

# 孔子學堂

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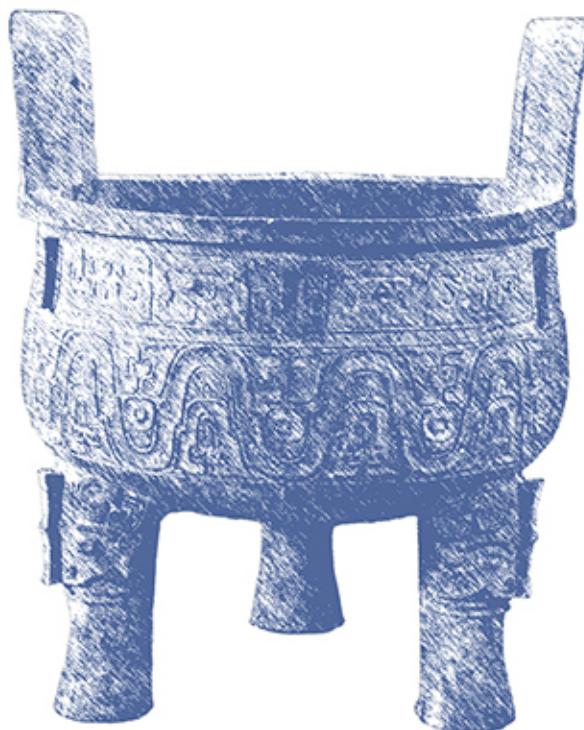
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封二 《孔学堂》约稿函

# 儒家思想、合本主义与日本资本主义精神

□ 宋斌

**摘要:**由于尚未发现将儒学观念转化为资本主义经济活动的社会机制,学者们迄今对“后儒家假设”中预设的儒家思想与亚洲早期工业发展之间的因果关系存在质疑。对独立儒商涩泽荣一在日本资本主义形成过程中的关键作用的研究,既可以对上述因果关系作出说明,也能够让我们理解儒家宗教性的特色。通过这一研究,本文亦重新考察马克斯·韦伯的宗教社会学方法论以及商业史研究对于当代商业教育的意义。

**关键词:**后儒家假设 社会机制 儒商 亚洲工业发展

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## 一、对于“后儒家假设”及马克斯·韦伯宗教社会学方法论的再考察 [见英文版第73页,下同]

对于二战之后亚洲工业发展的社会文化根源这一议题,学者们仍未就所谓“后儒家假设”达成共识。“后儒家假设”可被宽泛地理解为如下命题:在合适的现代环境下,儒家思想中存在鼓励资本主义经济发展的因素,尽管这些因素在前现代的中国由于缺乏一定的(社会、经济与政治)制度环境而没有发挥作用。<sup>①</sup>

本命题的语义结构及相关的学者讨论表明,后儒家假设的提出是针对马克斯·韦伯(Max Weber)的宗教社会学奠基之作《新教伦理及资本主义精神》,以及与此相关的韦伯关于“儒学在前现代中国起到了阻碍资本主义诞生的消极作用”观点的适时回应。韦伯对于资本主义的新教根源的研究,其方法论有四个要点:首先,通过统计学的方法,韦伯证明在资本主义产业的拥有者和领导层中,以及在与此相关的科技和商业培训的高等教育领域中,新教徒的比例要远远高于天主教徒。通过历史的研究,韦伯也明确了在时间顺序上,新教伦理的存在要先于与之存在统计学关联的资本主义精神与社会结构。其次,通过观念的分析,韦伯证明在新教伦理与资本主义精神之间存在极为近似且相互对

<sup>①</sup> 周克勤(Christian Jochim)给出了关于“后儒家假设”的这一宽泛的定义并借此梳理了不同学者对于这一假设的表述。参见Christian Jochim,“Confucius and Capitalism: Views of Confucianism in Works on Confucian Ethics and Economic Development,”*Journal of Chinese Religions* 20, no. 1 (1992): 139–141.

应的关系。按照韦伯的分析，资本主义精神及新教伦理的核心是一种“此世的禁欲主义”，它将某人在某一资本主义产业中的特殊职业理性化地理解为对于某种神圣召唤的回应。第三，当新教伦理应用于资本主义的工作场所中，新教徒们发展出了一种视无限度的财富积累为正当的生活态度。而韦伯宗教社会学方法论的第三点，便是寻找将新教的宗教著作转换为这种资本主义职场精神的种种社会机制。在这些社会机制中，韦伯发现教会（congregation）及教会中的教牧服侍（pastoral care）所发挥的作用是最为重要的。第四，通过一种比较宗教学的研究，韦伯试图解释资本主义生产方式为何没有在异于欧洲新教的其他传统中诞生。与本文的主题相关，韦伯认为儒家思想缺乏与新教伦理相似的一系列的观念特征，阻碍了资本主义在前现代中国的诞生，尽管韦伯也承认，帝制中国的某些社会与政治特征从制度层面上来看，是有利于资本主义的发展的。<sup>①</sup>

在韦伯方法论的这四个要点中，第一点是为了确证潜在地存在因果的历史事件之间的统计学关联。第二与第三点是通过两种因果解释的方式来确定所论事件之间确实存在因果关联：第一种是观念的解释，意在说明为何新教伦理蕴含了资本主义精神，另一种则是社会学的解释，意在说明新教伦理的观念是如何转化为社会实践的。第四个要点可以理解为社会学的“控制实验”，其目的是考察所涉因果关系中的某一关键变量——新教伦理——被改变的话，那其假设所设定的结果——资本主义的产生——是否仍然会发生。从一种比较的视野看，我们发现韦伯的方法论是在社会科学领域对于“假设—演绎”方法的模仿与创新，该方法源自并广泛应用于自然科学领域。这一方法论的核心是在存在统计学关联的社会现象中确定它们是否存在因果关系。既然社会现象难以像自然现象那样在科学家的实验室中被控制和重复，韦伯便将比较宗教学的研究作为一种主要的方法来强化所假设的因果序列的可能性。由于韦伯方法论的严格性以及他将其应用于学术研究的一贯性，韦伯关于资本主义的新教根源的结论，即使不是被社会学家们普遍接受，业已产生了重大影响。

然而，自19世纪晚期开始并在二战之后得到强化的亚洲工业的蓬勃发展，以及与此相关的后儒家假设的提出，都似乎对韦伯如上论证的第四个要点提出了挑战：如果儒家伦理被证明是亚洲资本主义发展的一个原因，那么，在何种程度上，韦伯关于资本主义新教根源的观点仍旧是正确的？但是，如果仔细阅读韦伯关于儒家思想的消极作用的评价，就会发现这个挑战实际上并没有它表面看去的那么大。韦伯论道：

中国人非常可能有很大的能力（这种能力或许比日本人还大）吸纳在现代文明中在技术上和经济上都已发展成熟的资本主义生产方式。将中国人视作是“自然地不适合”资本主义的要求，这显然是站不住脚的。但是，与西方相比，在中国那些可以外在地支持资本主义诞生的各种（制度）因素并没有促成它在这里实际上被创造出来。<sup>②</sup>

换句话说，韦伯已经预见到了这种可能性，即儒家文化能够“吸纳”资本主义制度，它可以在受儒家文化影响的地区鼓励资本主义经济的发展。这意味着韦伯已经预见到了“后儒家假设”这一理论的可能性。韦伯思想之所以可以容纳这种预见性，是由于被韦伯作为新教伦理的反例来分析的儒家伦理是与帝制中国时期的传统的文士—官僚体制紧密结合在一起的。因此，只要这种儒家伦理被证明不利

<sup>①</sup> 韦伯论证的这些要点由与本文议题相关的两本著作的诸多章节体现出来，它们是The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, trans. Stephen Kalberg (Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company, 2002)，以及The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism, trans. and ed. Hans H. Gerth (New York: Free Press, 1968)。关于韦伯方法论的结构，可以参见C. K. Yang, “Introduction,” in The Religion of China, xxix。所涉中文译文为笔者自译，下同。

<sup>②</sup> Weber, The Religion of China, 248.

于资本主义在帝制中国的产生，那么，由上述四个要点所组成的韦伯的论证方法便仍旧有效。

而与这一判断相互呼应的是，在关于后儒家假设的争论中，学者们所讨论的“儒学”并非传统的帝制儒学，而是正如由彼得·伯杰（Peter L. Berger）令人印象深刻的概念“俗众儒学”（vulgar Confucianism）所表明的，是一种可以将人们从传统中国的保守枷锁中解脱出来从而“调动街头民众”的工作伦理。<sup>①</sup>学者们对于这种不同的儒家伦理的关注是可以理解的，毕竟，工业亚洲的社会背景与传统的帝制中国大为不同。因此，为了准确地理解学者们关于后儒家假设的争论中的真正关键，必须领会以下两个要点：第一，即使后儒家假设被证实，也不会降低韦伯关于资本主义的新教根源的观点以及与此相应的他对于帝制儒家伦理的消极评价的有效性。第二，更重要的是，既然后儒家假设的提出是受亚洲工业发展的经济事实的激发，而且，它也以韦伯对于欧洲资本主义发展的社会文化根源的经典研究方法为榜样，那么，这一假设是否能够被证实，将取决于学者们是否能够提供一种系统的与韦伯的四要点论证相似的论证。具体来说，学者们需要证明：（1）从统计学上看，一种与帝国儒家伦理不同的儒家伦理，在时间上先于而又能够同时与亚洲资本主义的发展相关；（2）从比较的视角看，相较于世界上同样需要从西方引进资本主义制度的其他地区，受儒家文化影响的亚洲地区对于资本主义制度具有更大的接纳性；（3）从观念上看，存在某种利于塑造资本主义精神的儒家伦理；（4）从社会学上看，存在某种坚实的社会机制，其功能类似于新教教会中教牧服侍的作用，它可以将儒家伦理的观念转化为资本主义的实践活动。

