was different from that of Tokugawa Japan. The Confucianism that Max Weber once argued was responsible for the nondevelopment of capitalism in imperial China was not the Confucianism being credited with the success of the East Asian capitalist economies in the second half of the twentieth century.[25] Tu Wei-ming distinguishes political Confucianism from Confucianism as a way of life: the former is a doctrine that mandated a certain form of hierarchical political authority centered around the emperor and a state bureaucracy; the latter has to do with family relations, work ethics, and personal cultivation of the ordinary people.[26] Once we recognize the openness of the Confucian discourse, we could counter current misappropriations of Confucianism by Asian champions of authori-

tarianism more effectively, not by claiming superiority for Western values but by a broader, deeper study of the Confucian tradition and its relevance to the present and future.[27]

There have been various attempts to democratize Confucianism. Despite ideological and philosophical differences, Carsun Chang 張君勱, Tang Junyi 唐君毅, Xu Fuguan 徐復觀, and Mou Zongsan 牟宗三—signatories to the "Manifesto for a Reappraisal of Sinology and Reconstruction of Chinese Culture" and prominent representatives of twentieth-century Chinese scholarship, join forces in advocating a democratic reconstruction of traditional Chinese culture. Many participants in what Tu Wei-ming has called the "third epoch of Confucian humanism" share these scholars' commitment to a Confucian democracy. While sharing their new Confucian aspirations, Liu Shu-hsien criticizes the specific attempts of various twentieth-century Chinese scholars who attempt to marry democracy and Confucianism; he finds their solutions either impractical or hermeneutically unconvincing, because they underestimate the tension between Confucian and democratic values. Liu advocates surrendering some components of the tradition and radically transforming others to make room for democracy within Confucianism.[28]

Chenyang Li rejects the new Confucian approach completely, convinced that the essential incompatibility of Confucian and democratic values renders any attempt to democratize Confucianism harmful to the "real value and spirit of Confucianism." Instead of Liu's internal pluralist approach, he argues for an external pluralist approach, wherein democracy and Confucianism will remain independent value systems but "good neighbors" in China's future. But neighborliness may not be possible if no agreement is reached about what kind of neighborhood all should live in. Just admitting to the possibility of mutual influence and encouraging dialogue may not be enough when practical choices have to be made about governance, among other questions. Moreover, Li's preference for this minimalist approach is premised on an essentialist view of Confucianism, as evident in his talk of "the *real* values of Confucianism," which are "*essentially* conflicting" with those of democracy, despite admitting that "as a value system Confucianism is not unchangeable."[29]

The survival of Confucianism is not dependent on preserving an *idem* identity, requiring some kind of essence to remain the same; it has to do with an *ipse* identity that lies in meaningful continuity. Even if we grant that Confucianism might not be recognizable without "values such as emphasis on the family, filial morality, loyalty and respecting the old," what these values *mean* and how they are actualized could change over time and space. In any case, not everyone agrees that these values represent what is most valuable to Confucianism; they could be seen as derivative of the primary notions of *ren*, *yi*, and *li* in contingent social contexts. The following chapters recognize the contestedness of the Confucian tradition and lay no claim to *the* correct interpre-

tation. I am concerned with what Confucianism could mean now and in the future, not with what Confucianism is *essentially*. Nor is the reconstruction an attempt to present the picture of an entire tradition, since detailed analysis is limited to the three pre-Qin texts, and other Confucian works are mentioned only in passing. The link with the past that this work is interested in maintaining involves understanding the past, texts and events, in new ways conducive to finding better alternatives for the future. The proposed conception of Confucian democracy is meant to guide an experiment well worth trying in some contexts.

This proposal of a Confucian democracy aiming at a synthesis of two traditions is more radical and difficult than Chenyang Li's solution. Li mentions the two value systems learning from each other, but such learning will remain superficial unless the possibility of syntheses remains open. Li says little about how such mutual learning will occur; I will attempt to illustrate such mutual learning in the following chapters. Li takes the meaning of democracy for granted, hardly going beyond a cursory discussion of the definitional problem of democracy before adopting the liberal framework as the starting point of his comparison. A more nuanced approach that discusses in greater detail and depth the difficult problems of defining democracy is necessary. A Confucian democracy requires a certain understanding of democracy, which will be elaborated through the discussion of Dewey's philosophy that is critical of some liberal theories.

## Which Democracy?

Confucian democracy requires not only reconstruction of Confucianism, it also requires reconstruction of democracy. The democracy that crusading Westerners usually preach to Asian societies is a liberal one that emphasizes the rule of law and universal rights, based on the assumptions of individual autonomy and of the government as a necessary evil to be limited as much as possible. Bhikhu Parekh points out that the democratic part of liberal democracy has been far more attractive outside of Western Europe and North America than the liberal components. As Asians understand it, "liberalism breaks up the community, undermines the shared body of ideas and values, places the isolated individual above the community, encourages ethos and ethic of aggressive self-assertions . . . weakens the spirit of mutual accommodation and adjustment." For most Westerners, "the power and appeal of democracy come from the idea of autonomy"; for most Asians, the philosophical baggage of liberal autonomy slows down the spread of democracy.[30] A Confucian democracy would not be a liberal democracy à la America.

The conjunction of liberalism and democracy is contingent; there are

ambiguities in their relationship. According to David Beetham, "liberalism has provided not only the necessary foundation for, but also a significant constraint upon, democracy in the modern world." While we may have just cause to agree with John Dunn, that "all states today prefer to be democracies because a democracy is what [it] is virtuous for a state to be," it is quite another thing to claim that liberal democracy has gained universal acceptance.[31] Whatever consensus there is on the value of democracy, it tends to be at the expense of specificity of content. Democracy is government by the people, but who constitutes the people? What does it mean for them to govern? What institutions and practices best serve that purpose? Is democracy merely procedural or more substantive? Values commonly associated with democracy, such as liberty, equality, and pluralism, are susceptible to a variety of interpretations.

The concept of democracy is an essentially contested one—consensus on its content is impossible, because different analysts read into it their favored values. As David Held notes, "An uncritical affirmation of liberal democracy essentially leaves unanalyzed the whole meaning of democracy and its possible variants." Fareed Zakaria, arguing that constitutional liberalism and democracy are historically distinct and theoretically different, and that "democracy is flourishing; constitutional liberalism is not," concludes that "Western liberal democracy might prove to be not the final destination on the democratic road, but just one of many possible exits."[32] For him, this is a dangerous possibility; for others, the possibility could be enriching for both East and West.

Actually existing democracies are so dominated and controlled by a bewildering array of external and impersonal forces that some claim that government by the people "can now hardly amount to more than empty verbiage."[33] Many who believe in the ideal of democracy nevertheless find too big a gap between ideal and existing democracies. Sympathetic critics, such as Benjamin Barber, Robert Dahl, Carol Gould, Susan Okin, and Amy Gutmann, have suggested various ways in which existing democracies must be reformed if autonomous individuals are to be able to set their own life plans and participate in the collective life of the community.[34] Their advice ranges from countering the power of bureaucracies, corporations, and the media, reforming processes of collective decisions, and democratizing the workplace to reforming education, gender, and family relations. While they disagree on its causes, an increasing number of commentators detect a spreading discontent in Western democracies. Some argue that this discontent cannot be entirely attributed to the usual problem of reality falling short of the ideal; it cannot be solved by having "more democracy" if by democracy it is meant the current prevalent strain of liberal democracy.

Critics who have been described as "communitarian" reject the overemphasis on individual autonomy dominating liberal democracy, and they argue

that democracy, both in theory and in practice, needs to be rejuvenated with communitarian concerns. This internal critique of Western democracies resonates well with the quest for Asian versions of democracy. At the very least, Asian democracy would have to strike a better balance between individual rights and the interests of the wider community than liberal democracy has hitherto managed. Daniel Bell argues that justifications based on individual autonomy would not win Asian support for democracy any more than instrumental justifications; the best chance for democracy in Asia lies in communitarian justifications.[35] The Western communitarian critic of liberal democracy and the Asian communitarian in search of a democratic alternative may benefit from each other's project. Both have something to contribute to a much-needed reconstruction of democracy.