在关于后儒家假设的争论中，（1）与（2）并没有引起什么争议，既然它们所陈述的是导致后儒家假设提出的社会事实。对于参与争论的学者们，尤其是对儒学抱有同情的历史学家与哲学家们来说，证明（3）也没有什么困难。例如，余英时曾将有利于资本主义发展的儒家伦理追溯到儒学在16世纪所经历的理论转化中。按照余英时的观点，这种转换曾极大地提高了商人在传统中国社会中的地位。<sup>②</sup>受儒家伦理有利于亚洲的工业资本主义经济发展这一哲学观点的启发，杜维明也曾组织了几次以此为议题的国际会议。<sup>③</sup>在这些学者所提出的对后儒家假设的观念的解释（ideological explanations）中，儒家伦理的种种特点，例如它对于“努力工作”“勤俭”“教育”“家庭以及其他社团中的团体凝聚力”“尊重社会层级秩序”等价值的一贯肯定，经常被诠释为有利于资本主义从业劳力（workforce）的形成。

与此相比，要点（4）是最受争议的，因为它紧密关系到儒学在所争议的历史时期所经历的困境：正当亚洲从西方引进资本主义制度的时候，儒文化传统的制度基础也在逐渐崩溃。这主要表现为：帝国政体被替换或者被改造，公共教育深度西化，而在工业化的压力下，传统的受儒家思想影响的家族式大家庭不得不转变为以现代都市经济为依赖的核心小家庭。换句话说，既然传统儒文化的制度基础逐渐崩溃甚至全然消失，学者们难以发现某种能够将被声称是对现代经济有利的儒家伦理转化为资本主义实践的坚实的社会机制。这一困难促使那些对后儒家假设抱有同情心的学者，例如罗伯特·贝拉（Robert N. Bellah）或者彼得·伯杰，提出了诸如“弥散儒家”（diffuse Confucianism）<sup>④</sup>

<sup>①</sup> Peter Berger, "Secularity: West and East." Paper presented at Kokugakuin University Centennial Symposium on Cultural Identity and Modernization in Asian Countries, Tokyo, Japan, January, 1983. 在线版本可以于此查找 <http://www2.kokugakuin.ac.jp/ijcc/wp/cimac/berger.html>, accessed on September 3, 2017.

<sup>②</sup> 余英时：《中国近世宗教伦理与商人精神》，台北：联经出版事业公司，1987年。

<sup>③</sup> 杜维明这方面的学术著作，代表作可参见Tu Wei-ming, ed., *Confucian Traditions in East Asian Modernity: Moral Education and Economic Culture in Japan and the Four Mini-Dragons* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

<sup>④</sup> Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," *Daedalus* 96 (1967): 1-21.

或“俗众儒家”的概念,来说明在传统的儒文化制度崩溃之后儒家思想对于人们的经济生活可能造成的影响。尽管如此,这些概念的模糊性表明它们试图指称的社会现实仍远远达不到证明后儒家假设的程度,而这些概念的支持者也很坦然地承认这一缺憾。<sup>①</sup>与此相关,学者们也试图使用经验与定量的方法来澄清后儒家假设中所预设的因果关系。在这方面一个很好的例子是科恩·吕腾(Koen Rutten)。在《儒家资本主义:关于东亚思想与公司运作之间关系的考察》一文中,吕腾从台湾的企业收集了很多关于“经营宗旨”的样本,这些样本中所使用的语言至少部分来自儒家思想。通过统计学的方法,吕腾努力澄清在儒家观念与企业行为之间的相关性关系。他得出的结论是:反映在台湾企业的经营宗旨中的儒家伦理的确与这些企业的组织行为具有相关性,但与这些企业在金融上表现是否成功却并不具有相关性。<sup>②</sup>既然吕腾的研究是为了审查后儒家假设的可靠性,我们有如下几点评论:首先,关于儒家伦理和企业的金融表现的相关性,吕腾并没有开展一种类似的跨文化的统计学研究。既然后儒家假设的提出是针对与世界上其他的地域和文化相比,受儒家文化影响的亚洲工业蓬勃发展这一事实,与吕腾先生的如上研究类似的一种跨文化的统计学研究是非常需要的。其次,对“经营宗旨”的关注,与学者们的其他研究相比,吕腾的研究的确更接近于但却仍旧没有成功地找到一种具体的传递儒家观念的社会机制。我们尚未了解台湾企业中的工作人员在他们的日常的产业运作中是如何实践反映于经营宗旨中的儒家伦理的。总之,尽管学者们努力地证实要点(4)以完善关于后儒家假设的论证,但会使得坚实的社会机制付之阙如的事实,亦引起了一些学者对于后儒家假设的反对态度。例如,卜正民(Timothy Brook)就全然否定在后儒家假设中所预设的因果关系,他认为纯粹的人的“经济冲动”,是促成资本主义在所涉及的亚洲地区产生和发展的主要动因,而非什么儒家伦理。<sup>③</sup>

所以问题是:现在,是否可以推进关于后儒家假设的讨论?是否有希望找到那个被设想的社会机制,从而不仅可以推进如上的学术讨论,也可以帮助人们理解亚洲工业发展的社会文化根源?

以最近关于日本资本主义及日本经济的最新研究成果为依据,本文认为,对于解答这些问题来说如下研究路径是非常有前景的:即研究日本儒商——例如涩泽荣一(1840—1931)在明治维新前后是如何帮助将西方的资本主义制度移植到受儒家文化影响下的社会文化土壤之中。通过这一研究,不仅可以使用马克斯·韦伯曾经使用过的社会学方法推进学者们关于后儒家假设的讨论,而且,也可以在观念上及社会现实中找到新的资源开辟一些新的学术讨论的维度,例如儒家宗教性的独特特点、日本资本主义经济的模式、以及商业史研究对于当今商业教育的意义等。

然而,为了让读者们更清楚地理解笔者在本文剩余部分的论证方法,笔者愿提前作一个说明。在上文明确了问题域及研究方法之后,本文剩余部分的论证焦点是:通过分析涩泽荣一在明治维新时期对于日本资本主义形成过程的作用,笔者力图证明,被涩泽荣一所诠释及推广的儒家伦理是日本资本主义生产方式诞生并发展的诸多原因之一,而非仅仅是后者的在统计学意义上的关联因素。之所以得出这一结论,主要是由于涩泽荣一及其他抱有类似观念的儒商们作为经济主体的经营活动,可以看作一种坚实的社会机制,从而弥补后儒家假设学者们一直都在寻找的那个关键的论证环节(4)。在这个论证过程中,虽然笔者将韦伯关于新教伦理的研究作为一种方法论的指导,但是笔者并不想就伦理学

<sup>①</sup> Peter Berger, “An East Asian Development Model?” in *In Search of an East Asian Development Model*, eds., Peter Berger and Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1988), 7.

<sup>②</sup> Koen Rutten, “Confucian Capitalism: An Inquiry into the Relationship between East Asian Thought and Firm Performance” (master’s thesis, Erasmus University, 2009), [https://www.erim.eur.nl/fileadmin/default/content/erim/research/centres/china\\_business/admin/c\\_master\\_theses/koen%20rutten%20-%20confucian%20capitalism.pdf](https://www.erim.eur.nl/fileadmin/default/content/erim/research/centres/china_business/admin/c_master_theses/koen%20rutten%20-%20confucian%20capitalism.pdf).

<sup>③</sup> Timothy Brook, “Weber, Mencius, and the History of Chinese Capitalism,” *Asian Perspective* 19, no. 1 (1995): 79–97.

的内容方面提供关于儒家伦理的与新教伦理全然近似的说明。换句话说，笔者认为被涩泽荣一所诠释的儒家伦理具有自身独特的特色，它亦以一种独特的方式帮助将西方的资本主义制度移植到日本。正因为如此，儒家伦理对于在日本建立源自西方的工业资本主义生产方式所起到的作用，从因果关系上来说，既是转移式的也是转化式的。也就是说，在帮助移植西方资本主义的过程中，儒家伦理为这种生产方式提供了新的特征，这些特征使得学者们得以将其定义为一种资本主义发展的日本模式。儒家伦理究竟是如何起到这种作用的呢？这将是如下行文所解释的要点。

## 二、涩泽荣一与日本资本主义的形成<sup>[77]</sup>

尽管儒家思想在日本立国伊始就影响了日本文化，但直到德川幕府时代（1603—1867），儒家思想才真正在日本民众——尤其作为政治精英的武士阶层——的精神生活中产生普遍的影响<sup>①</sup>。

涩泽荣一出生于一个经营地方印染产业的商人家庭。他年轻的时候，从其叔舅及其他受德川幕府时期重要的儒家哲学家如石田梅岩（1685—1744）等影响的儒家学者那里，接受了非官方但却扎实的儒学教育。在服务于德川幕府期间，涩泽荣一作为金融大臣，在1867年至1868年间，曾与其他政府代表一起被派往欧洲，参加巴黎世博会以学习西方先进的政治与经济制度。但是，就在涩泽荣一逗留于巴黎期间，日本国内推翻幕府统治的运动得以成功，日本自此进入了明治维新的时代。作为最高的金融官员之一，涩泽荣一短暂地服务于明治天皇政府之后退出了政界，自此作为一位独立的企业家将其余生致力于打造现代日本经济。他是日本现代银行体系的缔造者，并帮助成立了超过五百家以上的日本公司。由于涩泽荣一在现代日本经济形成过程中的巨大作用，他常常被日本媒体奉为“日本资本主义之父”。更重要的是，涩泽荣一有一种罕见的才能可以将企业家实践与理论表述结合在一起。他具有极强的写作能力，也是一位有魅力的演说家。在他的写作与演讲活动中，他号召用儒家的工作伦理来指导逐渐成形的现代日本经济。<sup>②</sup>

以东西方主要语言为载体的关于涩泽荣一的研究不可谓贫乏。但是，与本文的研究相关，从宗教社会学的角度分析涩泽荣一，关于日本资本主义形成的贡献并说明这些贡献对于被持续争论的后儒家假设的意义，将极为重要。从这个角度看，涩泽荣一的贡献主要有两个方面：第一，通过对儒家经典如《论语》的再诠释，涩泽荣一凸显了“财富”在传统儒家以成圣为终极目标的道德修身过程中的地位。对于财富的认知地位的提升不仅使得儒学更利于接纳资本主义的经济制度，也使得日本传统文化拥有了思想资源以矫正西方资本主义的潜在缺陷。第二，涩泽荣一既将儒学理解为一种信仰和伦理的传统，也将它视作一种关于管理技能的智慧传统；由此，涩泽荣一努力地将源自儒学传统的洞见应用到他所参与创造的股份合作制企业（日文称之为“合本”企业）的管理实践之中。从这个角度看，涩泽荣一的儒家思想不仅帮助移植了现代的资本主义制度，它也对这些制度进行了修改从而创造了新的制度特色——使得学者们可以将其定义为一种独特的日本资本主义模式。

① 关于日本儒学最新的文化史研究，可以参见 Kiri Paramore, *Japanese Confucianism: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

② 关于涩泽荣一的传记研究，可以参见 Patrick Fridenson and Kikkawa Takeo, eds., *Ethical Capitalism: Shibusawa Eiichi and Business Leadership in Global Perspective* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 5–12，与 Shichihei Yamamoto, *The Spirit of Japanese Capitalism and Selected Essays*, trans. Lynne E. Riggs and Takechi Manabu (London: Madison Books, 1992), 175–192.