## Liberals and Communitarians

Most communitarian critiques of liberalism reject the conception of self and the ensuing individualism at the heart of the liberal tradition. They are dissatisfied with liberalism's neglect of community and shared values and concerned with civic virtues that they believe liberalism cannot underwrite. But their views are varied and not always compatible with one another. According to Michael Sandel, at the heart of the American democracy's discontent are "the fear that individually, and collectively, we are losing control of the forces that govern our lives" and "the sense that, from family to neighborhood to nation, the moral fabric of community is unraveling around us."[36] This anxiety about the loss of self-government and the erosion of community is engendered by the politics of "the procedural republic" that has at its core the ideal of a neutral political framework. According to this ideal, freedom consists in our capacity to choose our ends for ourselves. In the procedural republic, politics should not try to form the character or cultivate the virtue of its citizens, for to do so would be to "legislate morality." Government should not affirm through its policies or laws any particular vision of the good life. Instead, it should provide a framework of rights that respects persons as free and independent selves capable of choosing their own values and ends. John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin, Joel Feinberg, Joseph Raz, and Robert Nozick—despite important differences among their theories—are all proponents of such rights-based liberalism.[37] It is this rights-based liberalism that is considered inappropriate to Asian societies by those who argue for the cultural distinctiveness of Asian countries.

Western critics of Asian societies such as the People's Republic of China and Singapore often point to the governments' interference in the people's private lives. However, such criticisms often overlook a genuine and fairly

widespread belief in these societies that governments have a responsibility to educate the people through various measures, including legislation as well as public campaigns, in quest of a vision of the good life, the good society. If critics acknowledge the belief at all, they tend to dismiss it as some kind of "false consciousness" and to view the people of these societies as having been brainwashed into "hugging their chains" because of their long history of being oppressed. It is precisely such patronizing attitudes that provoke much Asian resentment (and not just on the part of the governments).

Joseph Chan, who declares his sympathies to be more on the side of critics of Asian governments in the debate on human rights, nevertheless argues that most Asian political moralities that have to be developed to support human rights in Asian terms "would probably endorse the principles of perfectionism, moralism, and paternalism."[38] A Confucian democracy would differ from Western liberal democracies on the issue of political neutrality to conceptions of the good, on the limits of government. However, one cannot be too sanguine about this difference. History has shown that governments' interference in people's lives often is not benign but intrusive, oppressive, and stultifying to personal development, preventing a person from living a good life—and the same could be said of the pressures of social opinion. The challenge for those supporting Confucian democracy is to articulate an alternative that would be sensitive to cultural requirements while taking seriously the liberal concern about governmental and social tyranny. What is needed is a politics that avoids authoritarianism without neglecting the joint realization of a common good in free discussions.

Linking the discussion of the possibility of Confucian democracy with the Western liberal-communitarian debate serves a number of purposes. It helps bridge cultural differences and bring the debate about the future of Asian societies closer to a public outside of Asia by establishing a connection with a discourse that is more familiar to the latter. It enables both Western publics and those in Asia to link their concerns with what might prove to be an emerging global communitarian trend, and it allows each to learn from the other in widening communitarian perspectives and refining theories and practices. Such an approach, however, is not without its own risk. The dialectical tendencies of Western academic discourse are such that it is easy to overstate the opposition between the communitarian and the liberal stands. Dualistic thinking is inhospitable to Confucianism. The task is to find a more specific reference within the Western liberal-communitarian debate that would avoid dualism and resonate well with Confucian discourse.