### (一) 涩泽荣一的儒家工作伦理 [78]

涩泽荣一关于财富的再思考表现于他对于《论语·雍也》第30章的诠释中：“子贡曰：‘如有博施于民而能济众，何如？可谓仁乎？’子曰：‘何事于仁！必也圣乎！尧舜其犹病诸！……’”在这段对话中，来自与孔子的家乡鲁国相临近的卫国的商人子贡前来询问孔子关于“仁”的准确含义；而“仁”正是孔子在《论语》之中所宣讲的道德学说的“主善”(cardinal virtue)。在孔子的回答中提到的尧、舜是传说中远古中华文明的两位圣王，他们的人格之“圣”被孔子及其追随者奉为儒家修养的终极目标。关于这段对话的一个重要细节是当子贡阐发他对于仁的理解时所使用的“济众”一词中的“济”字，在语义上同中文的“经济”<sup>①</sup>一词相关联。如果考虑子贡在跟随孔子学习之时以及之前是一位商人的事实，那么，由子贡所选择并且由孔子所赞许的用于诠释“仁”德的这些字眼实际蕴含了对于“财富”在儒家伦理中地位的肯定，尽管在所录《论语》之中，这层含义并没有明确地被表露出来。

受德川幕府时代前辈儒家思想家如石田梅岩的影响，涩泽荣一抓住了所引《论语》之中的这一细节，并通过对《论语》关键语句的重新诠释将他对财富和商业活动的理解融入传统的儒家伦理学之中。涩泽荣一论道：

若对“仁”作狭义解释，则其义相当简单，即平时待人亲切。若对“仁”作广义解释，则如《论语·雍也》篇孔子的弟子子贡询问孔子“如有博施于民而能济众，何如，可谓仁乎”时，孔子答曰“何事于仁，必也圣乎”所示，济民之事即治国平天下，此谓仁也。<sup>②</sup>

涩泽荣一在另一处文献中进一步论道，旨在积累财富的商业活动对于“济民之事”来说是不可或缺的：“如欲博施于民而能济众，首先需要金钱。如何想博施济众，若无财富，终究不能实现其愿望。欲布周文王之政，必要的也是财富。”<sup>③</sup>令人印象深刻的是，通过对《论语》经文的再诠释，涩泽荣一证明了商人积累财富的商业行为对于传统的旨在成圣的儒家修养来说不仅是相融的，而且是不可或缺的。

如果了解日本从德川幕府时代向明治维新时期的社会转型特征，就不难理解为什么涩泽荣一作为一位独立儒商，如此迫切地意欲提高财富在儒家伦理中的地位。作为封建制日本国的最后一个时期，德川幕府时代的日本社会由四个阶层组成：士（武士）、农、工、商。在这四者之中，商人的地位最低。由于缺乏与帝制中国类似的科举制度，日本社会各阶层之间的流动性也大为受限。这就导致了尽管德川幕府大力推行儒家思想，武士阶层也因此受到儒家思想的广泛影响，儒家伦理意识却难以在商人阶层中扎根。在明治维新伊始，商人的这种受限制的社会地位带来了很大的问题。首先，商人在社会阶层中被贬低的地位与日本迫切地引进先进的资本主义经济制度和技术以与西方相抗衡的愿望不相称；其次，即使制度和技术被引进日本，由于商人阶层普遍缺乏道德意识，这些源自西方的经济机制能否在一个异质文化的土壤上发挥它本有的作用也让人大为质疑。在这样的意义上，涩泽荣一对于儒学中财富观念的再诠释提供了非常重要的日本传统文化资源，使得日本传统文化可以对日本资本主义的早期发展发挥“理性化”(rationalize,韦伯术语)的塑形作用。

① “经济”一词在汉语古代语境中多指“经世济民”之义，包含但又不限于现代语境中的经济活动。而日文的“経済”一词源自中文，在现代语境中用于翻译英文的economics，主要用于指称现代经济活动。

② 转引自冯玮：《论“日本资本主义之父”涩泽荣一的“三大贡献”》，《江西师范大学学报（哲学社会科学版）》2008年第4期。原文引自川口浩：《涩泽荣一的经世济民思想》，东京：日本经济评论社，2002年，第1页。

③ 转引自周见：《涩泽荣一的实业思想与日本资本主义精神》，《日本研究》2003年第4期。原文引自涩泽荣一：《涩泽荣一全集》（第2卷），东京：平凡社，1930年，第162页。

既然涩泽荣一意图用一种儒家的——而非新教的——伦理支撑日本资本主义的发展，可以设想他参与塑造的“日本资本主义精神”应当与韦伯所描述的那种精神有所不同。在这方面，一个突出的例证就是涩泽荣一阐释商人们当如何处理寻求“私利”与寻求“他人利益”之间的关系。

在《论语·里仁》第16章中，孔子曾教导“君子喻于义，小人喻于利”。在涩泽荣一看来，这呈现了孔子对于公共利益和私人利益关系的理解。关于如何处理这种关系，涩泽荣一的思想有如下一些要点：

第一，涩泽荣一认为“私人利益可以导向公共利益。公共利益如果没有私人利益做基础便是无根基的”<sup>①</sup>。换句话说，商业活动对于私人利益的追逐是实现公共利益的基础。这个思想与上面所分析的涩泽荣一关于财富积累在儒家修身过程中的重要性认识是一致的。

第二，尽管如此，涩泽荣一反对商人应当首先寻求他们的个人私利。与此相反，商人应当首先寻求他人的利益，因为涩泽荣一认为“首先为他人寻求利益不会阻碍商人们顺利地开展他们的业务，而且也不会阻碍他们最终获取自己的利益；毋宁说，为他人寻求利益对于商人获取自己的利益来说是绝对必要的”<sup>②</sup>。按照涩泽荣一的理解，如果一个人始终无视他人的利益而仅仅追求自身的私利，那么他将无法持续地积累财富，而在这种情况下，这个人的私利最终也将无法实现。因此，尽管涩泽荣一鼓励人们为了创造社会财富而追求自身的私利，但是他却强调他人的利益应该优先于私己的利益，由此他也坚定地相信将一个社会的经济良好地协调成为一个和谐的发展整体应该而且能够给每个社会成员都带来好处。按照涩泽荣一的观点，因为孔子曾用“己欲立而立人，己欲达而达人”（《论语·雍也》）这种意味深长的语言来回答子贡关于仁是否意味着“博施于民而能济众”的问题，如上这种经济发展模式正是孔子所赞许的。

第三，即使商人的积累财富的活动最终成功地实现了既让他人也让自身获利的效果，涩泽荣一认为这并不意味着商人有独占其财富的权利，因为这些财富的积累是由社会上与此相关的全部成员共同完成的。因此，涩泽荣一鼓励富人们投身于慈善事业，但是，本着儒家的中道精神，涩泽荣一也并不主张这意味着人们应该由于慷慨捐助而再次复归贫穷。<sup>③</sup>

与韦伯借以分析欧洲资本主义起源的资本主义精神相比，由涩泽荣一关于公共利益与私人利益关系的理解所表现的日本资本主义精神是非常不同的。这种精神诉诸更多整体性思维、更少的个人主义，由此也更加关注一个经济体中全部参与者的利益的和谐。尤为独特的是，涩泽荣一所表述的日本资本主义精神鼓励商人将积极寻求公众利益作为商业活动的首要任务，这是非常不同于西方的经典经济学家如亚当·斯密（Adam Smith）的观点的。按照亚当·斯密的观点，商人们应当首先寻求个人私利，而如果存在一个共同遵守的正义的法律架构，自由市场的看不见的手就会帮助一个社会实现利益的最大化。<sup>④</sup>

## （二）涩泽荣一的儒家管理哲学 [81]

涩泽荣一对于日本资本主义的形成所做的贡献有其独特之处：由于儒家思想的整体论特征及其

<sup>①</sup> 转引自Tanaka Kazuhiro, “Harmonization between Morality and Economy,” in *Ethical Capitalism*, 48. 原文引自Shibusawa Eiichi, “Shonin no hombun” [商人的责任], in vol. 26 of *Shibusawa Eiichi Denki shiryo* [涩泽荣一传记资料] (Tokyo: Ryumonsha, 1959), 159. 中文译文为笔者自译，下同。

<sup>②</sup> Tanaka, “Harmonization between Morality and Economy,” 47.

<sup>③</sup> 关于涩泽荣一如何处理个人私利与公共利益的关系，可以参见Tanaka, “Harmonization between Morality and Economy,” 46–48.

<sup>④</sup> 对于涩泽荣一和亚当·斯密的经济思想的比较，参见Tanaka, “Harmonization between Morality and Economy,” 51–52.

涵泓和谐的倾向,它不仅在塑造日本资本主义的精神方面起到了与新教伦理相似的作用,而且,涩泽荣一也将儒学作为一种具有实践性的管理工具应用到企业的实际经营过程之中。通过涩泽荣一的努力,这种管理实践使得被引进的资本主义制度具有了新的堪称日本资本主义独有的特色。这方面的一个显著的例证,便是涩泽荣一倾心尽力地引进并转化了“合本主义”(*Gapponshugi*)的企业组织。

涩泽荣一对合本主义——即股份制合作企业的兴趣始自其参访巴黎世博会期间。他发现这种企业组织形式具有极高的统合资源效率,与开创工业项目的前景。因此便着意将其引进日本。但是,受旨在长远规划的儒家思维的整体论影响,涩泽荣一并不狭隘地将合本主义理解为一种资本主义制度的具体类型,而是将其更广泛地视作“通过聚集最优秀的人力与财力以实现经营宗旨并创造公共福利的商业发展的原则”<sup>①</sup>。涩泽荣一也着意将他的儒学知识应用到对合本企业的管理之中:“为了管理一个合本类型的公司,管理者必须依赖完善的理性与牢靠的标准。但人们从哪里可以发现这些标准呢?它们只可能存在《论语》之中。因此,我在思考用《论语》中的智慧来管理商业。”<sup>②</sup>

几个例证可以让我们理解涩泽荣一如何将他的儒术应用到对合本商业组织的管理之中:

第一,商业决定。涩泽荣一的心中存在着一个关于价值的序列来帮助他做出商业决定:

如果问我如何考虑,我会这样回答,即首先要考虑的是,对于一件事情,如何做才算合乎道理。

然后考虑如何用这种合乎道理的做法,是否能为国家社会带来利益。再进一步考虑,这样做,对自己的影响如何?经过考虑之后,如果对自己无利,可是只要其合乎道理,而且又有利于国家社会,那么,我会断然舍弃自己的利益,遵循道理行事。<sup>③</sup>

涩泽荣一进一步澄清,这里提到的“道理”便是“与仁义相符合”<sup>④</sup>,而仁、义正是儒家伦理的两条主要道德原则。换句话说,商人的商业决定首先必须是伦理的。其次,这些决定应当将公共利益置于私人利益之前做优先考量。如上所论,一种道德的并对社会有帮助的商业最终会给个人带来持久的利益。

第二,交流与沟通。涩泽荣一伦理的以及整体主义的做出商业决定的方法,也表现在他在合本企业组织中整合各方利益的沟通技巧。在涩泽荣一参与开创的所有企业之中,他的同僚最期盼他扮演这样的角色:“调整利害相关方的利益冲突,通过沟通与裁决来达成各方的妥协。”<sup>⑤</sup>在这个过程中,涩泽荣一的一项关键的沟通技能被研究者们描绘如下:

涩泽荣一并不试图单向度地操纵对话。与此相反,他往往仔细地倾听各方,等待其中一方提出一种可能达成妥协的意见。通过这一过程,抱有不同利益的参与者最终会找到某种合作的基础,使得筹划中的公司成为一种各方对其享有长远利益的公共实体。在这个意义上,公司本质上是落实在私人领域中的“公共”领域。<sup>⑥</sup>

将全部利害相关方的利益考量在内,并最终构建一种具有包容性的和谐体以增进公共利益,我们发现涩泽荣一所使用的这种沟通方法非常类似于《论语》中所记载的孔子与普通民众沟通的方法。例如,“子曰:‘吾有知乎哉? 无知也。有鄙夫问于我,空空如也,我叩其两端而竭焉。’”(《论语·子罕》)

① Fridenson and Kikkawa, “Introduction,” in *Ethical Capitalism*, 3.

② 原文引自Shibusawa Eiichi, “Dotoku Keizai goitsu setsu” [道德与经济不可分离], 转引自Tanaka, “Harmonization between Morality and Economy,” in *Ethical Capitalism*, 54.

③ 涩泽荣一:《论语与算盘:人生·道德·财富》,王中江译,北京:中国青年出版社,1996年,第24页。

④ 涩泽荣一:《论语与算盘:人生·道德·财富》,王中江译,第77页。

⑤ Fridenson and Kikkawa, “The Crisis of Capitalism and the *Gapponshugi* of Shibusawa Eiichi,” in *Ethical Capitalism*, 179.

⑥ Shimada Masakazu, “Tensions between the Open Market Model and the Closed Zaibatsu Model,” in *Ethical Capitalism*, 22.

从这个角度看，涩泽荣一的沟通方法受到了儒学中“和”的价值的启发。

第三，劳资关系。涩泽荣一具有的显著的儒学特色的关于商业决定以及交流沟通的方法也体现在他对于劳资关系的理解中。孔子曾经有一段关于“法治”和“礼治”关系的著名论述：在这两者之中，孔子较为赞赏人性化并强调教育之作用的“礼治”，因为孔子认为这可以让“治理”从人们的内心根基处着手，从而达成社会的和谐。这段讨论在《论语》中的经文如下：“子曰：‘道之以政，齐之以刑，民免而无耻；道之以德，齐之以礼，有耻且格。’”（《论语·为政》）延续同样的思维，尽管西方资本主义向日本的移植过程中伴随着一系列法律条文及执行机构的建立，但是涩泽荣一却拒绝仅仅从法律的角度来思考劳资关系：

资本家与工人之间，向来都是以家族的关系相联结的，现在忽然制定了法律，要对此加以管理，这虽然是很好的想法，但实施的结果，果真能合乎当局的想法吗？依靠多年的关系，在资本家和工人之间有一种无法用言语来表达的感情，使他们牢固地结合起来，现在法律明确了两者的权利和义务，就势必把这种关系分隔，从而使管理者劳而无功，反达不到目的。我想在这方面，有必要更进一步地作深入的研究。<sup>①</sup>

很显然，涩泽荣一对以法律为中心的企业管理方法抱有怀疑，他意图保存更重视雇主与雇员私人关系的日本传统管理文化。以一种比较的视野看，涩泽荣一具有儒家特色的管理方法是不同于被韦伯所描述的以新教伦理为指导的相关情形——员工与企业之间没有任何私人关系，他们只是在一个资本主义工作场所之中履行由法律条文明文规定的职责。

### 三、对涩泽荣一研究的启示和反思 <sup>[83]</sup>

在理解了涩泽荣一对于日本资本主义形成的作用之后，是否拥有了新的方向感来参与关于后儒家假设的争论呢？尤为重要的是，涩泽荣一这一案例是否提供了某种社会机制的例证，从而弥补了对这一假设的证明来说亟须但却尚未找到的关键的论证环节呢？

从宗教社会学的角度看，涩泽荣一公开的儒者信仰<sup>②</sup>以及他对于日本资本主义形成的决定性作用是不能够被忽视的。根据最新的关于日本儒学的研究，了解到涩泽荣一作为一个独立儒者而推动日本资本主义的建立和发展的情形并不是孤例。基里·帕拉莫尔（Kiri Paramore）论道，德川幕府在明治维新之前所建立的中央及地方的众多儒家书院，作为一种具有智库功能的基础设施“是19世纪50年代之后（日本的）西方化与现代化得以大规模推行的中介结构”<sup>③</sup>。尽管并不是所有受过这些儒家知识机构熏陶同时又向西方文明学习的日本学习者都像涩泽荣一那样将自己明确地认同为儒者，但是，在儒家文化的氛围中接受教育、成长，并由此成为将西方资本主义经济制度引入日本的先行者，该现象绝不仅仅局限于像涩泽荣一这样履历耀眼的个例。接受儒家文化影响的人可以在资本主义的企业机构中担任重要的管理角色，这一现象也可以在当代的日本企业家如稻盛和夫身上发现。<sup>④</sup>因此，在仔细考量这些与日本儒学和日本资本主义的关系相关的历史因素之后，如继续追问当一种儒家伦理一旦与传统帝制中国的文士—官僚体制相剥离，是否可以作为鼓励资本主义的发展的原因？至少应当在

① 涩泽荣一：《论语与算盘：人生·道德·财富》，王中江译，第150页。

② 涩泽荣一称以儒家为中心的“汉学”为自己的信仰。（涩泽荣一：《论语与算盘：人生·道德·财富》，王中江译，第35页）

③ Paramore, *Japanese Confucianism: A Cultural History*, 116.

④ Geoffrey Jones, “*Gappōshugi in Global Perspective: Debating the Responsibility of Capitalism*,” in *Ethical Capitalism*, 159.

日本的近代改制这一历史背景下对此问题做出肯定的回答。

涩泽荣一将他的儒者信仰融入日本资本主义的方式也表现了儒家宗教性的两个特色——而儒家宗教性问题也正是与后儒家假设相关的被学者们持续争论的话题。首先，与启动了欧洲资本主义的新教教会机制不同，涩泽荣一作为一位独立儒商既是儒家观念的宣教者也是一位商业精英。这表明具有宗教性的儒家思想并不在社会阶层中区分“牧师”与普通信众；并且，儒家也不需要建立一个如提供教牧服务的教会那样典型的“宗教”组织来将宗教观念传递到商业实践之中。第二，与第一点相关，涩泽荣一不仅将儒学视作包含了伦理要求的信仰，他也将儒学作为一种富含实践智慧的传统并从中提炼出企业管理的技巧来经营被引进的合本组织。基于儒家宗教性的这两个特点，笔者认为任何无加区别地使用“宗教”一词来刻画儒家传统的总体特征的做法都是有欠考虑的。这也提醒学者们，为了发现儒家观念在社会中宗教或非宗教的影响，那些看似明显的宗教组织，如教会、庙宇等，可能并不是最好的开展社会学调研的场所。正相反，更有希望的途径应当是调查儒家传统如何帮助塑造了那些“世俗”的机构，例如家庭、学校、工商业企业以及政府。近年来，尤其是在中国大陆，人们在所有这些按照西方术语的划分是“世俗的”机构中目睹了儒学的强劲复兴。因此，希望以儒家为研究对象的宗教社会学家们应当或多或少转变他们的田野调研的思路，从而可以更准确地定位儒学在整个亚洲发展的制度根基。