In actual fact, few occupy the extreme ends of the range of opinions in the Western liberal-communitarian debate. An increasing number gravitate toward the middle in the continuum between two extremes on most issues that divide communitarians from liberals. The area of overlap between liber-

alism and communitarianism is increasing. Communitarians differ on whether liberalism should be completely rejected or merely reformed. In contrast to Sandel, MacIntyre, and Taylor, who reject liberalism, Michael Walzer argues that Western communitarian critiques do not lie outside of liberalism but constitute a recurrent and an inconstant feature of liberalism. Roberto Unger characterizes his critique of liberalism as "superliberalism." Amy Gutmann argues that the role of communitarian values may be to supplement rather than supplant liberal values.[39]

Those who insist on the incompatibility of liberalism and communitarianism tend to take a fairly narrow and often rather unreasonable (often described as "strong," though "extreme" might be more accurate) interpretation of the opposing camp's position, when it actually includes a wide variety of theories. The more reasonable recognizes that each side "accords in its view some status to the values on the center stage in the other view." An increasing number seeks some kind of rapprochement, "a fruitful convergence of what is best in liberalism and communitarianism, not a victory of one over the other."[40] What is at issue is not an irreconcilable conflict between the values of individual liberty and community but a matter of ascertaining what the best balance is between the two.

Some communitarians do not even view liberalism as the target of their critiques to begin with. Henry Tam, the chairman of UK Communitarian Forum, claims that the target of communitarian critiques is market individualism, not liberalism—although many would argue that the two are closely linked. He argues that liberalism, as much as conservatism or socialism, could be pursued within the communitarian framework. "Communitarianism is not to be located alongside conservatism, liberalism, and socialism as a rival ideology. Instead it challenges all those attracted to elements of conservative, liberal, or socialist ideas to avoid making the assumption that such ideas can only be pursued within a framework which mixes varying degrees of individualist and authoritarian practices." The Communitarian Movement in the United States, spearheaded by Amitai Etzioni and William Galston, also sees itself as providing a third alternative to "the Authoritarians (such as Moral Majority and Liberty Bell) and the Radical Individualists (libertarians such as the intellectuals at the Cato Institute; civil libertarians, especially the Civil Liberties Union; and laissez-faire conservatives)."[41]

The liberalism that Tam considers compatible with communitarianism includes the liberalism of J. S. Mill, L. T. Hobhouse, and John Dewey.[42] These are liberals who launched communitarian critiques against classical liberalism in an earlier period. They too attempted to reconcile individuality with sociality, and among their revisions of liberalism are a conception of the individual that is decidedly social and an emphasis on the value of community.[43] Though those whom communitarians would consider favoring individual autonomy at

the expense of community have often cited J. S. Mill, Gerald Gaus argues persuasively that community is more important in Mill's liberal doctrine than is often acknowledged by contemporary liberalism. In the current liberal-communitarian debate, both sides in aid of their respective positions have cited Dewey. Though Dewey identified himself as a liberal, he is justifiably seen as offering a communitarian program, given his identification of the idea of democracy with the idea of community. David Hall and Roger Ames use Dewey's communitarian view to criticize liberalism in their discussion of the prospects of democracy for China.[44] However, if he were alive today, Dewey would no doubt dismiss the liberal-communitarian dualism as a false dichotomy, as he was wont to do with all dualisms. Drawing on the philosophy of John Dewey, my proposed Confucian democracy aims for a third alternative that would address the concerns of both liberals and communitarians without siding entirely with either.