最后，笔者将申述两个观点，以反思本文将涩泽荣一的研究作为商业史研究的一个案例，对今天的商学教育的意义。

第一，自从日本发展为亚洲资本主义经济的强大引擎之后，学者们经常讨论关于日本资本主义的“模式”问题。关于本主题的最近的研究论道：“我们可以将日本模式定义为一种聚集了各种机构（这包含政治机构、中介性的协会、金融体系、劳资关系协会以及企业间组织等）的集合体，其中涉及的各种机构被广泛地联结在一起，从而形成了关于经济治理的一个特征显著的国家系统。”<sup>①</sup>与此同时，学者们也在微观领域关注日本企业的某些机构特征来对日本资本主义模式作出说明，例如被称作“三大法宝”的雇佣终身制、年功序列工资制以及企业工会组织。<sup>②</sup>与西方资本主义的自由市场模式——例如美国的情况相比，日本模式更加具有整体性，更重视远景规划，更重视以人为本，从而也更少地强调个人主义。根据史蒂文·沃格尔（Steven K. Vogel）的观点，尽管当年的危机也促使日本经济学习了更多美国模式的经验从而增加自身的柔韧性与灵活度，日本模式的这些特点在20世纪90年代日本经历经济危机之后仍旧持续存在。<sup>③</sup>尽管如此，如果论到日本资本主义模式的社会文化根源，我们发现这方面的研究与旨在描述这一模式本身为何的研究相比尤为欠缺。<sup>④</sup>因此，关注涩泽荣一这样的儒商如何在日本资本主义形成的早期起到了至关重要的作用，这对于如上关于社会文化根源的主题的研究显然会大有裨益。这种类型的商业史研究至少可以带来两个明显的好处：其一，它将会增强非日本企业在国际商务中的文化能力，从而更好地与日本企业进行沟通与合作；其二，日本之外的商业经营者可以学习被涩泽荣一所成功运用的儒家商业智慧，从而为改善自身商业组织中的管理质量提供可

<sup>①</sup> Steven K. Vogel, *Japan Remodeled: How Government and Industry Are Reforming Japanese Capitalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 8.

<sup>②</sup> Fridenson and Kikkawa, “The Crisis of Capitalism and the *Gapponshugi* of Shibusawa Eiichi,” 185.

<sup>③</sup> Vogel, *Japan Remodeled*, 218–220.

<sup>④</sup> 这方面一个令人欣喜的例外是被称作“现代管理学之父”的彼得·德鲁克（Peter Drucker）对于儒家伦理和它对于现代日本企业的管理文化的影响的研究，请参见Peter Drucker, *The Ecological Vision: Reflections on the American Condition* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 207–212, 400–403.

资利用的资源。由于东亚及东南亚的一些主要的国家和地区，例如中国、韩国、越南、中国台湾、中国香港、新加坡等在历史上都曾长期浸染于儒家文化的影响之中，对于商学研究者们来说，研究儒家传统对于亚洲商业的社会文化影响就显得更加迫切。

第二，被涩泽荣一所设想的儒家伦理视公共利益重于个人私利，因此，与韦伯所刻画的新教资本主义精神以及西方经典经济学家如亚当·斯密所论述的经典的自由市场理论相比，涩泽荣一的经济思想具有显著的不同。在这个意义上，在关于“资本主义危机”的讨论几乎成为陈词滥调的今天，对儒商们的研究是否可以提供一种更有利于人类文明持续发展的不同于西方的资本主义模式呢？对于这个问题，笔者谨慎地抱有与杜维明先生的如下观点相类似的乐观态度：“与由清教徒此世的禁欲伦理所塑造的经典资本主义发展模式相比，植根于儒家伦理的资本主义模式或许可以被证明对于21世纪的人类社会来说具为远大的意义。”<sup>①</sup>

（责任编辑：陈真 责任校对：陈俊宇）

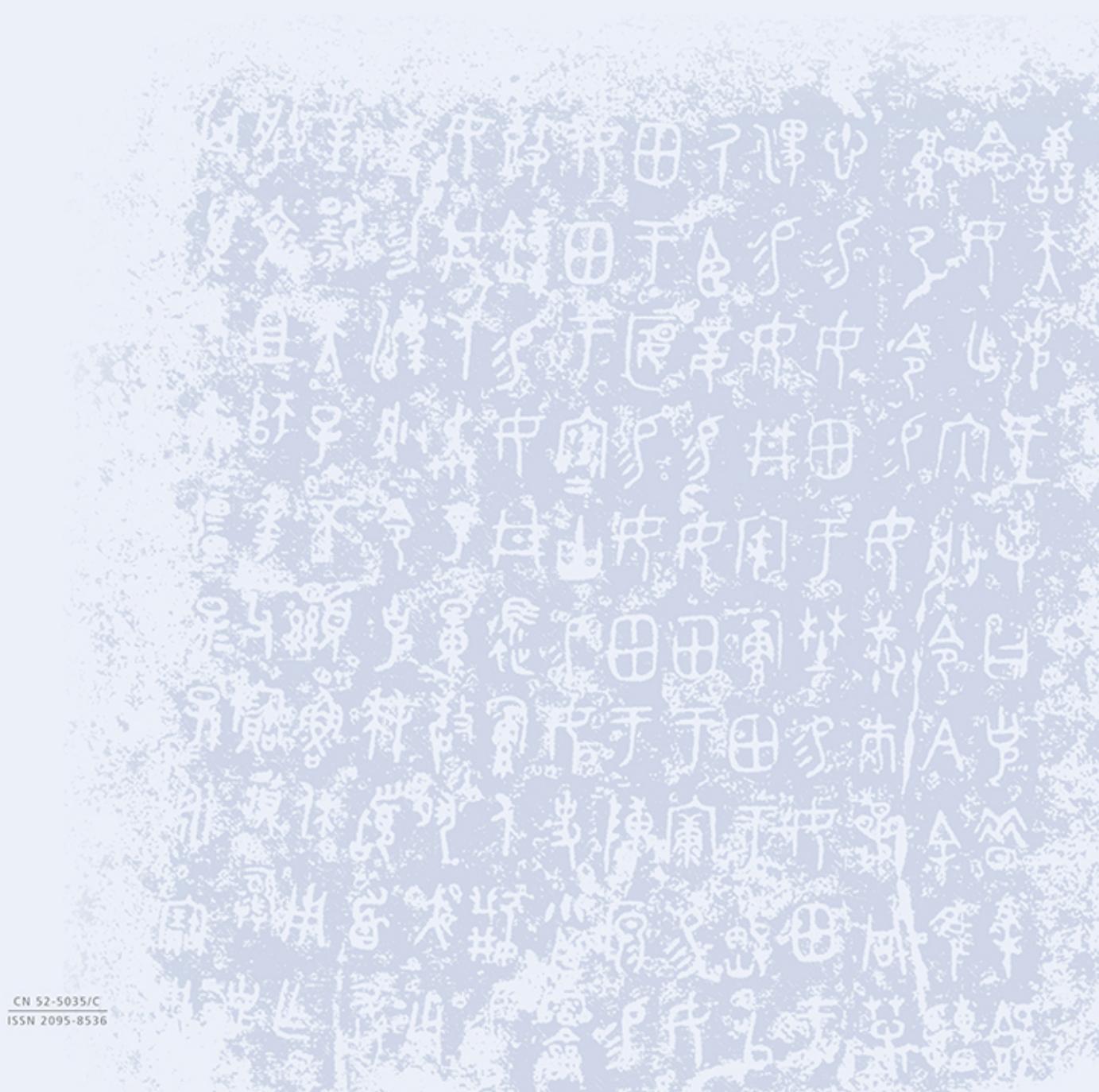
<sup>①</sup> Tu, *Confucian Traditions in East Asian Modernity*, 10.

# CONFUCIAN ACADEMY

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## *Confucian Academy Volume 5 Contents*

# Confucianism, *Gapponshugi*, and the Spirit of Japanese Capitalism

Song Bin\*

**Abstract:** An inability to discover a solid social mechanism transmitting Confucian ideas into capitalist activities has led scholars to disagree on the causal relationship between Confucianism and early industrial development in Asia, as assumed by the so-called post-Confucian hypothesis. A study of the decisive role of independent Confucian businessperson Shibusawa Eiichi in the formation of Japanese capitalism sheds light upon our understanding on both this causal relationship and the features of Confucian religiosity. Through this study, the methodology of Max Weber's sociology of religion and the meaning of the study of business history for today's business education can also be reexamined.

**Keywords:** post-Confucian hypothesis, social mechanism, Confucian businessperson, Asian industrial development

## A Re-Examination of the Post-Confucian Hypothesis and the Methodology of Max Weber's Sociology of Religion

[Refer to page 79 for Chinese. Similarly hereinafter]

In their investigations into the sociocultural roots of Asian industrial development after the Second World War, scholars continue to debate a “post-Confucian hypothesis,” but have yet to reach a consensus. Defined broadly, the post-Confucian hypothesis assumes that Confucianism contains elements which, in an appropriate modern environment, will encourage the development of capitalist economy, though these elements may not have done so in premodern China because of its different institutional (social, economic, and political) environment.<sup>1</sup>

As implied by its semantic structure and admitted by relevant scholars, the hypothesis was a timely and deliberate response to Max Weber's monumental research in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* and his corresponding negative evaluation

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1 Christian Jochim devised this broad definition of the post-Confucian hypothesis and traced its various formulations. See Christian Jochim, “Confucius and Capitalism: Views of Confucianism in Works on Confucian Ethics and Economic Development,” *Journal of Chinese Religions* 20, no. 1 (1992): 139–141.

of Confucianism regarding its role in impeding the creation of capitalism in pre-modern China. Concerning the methodology of Weber's investigation into the Protestant roots of capitalism, we can discern four major elements: (1) He demonstrated a statistically higher concentration of Protestants than Catholics in ownership and leadership of capitalist enterprises and in the fields of higher education training for science, technology, and business. Through a historical investigation, Weber also confirmed the temporal sequence in which the Protestant ethic preceded the development of the capitalist spirit and social structures with which it was statistically correlated. (2) Through an analysis of ideas, Weber demonstrated the close affinity and mutual congruence between the characteristics of the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism, centred around the attitude of "this-worldly ascetics" rationalizing their particular vocation in a capitalist enterprise as a response to a divine calling. (3) Weber traced the various social mechanisms into which Protestant writings were converted in the capitalist workplace so as to develop an attitude that sanctioned the unlimited acquisition of wealth as righteous. Among these social mechanisms, the role of religious congregation and pastoral care in the church was highlighted. (4) Through a comparative study of religion, Weber attempted to explain why capitalism did not arise within traditions other than European Protestantism; in relation to this paper's theme, "Confucianism" was considered by Weber to be lacking a panoply of ideological features similar to the Protestant ethic, so it impeded the creation of capitalism in pre-modern China, although institutionally, some social and political features of imperial China were considered by Weber as advantageous to the development of capitalism.<sup>2</sup>

Among these four elements, the first was used to confirm the statistical correlation of a potentially causal sequence. The second and third were used to pin down the actual causal relationship, which implies two kinds of causal explanations: an ideological explanation of why the Protestant ethic implies the spirit of capitalism, and a sociological explanation of how the ideas of the Protestant ethic were transformed into social practices. The fourth is a sociological "control experiment" to investigate whether if one crucial variable, the Protestant ethic, was removed, the expected outcome, the emergence of capitalism, could still transpire. From a comparative perspective, we find Weber's methodology both an imitation and an innovation in the area of social science of the "hypothesis-deduction" method that has thrived in natural science since the early modern scientific revolution. Its crucial point is to confirm the causal sequence among correlated social phenomena. Since social phenomena can rarely be manipulatively repeated in scientists' laboratories as natural ones can, comparative religious studies were taken by Weber as one major method to strengthen the probability of a conjectured causal sequence. Because of the rigor of his methodology and its consistent implementation in his scholarship, Weber's conclusion regarding the Protestant root of capitalism was highly influential, even if not universally convincing, among sociologists.

However, the boom in Asian industrial development that began in the late nineteenth century and intensified after the Second World War, and the resulting proposal of the post-Confucian hypothesis, seem to provide a challenge to the fourth element of Weber's argument: if a Confucian ethic is proven to be one cause of the development of Asian capitalism, to what extent can Weber's view concerning the Protestant roots of capitalism be maintained? However, if we read Weber's evaluation of the negative role of Confucianism carefully, we find that the challenge may not be so great:

2 Elements of Weber's argument are contained in various chapters in his two monographs most relevant to this paper's topic: *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Stephen Kalberg (Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company, 2002) and *The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism*, trans. and ed. Hans H. Gerth (New York: Free Press, 1968). Concerning the four-element structure of Weber's argument, see C. K. Yang, "Introduction," in *The Religion of China*, xxix.

The Chinese in all probability would be quite capable, probably more capable than the Japanese, of assimilating capitalism which has technically and economically been fully developed in the modern cultural era. It is obviously not a question of deeming the Chinese “naturally ungifted” for the demands of capitalism. But compared to the Occident, the varied conditions which externally favored the origin of capitalism in China did not suffice to create it.<sup>3</sup>

In other words, Weber envisioned the possibility that Confucianism could “assimilate” capitalist institutions so as to encourage the development of a capitalist economy in areas under Confucian influence, which is equivalent to saying that Weber did envision the possibility of the post-Confucian hypothesis. This is because the Confucian ethic that Weber analyzed as a counter-example to the Protestant ethic is one that was tightly bound to the traditional literati-official establishment of imperial China. Hence, as long as this particular kind of Confucian ethic was proven to be unfavorable to the emergence of capitalism in imperial China, the effectivity of Weber’s four-element argument would remain intact.

However, as far as the debates over the post-Confucian hypothesis are concerned, the “Confucianism” that scholars discuss is not the traditional imperial form, but one that, as betokened by Peter L. Berger’s (1929–2017) impressive concept of “vulgar Confucianism,” can be taken as a work ethic for people liberated from the conservative yoke of the Chinese state, and thus, “motivating the man-in-the-street.”<sup>4</sup> This focus on an alternative Confucian ethic is understandable given the immensely different social context of industrial Asia from imperial China. Therefore, in order to understand what is at stake in scholars’ disagreements concerning the post-Confucian hypothesis, we must bear the following two points in mind:

First, the probable verification of the post-Confucian hypothesis does not undermine Weber’s argument concerning the Protestant roots of capitalism and his corresponding negative assessment of the imperial Confucian ethic.

Second, and more importantly, since the proposal of the post-Confucian hypothesis was stimulated by the economic realities of industrial Asia and is modeled upon Weber’s classical argument concerning the sociocultural roots of European capitalism, whether the hypothesis can be verified will be determined by whether scholars can provide a methodical argument similar to the four-element one devised by Weber. In more concrete terms, scholars need to prove that (1) statistically, an alternative Confucian ethic preceded and is correlated with the flourishing of Asian capitalism; (2) comparatively, Asian areas under Confucian influence are more receptive to capitalist institutions than other areas in the world which also need to import capitalist institutions from the West; (3) ideologically, there is a Confucian ethic advantageous to nurturing the spirit of capitalism; and (4) sociologically, there is some form of solid social mechanism with a function similar to the pastoral service provided in Protestant congregations to transmit the ideas of Confucian ethics into capitalist activities.

Points (1) and (2) are hardly controversial for the debate concerned, since they pertain to the social realities that encouraged the proposal of the post-Confucian hypothesis in the first place. Scholars, especially historians and philosophers sympathetic to Confucian ideas, have had no difficulty in substantiating point (3). Examples include Yu Ying-shih 余英时 and Tu Wei-ming 杜维明. Yu Ying-shih has traced the Confucian ethic favorable to capitalism to the ideological transformation of Confucianism in the sixteenth century

3 Weber, *The Religion of China*, 248.

4 Peter L. Berger, “Secularity: West and East.” Paper presented at Kokugakuin University Centennial Symposium on Cultural Identity and Modernization in Asian Countries, Tokyo, Japan, January 1983. An online version can be found at <http://www2.kokugakuin.ac.jp/ijcc/wp/cimac/berger.html>, accessed September 3, 2018.

which significantly elevated the status of merchants in traditional Chinese society.<sup>5</sup> Tu Wei-ming has organized several international conferences whose themes were all inspired by his philosophical idea that the Confucian ethic is favorable to the development of capitalist economy in industrial Asia.<sup>6</sup> For this kind of ideological explanation, characteristics of a Confucian ethic such as its consistent championship of “working hard,” “frugality,” “education,” “collective solidarity in family and other social groups,” and “respect for social hierarchy” are frequently interpreted as favorable to the formation of a capitalist workforce.

In comparison, point (4) is the most controversial, since it is closely related to a dilemma of Confucianism during the historical period concerned: just when capitalist institutions were being imported from the West, the traditional institutional basis for Confucianism in Asia was collapsing. Imperial regimes were either replaced or transformed, public education was deeply Westernized, and, under the pressure of industrialization, the traditional Confucian extended family also had no choice but to transform into a family unit searching for prosperity in urban areas. In other words, in face of the collapse, if not the total disappearance, of traditional Confucian institutions, scholars have struggled to find a solid social mechanism transmitting the ideas of a purportedly favorable Confucian ethic into capitalist activities. This difficulty has driven scholars sympathetic to the post-Confucian hypothesis such as Robert N. Bellah (1927–2013) and Peter Berger to propose ideas such as “diffuse Confucianism”<sup>7</sup> or “vulgar Confucianism” in order to account for the possible influence of Confucianism upon people’s economic life even after the collapse of traditional Confucian institutions. However, the vagueness of these ideas indicates that the social realities that they refer to remain some way from confirming the post-Confucian hypothesis, as has been admitted by some of their proponents.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, scholars have tried to use empirical and quantitative methods to clarify the purported causal relationship in the post-Confucian hypothesis. An impressive example is Koen Rutten. In his thesis “Confucian Capitalism: An Inquiry into the Relationship between East Asian Thought and Firm Performance,” Rutten gathered samples of “mission statements” formulated at least partially using Confucian terms and ideas from various corporations in Taiwan. Using a statistical method, Rutten then tried to confirm the correlation between Confucian ideas and organizational behaviors. His conclusion was that a Confucian ethic embodied in the mission statements of various Taiwan corporations indeed correlated with organizational behaviors, but had nothing to do with their financial performance.<sup>9</sup> Concerning this paper’s purpose of reexamining the post-Confucian hypothesis, we can add the following two points in comment on Rutten’s work. First, Rutten did not do a similar cross-cultural statistical study regarding the correlative relationship between the Confucian ethic and the financial performance of corporations. Since the post-Confucian hypothesis targets the distinctive Asian industrial development under Confucian influence in comparison to that in other areas and cultures, a cross-cultural statistical study similar to Rutten’s is much needed. Second, a focus upon “mission statements” is still some way from, though comparatively closer to, finding a concrete social mechanism transmitting Confucian ideas. We do not yet understand how the workforce in

5 Yu Ying-shih 余英时, *Religious Ethics and the Merchant Spirit in Early Modern China* [中国近世宗教伦理与商人精神] (Taipei: Linking Publishing, 1987).

6 An example of Tu Wei-ming’s publications in this regard is Tu Wei-ming 杜维明, ed., *Confucian Traditions in East Asian Modernity: Moral Education and Economic Culture in Japan and the Four Mini-Dragons* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

7 Robert N. Bellah, “Civil Religion in America,” *Daedalus* 96 (1967): 1–21.

8 Peter Berger, “An East Asian Development Model?,” in *In Search of an East Asian Development Model*, eds. Peter Berger and Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1988), 7.

9 Koen Rutten, “Confucian Capitalism: An Inquiry into the Relationship between East Asian Thought and Firm Performance” (master’s thesis, Erasmus University, 2009), [https://www.erim.eur.nl/fileadmin/default/content/erim/research/centres/china\\_business/admin/c\\_master\\_theses/koen%20rutten%20-%20confucian%20capitalism.pdf](https://www.erim.eur.nl/fileadmin/default/content/erim/research/centres/china_business/admin/c_master_theses/koen%20rutten%20-%20confucian%20capitalism.pdf).

a Taiwan corporation implements the Confucian ethic expressed in its mission statement in its everyday industrial activities. In summary, despite the aforementioned scholars' efforts to substantiate point (4) in debates concerning the post-Confucian hypothesis, the fact that a solid transitional social mechanism has not yet been found leads many scholars to take a critical attitude toward the post-Confucian hypothesis. For example, Timothy Brook straightforwardly denies the causal relationship implied by the post-Confucian hypothesis, and suggests that it was purely "economic compulsion," rather than any Confucian ethic, that triggered the birth and development of capitalism in related Asian regions.<sup>10</sup>

So, our question is, at this moment, what contribution can be made to the progress of the scholarly debate on the post-Confucian hypothesis? Is there any hope to find the envisioned social mechanism not only for discussing the hypothesis but also illuminating people's understanding of the sociocultural foundation of Asian industrial development?