## Dewey and Confucius

Dewey spent more than two years (May 1919 to July 1921) in various parts of China during one of the most interesting periods of Chinese history. Dewey's connection with China began earlier: at Columbia, he had taught a group of Chinese students who were to play important roles in China's history between the two world wars, and whose thinking continued to influence Chinese intellectuals thereafter. It is partly due to the careful preparation and skillful sponsorship of these Chinese students, Hu Shih 胡適 and Jiang Menglin 蔣夢麟 among them, as well as the timeliness of his own message on democracy in the context of China immediately after the First World War, that "Dewey became a fad" while he was in China.[45]

To Benjamin Schwartz, "the encounter between John Dewey and modern China is one of the most fascinating episodes in the intellectual history of twentieth-century China."[46] When Dewey was in China, he often was referred to as the "Second Confucius." The flattering comparison was first made by the then-president of Beijing University, Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培. Though the comparison with Confucius was intended as an accolade, ironically, Dewey's Chinese audience was more interested in Dewey's philosophical differences from Confucianism, which was then associated with the obsolete monarchy and other despised institutions of "Old China." As Cai Yuanpei puts it, "Confucius said respect the emperor, [Dewey] advocates democracy; Confucius said females are a problem to raise, [Dewey] advocates equal rights for men and women; Confucius said transmit not create, [Dewey] advocates creativity."[47] The prevalent interpretation of Confucianism, and the iconoclastic attitude toward it during his visit, probably means that Dewey learned little directly

from Confucianism on a philosophical level that could benefit his democratic theory. Still, one could speculate that the close contact with a Confucian society on an everyday basis for over two years might have left some marks on Dewey's subsequent thinking. It is to be hoped that the current encounter between Dewey's pragmatism and Confucianism would be more reciprocal.

In the reconstruction of Confucianism that follows, we shall overturn the contrast with Dewey's pragmatism that Cai Yuanpei drew, not because it was entirely inaccurate, but because circumstances have changed. The Confucianism that would give us Confucian democracy in the new millennium is a different breed from the state orthodoxy believed to have sustained imperial China but also led to its eventual demise. The Chinese intellectuals of an earlier period looked for an alternative to Confucianism as a route to democracy; we shall look for a Confucian route to democracy.

Barry Keenan showed how Dewey's ideas played a role in defining the content of liberal reform movements in the early Republican period in China. The "Dewey experiment" to introduce democracy to China through first transforming its culture has been judged a failure by Keenan and other scholars, but Dewey's encounter with China is, in a sense, still an incomplete story. A new chapter has begun with the simultaneous revival of interest in Confucianism and in Dewey's pragmatism on both sides of the Pacific. What follows will hopefully reinforce Dewey's claim to the title of "second Confucius" and demonstrate the resonance between their philosophies: their conceptions of the individual as a social person; their views of community, its value, and how to bring it about; and the consequent inseparability of the questions "How should one live?" and "How should we live together?" In synthesizing their philosophies, the concerns of ethics and politics merge in a philosophy of democracy as a community of flourishing, unique persons.

While both see the person as social, Confucius' notion of authoritative personhood (*ren* 仁) emphasizes the role of community more than Dewey, whose aim is to correct rather than completely reject liberalism, and hence it gives a greater role to individual choice (albeit a reconstructed concept of choice) than Confucius. Though both believe that building a community requires working on all aspects of human interaction and not separating feeling from thinking, Confucius emphasizes the aesthetic in "ritual practice (*li* 禮)," while Dewey emphasizes thinking in "cooperative inquiry." The different contexts of their thought give rise to important philosophical differences. Confucius emphasizes "government for the people" but is silent on "government by the people"; Dewey pays a great deal of attention to the connection between the two. Their similarities often highlight Dewey's departures from other Western philosophies and, combined with their differences, suggest possible means to realize Dewey's ends other than those offered by Western contexts. Their differences are most evident on points (e.g., liberal concerns) that Dewey

shares with other Western philosophies and usually brings out the weaknesses of Confucianism in its historical practice. Their similarities and differences combined suggest ways in which the problems of Confucian societies might be solved in future and alternative ways in which Deweyan democracy might be realized.

Introducing Dewey into a discussion of Confucian democracy illuminates Confucianism in new ways that contribute significantly to the reconstruction of Confucianism that we need to undertake to make Confucian democracy possible. At the same time, being introduced into a new context also throws a light on aspects of Dewey's philosophy that might not otherwise be as clearly revealed, and it is suggestive of new possibilities for Dewey's project of reconstructing democracy.