Relying upon recently updated studies on Japanese Confucianism and the Japanese economy, this paper proposes that in tackling the above questions it is highly promising to investigate the role of Japanese Confucian businesspeople such as Shibusawa Eiichi 渋沢栄一 (1840–1931) in facilitating the import of Western capitalist institutions into a sociocultural soil under Confucian influence during Japan's Meiji Restoration period (1868–1912). Through this investigation, we can not only advance scholars' discussion of the post-Confucian hypothesis using the same methodology of sociology championed by Max Weber, but are also equipped with the ideological and sociological resources to develop new dimensions of discussions on themes such as the distinctive features of Confucian religiosity, the Japanese model of capitalism, and the role of business history in today's business education.

However, in order for readers to understand my argument in the remaining parts of the paper more clearly, I would like to add a caveat in advance. Illuminated by the above discussion, my focus for the following parts is that through analyzing Shibusawa Eiichi's role in the formation of Japanese capitalism in the Meiji Restoration period, I intend to prove that the Confucian ethic as interpreted and promoted by Shibusawa was one among many causal factors, and not just a correlative one, for the formation of Japanese capitalism. This is because Shibusawa Eiichi and other similarly-minded Confucian businessmen's agential activities can be taken as a solid social mechanism constituting the crucial fourth element of the envisioned argument for the post-Confucian hypothesis. Nevertheless, although I take Max Weber's argument on the case of the Protestant ethic as a methodological guide, I do not intend to provide an isomorphic argument in the case of a Confucian ethic regarding this ethic's content. In other words, the Confucian ethic envisioned by Shibusawa has its idiosyncratic features that facilitated the import of Western capitalist institutions into Japan in its own idiosyncratic way. In this sense, the causal role played by the Confucian ethic in the initiation of the West-originated industrial capitalism in Japan was both transitional and transformative: during the process of facilitating its import, the ethic furnished new features allowing scholars to define it as a Japanese model of capitalism. How this is so will be explained in the following.

## Shibusawa Eiichi and the Formation of Japanese Capitalism <sup>[83]</sup>

Although Confucianism had influenced Japanese culture since the establishment of the Japanese state, it was not until the Tokugawa period (1603–1867) that Confucianism started

10 Timothy Brook, "Weber, Mencius, and the History of Chinese Capitalism," *Asian Perspective* 19, no. 1 (1995): 79–97.

to take a prevailing role in the spiritual life of Japanese people, especially their political elite—the samurai class.<sup>11</sup>

Born into a merchant family owning a local dyeing business, the young Shibusawa received an informal yet substantial education in Confucianism from his uncle and other Confucian scholars who were influenced by distinguished Confucian philosophers in Tokugawa Japan such as Ishida Baigon 石田梅岩 (1685–1744). While serving as a financial minister in the Tokugawa government, in 1867–1868 Shibusawa was sent to France together with other envoys to participate in the Paris Universal Exposition and to learn about advanced Western political and economic institutions. However, during Shibusawa's stay in Paris, the movement overthrowing the Tokugawa Shogunate succeeded, and the Meiji Restoration era began. After serving briefly in the Meiji government as one of its highest financial officials, Shibusawa resigned from government and dedicated his remaining life to building the Japanese modern economy as an independent entrepreneur. He was the founder of the modern Japanese banking system, and helped to develop more than five hundred companies. Because of Shibusawa's powerful influence upon the formation of the Japanese modern economy, he has been frequently acclaimed by Japanese media as the “father of Japanese capitalism.” More importantly, Shibusawa displayed a rare combination of talents for both business entrepreneurship and theoretical articulation. He was a prolific writer and charismatic speaker urging the fusion of the emergent Japanese modern economy with a Confucian work ethic.<sup>12</sup>

Current research on Shibusawa in major Eastern and Western languages cannot be said to be scarce. However, it will be of particular interest to this paper to analyze the major contributions of Shibusawa to the formation of Japanese capitalism from the perspective of the sociology of religion so as to illustrate their implications for the ongoing debate on the post-Confucian hypothesis. These major contributions include two points: First, through reinterpreting Confucian classics such as the *Analects*, Shibusawa highlighted the status of “wealth” in the traditional Confucian practice of moral self-cultivation which takes the realization of sagehood as its ultimate goal. This ideological elevation of wealth not only made Confucianism conducive to the import of capitalist institutions, it also equipped traditional Japanese culture with ideological resources to rectify the potential defects of capitalism. Second, Shibusawa understood Confucianism as a tradition both of faith and ethics and also of managerial skills and wisdom, so he incorporated his Confucian sensitivity into the actual managerial process of the *Gappon* corporations that he helped to create. In this way, Shibusawa's Confucian thought not only helped to transplant modern capitalist institutions but also modified them to create new institutional features capable of being defined as a Japanese model of capitalism.

### Shibusawa's Confucian Work Ethic [84]

One example of Shibusawa's hermeneutics concerning wealth in Confucianism is his interpretation of *Analects*, 6:30:

Zigong said, “If there were one able to broadly benefit the common people and bring aid to the multitude, what would you make of him? Could such a person be called benevolent?” The Master said, “Why stop at benevolence? Such a person should surely be called a sage! Even someone like Yao or Shun would find such a task daunting.”<sup>13</sup>

11 An excellent research on the cultural history of Confucianism in Japan can be referred to Kiri Paramore, *Japanese Confucianism: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

12 A fine biographical account of Shibusawa Eiichi's life can be found in Patrick Fridenson and Kikkawa Takeo, eds., *Ethical Capitalism: Shibusawa Eiichi and Business Leadership in Global Perspective* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017): 5–12, and Shichihei Yamamoto, *The Spirit of Japanese Capitalism and Selected Essays*, trans. Lynne E. Riggs and Takechi Manabu (London: Madison Books, 1992): 175–192.

13 Edward Slingerland, trans., *Confucius Analects: With Selections From Traditional Commentaries* (Indianapolis:

During this conversation, Zigong, a local businessman living in the state of Wei next to Confucius's home state of Lu, came to ask Confucius the exact meaning of benevolence (*ren* 仁), the cardinal human virtue consistently championed by Confucius in the *Analects*. Yao and Shun as mentioned in Confucius's answer are the two legendary sage-kings of ancient Chinese civilization, and the "sagehood" that they exemplified was taken by Confucius and his followers as the ultimate goal of Confucian learning. One important nuance of this conversation is that the character *济* used by Zigong to articulate his understanding of benevolence in the phrase *济众* ("bring aid to the multitude" in our translation) has a semantic affinity to *经济*, the Chinese term for economy.<sup>14</sup> In addition to the fact that Zigong was a local businessman before and during his studies with Confucius, the word chosen by Zigong and endorsed by Confucius to explain benevolence implies a strong endorsement of wealth in Confucian ethics, although this was not explicitly stated in the quoted text.

Influenced by the similar view of his Tokugawa Confucian predecessors such as Ishida Baigon, Shibusawa Eiichi grasped the nuance in the quoted Confucian text, and then incorporated his understanding of wealth and commercial activities into traditional Confucian ethics by reinterpreting this crucial verse of the *Analects*. He said:

If we explain *ren* in a narrow sense, it will simply mean that people should treat each other well in their daily life. However, if we explain *ren* in a broader sense, *ren* will mean what Confucius implied in his answer "Why stop at benevolence? Such a person should surely be called a sage!" to his student Zigong's question "If there were one able to broadly benefit the common people and bring aid to the multitude, what would you make of him? Could such a person be called benevolent?" as recorded in chapter 6 of the *Analects*. Enterprises aiming to bring aid to the people are meant by the Confucian teaching of "governing one's country and bringing peace to all under heaven."<sup>15</sup> This is what *ren* means.<sup>16</sup>

Elsewhere, Shibusawa stated further that commercial activities aiming to accumulate wealth are indispensable to "enterprises aiming to bring aid to the people": "In order to broadly benefit the common people and bring aid to the multitude, one must have money. If one wishes to bring aid to the multitude but has no available wealth, one cannot fulfill one's wish. In this way, wealth is needed for the realization of King Wen of Zhou's ideal of governance."<sup>17</sup> Impressively, through this interpretation, Shibusawa succeeded in proving that a businessperson's commercial activities aiming to create material wealth are not only compatible with, but also indispensable to the traditional Confucian learning aiming to achieve sagehood.

Given the social transition between the Tokugawa and Meiji Restoration periods, it is not difficult for us to understand why Shibusawa, as an independent Confucian businessperson, was so dedicated to acknowledging the importance of wealth in Confucian ethics. Tokugawa, the last period of feudal Japan, was organized into a social class system with four-tiers: samurai, peasants, artisans, and merchants, among which merchants were the lowest. Due to the lack of an enduring institution of civil examination similar to the one in imperial China, mobility among classes was also very limited. This led to the fact that although the mindset of the samurai class was permeated by the Confucian ideas that

Hackett Publishing Company, 2003), 62. Translations have in some cases been slightly modified.

14 This is also true for its Japanese term: *経済*.

15 These two phrases are mentioned in one of Confucian canonical books, the *Great Learning* [大學], to illustrate the steps and goal of a Confucian learner's self-cultivation.

16 Kawaguchi Hiroshi, *Shibusawa Eiichi's Thought on Regulating the World and Bringing Aid to the People* (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Hyouronsha Ltd., 2002), 1. The English translation is by the present author.

17 Shibusawa Eiichi, *Shibusawa Eiichi zen shu* [Completed Works of Shibusawa Eiichi], vol. 2 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1930), 162. The English translation is by the present author. King Wen of Zhou is another legendary sage-king living before the time of Confucius.

the Tokugawa Shogunate had consistently promoted, this Confucian moral consciousness hardly seeped into the class of merchants. At the beginning of the Meiji Restoration, this reduced social status of merchants caused significant problems: first, their low position in the social hierarchy was not commensurate with Japan's urgent need to import advanced capitalist institutions and technologies in order to compete with its Western counterparts; second, even if these institutions and technologies could be successfully imported, the merchant class's lack of moral discipline would make it highly dubious whether these Western economic mechanisms could function well in a culturally alien terrain. In this sense, Shibusawa's reinterpretation of the idea of wealth in Confucianism provided important resources from traditional Japanese culture to "rationalize," using Max Weber's term, the development of Japanese capitalism in its initial period.

However, since Shibusawa intended to use a Confucian ethic, rather than Protestantism, to support the development of Japanese capitalism, we can imagine that "the spirit of Japanese capitalism" that he helped to fashion would be different from the one described by Weber. An impressive example is how Shibusawa explained the relationship between a businessperson's initiatives to "earn profit for oneself" and to "seek to profit others."

In *Analects*, 4:16, Confucius once taught that "A gentleman seeks what is right, and a petty person seeks what is profitable."<sup>18</sup> In Shibusawa's view, this presents Confucius's understanding of the relationship between the public good and individuals' self-interest. Concerning how to deal with this relationship, Shibusawa stressed the following points:

First, Shibusawa said, "Self-interest can lead to the public good. The public good is fragile unless it is based on self-interest."<sup>19</sup> In other words, each businessperson's pursuit of his self-interest is a foundation for the realization of public good. This statement is in tune with Shibusawa's view on the importance of accumulating wealth in the process of Confucian learning as analyzed above.

Second, however, Shibusawa opposed businesspeople seeking profits primarily to profit themselves. Instead, they should primarily seek to profit others, because Shibusawa thought "Primarily seeking to profit others will not hinder the smooth conduct of business activities and eventually gaining profits for oneself; it is even essential for this purpose."<sup>20</sup> According to Shibusawa's understanding, if one seeks self-interest without regard for the interests of others, one will ultimately have no sustainable way to accumulate wealth, and in that case one will ultimately be unable to achieve one's own self-interest. Therefore, although Shibusawa encouraged people to seek their own self-interest in order to create social wealth, he prioritized the pursuit of others' profits over one's own self-interest and firmly believed that an economy well-coordinated as a harmonious whole should and can bring benefits to everyone. According to Shibusawa, this is what Confucius meant when he taught that "Desiring to take his or her stand, one who is benevolent helps others to take their stand; wanting to achieve something, he or she helps others to achieve it"<sup>21</sup> in answer to Zigong's question concerning whether benevolence implies enterprises bringing aid to the multitude, as quoted above.

Third, even if a businessperson's accumulation of wealth has successfully achieved the goal of profiting both others and himself, Shibusawa thought he has no right to monopolize

18 Slingerland, *Confucius Analects*, 35.

19 Shibusawa Eiichi, "Shonin no hombun" [The Duties of Businessman], in vol. 26 of *Shibusawa Eiichi Denki shiryō* [Shibusawa Eiichi Biographical Materials] (Tokyo: Ryumonsha, 1959), 159, which is quoted in English translation by Tanaka Kazuhiro, "Harmonization between Morality and Economy," in *Ethical Capitalism*, 48.

20 Tanaka, "Harmonization between Morality and Economy," 47.

21 Slingerland, *Confucius Analects*, 62.

his wealth, since his wealth derives from the contributions of all related people in society. Accordingly, Shibusawa urged wealthy people to be dedicated to philanthropy, but by this he did not mean that people should return to poverty due to their generous charity.<sup>22</sup>

In comparison to that analyzed by Weber to account for the origins of European capitalism, the spirit of Japanese capitalism as exemplified by Shibusawa's understanding of the relationship between public good and self-interest is very different. It is more holistic, less individualistic, and attends more to the harmonization of interests among all involved participants in an economy. In particular, it urges businesspeople to actively seek the public good as a priority of business, which is very different from some Western classical economists, such as Adam Smith's view that businessmen should care solely for their own self-interest and that given a shared and just legal infrastructure, the invisible hand of the free market will help realize the greatest possible benefits for society.<sup>23</sup>

### Shibusawa's Confucian Philosophy of Management [85]

What is peculiar about Shibusawa's contribution to the formation of Japanese capitalism is that, because of its holistic nature and all-harmonizing tendency, Confucianism not only played a role similar to that of the Protestant ethic in fashioning a *spirit* of Japanese capitalism, but was also taken by Shibusawa as a practical tool-kit of management that he could implement in the actual operational process of corporations. In this way, Shibusawa helped to endow imported capitalist institutions with new features that can be defined as unique to Japanese capitalism. One illuminating example in this regard is his enthusiasm in importing and transforming the *Gapponshugi* organization.

Shibusawa's interest in *Gapponshugi*, the joint-stock corporate organization, began during his learning trip to Paris. Impressed by this organization's efficiency in mustering resources to launch promising industrial projects, Shibusawa dedicated himself to transplanting it to Japan. However, in tune with his Confucian holistic and long-term thinking, Shibusawa did not narrowly understand *Gapponshugi* as a particular type of capitalist institution, but as "the principle of developing a business by assembling the best possible people and funding to achieve the mission and aim of pursuing the public good."<sup>24</sup> Shibusawa also avowed to make use of his Confucian knowledge to navigate the management of a *Gappon* organization: "To manage a *gappon* organization company, one must rely on perfect and solid reasons and norms. So where should one find the standards to do this? There can be nothing but the *Analects*. Thus, I thought of managing business based on the *Analects*."<sup>25</sup>

Several examples can help us to understand how Shibusawa managed his *Gappon* business using his Confucian skills:

First, business decision-making. There is a sequence of value in Shibusawa's mind for a businessperson's decision-making:

If you ask me how to make decision, I will answer as such: The priority is to consider whether the thing I will do complies with moral principle (*daoli* 道理). Then, I will ponder whether the thing that I will do according to moral principle can bring benefits to my country and society. Further, I will consider what influence it will have upon myself. After considering all these factors, if the thing has no benefit upon myself, but as long as it

22 Regarding how Shibusawa treated the relationship between self-interest and public good, please refer to Tanaka, "Harmonization between Morality and Economy," 46–48.

23 For a comparison between Shibusawa's and Smith's economic thought, please see Tanaka, "Harmonization between Morality and Economy," 51–52.

24 Fridenson and Kikkawa, "Introduction," in *Ethical Capitalism*, 3.

25 Shibusawa Eiichi, "Dotoku Keizai goitsu setsu" [The Doctrine of Inseparability of Morality and Economy], this is quoted in English translation by Tanaka, "Harmonization between Morality and Economy," in *Ethical Capitalism*, 54.

complies with moral principle and is beneficial to the country and society, I will resolutely abandon my own interest, and then, do the thing following moral principle.<sup>26</sup>

Further, Shibusawa clarifies that the “moral principle” mentioned here means “to comply with benevolence and righteousness (*yi* 义),” the two cardinal moral principles of Confucian ethics. In other words, a businessperson’s decisions should first and foremost be ethical. Then, they should prioritize the public good over self-interest, since, as we analyzed above, a business that offers moral and community benefit will ultimately yield sustainable benefits for individuals.

Second, interaction and communication. The ethical and holistic nature of Shibusawa’s method for business decision-making also speaks to his skills of communication between interested parties in a *Gappon* organization. In all enterprises that Shibusawa helped to create, his role was expected mostly to be “adjusting conflicts of interest among relevant parties and trying to achieve resolutions through arbitration and intermediation.”<sup>27</sup> During this process, one of Shibusawa’s key communicative skills is described as:

Instead of attempting to steer discussions with a unilateral approach, he listened patiently to all the parties involved and waited for one side to broach the possibility of a compromise. Through this process, parties with different interests eventually recognized certain common ground, making the company more of a public entity with shared long-term interests. Essentially, companies became “public” areas within the “private” sphere.<sup>28</sup>

Shibusawa’s communicative method, which took all involved parties’ interests into account in order to ultimately achieve an inclusive harmony aiming to increase the common good, is very similar to what was recorded in the *Analects* on how Confucius communicated with common people: “The Master said, ‘Do I possess any preconceived knowledge? No, I do not. [For example, recently] a common fellow asked a question of me, and I came up completely ignorant of it. But I discussed the problem with him from beginning to end until we finally got to the essence of it.’”<sup>29</sup> In this way, both Shibusawa’s and Confucius’s communicative methods are enlightened by the distinctively Confucian value of harmonization (*he* 和).

Third, labor relationships. Shibusawa’s distinctively Confucian methodology of business decision-making and communication also resonates with his understanding of labor relationships. Confucius once had a famous discussion on the relationship between “government by law” and “government by ritual,” between which he favored the personal and educational approach of “government by ritual” since he thought it could establish social harmony from within people’s heart-minds. The discussion is like this: “The Master said, ‘If you try to guide the common people with coercive regulations and keep them in line with punishments, the common people will become evasive and will have no sense of shame. If, however, you guide them with virtue, and keep them in line by means of ritual, the people will have a sense of shame and will rectify themselves.’”<sup>30</sup> By the same token, although the importing of Western capitalist institutions to Japan was accompanied by the installation of all necessary legal codes and their executive structures, Shibusawa was reluctant to think of labor relationships in merely legal terms:

Capitalists and workers were always tied (in the past) to each other following the model of family. Now, we suddenly have lots of laws, and we have to manage corporations

26 Shibusawa Eiichi, *The Analects and Abacus* [论语与算盘], trans. Wang Zhongjiang 王中江 (Beijing: China Youth Publishing Group, 1996), 24.

27 Fridenson and Kilkawa, “The Crisis of Capitalism and the *Gapponshugi* of Shibusawa Eiichi,” in *Ethical Capitalism*, 179.

28 Shimada Masakazu, “Tensions between the Open Market Model and the Closed Zaibatsu Model,” in *Ethical Capitalism*, 22.

29 Slingerland, *Confucius Analects*, 68.

30 Ibid., 8.

according to these laws. Although this may be a very good idea, is the outcome of this sort of management really as efficient as our government imagines it to be? In relying upon years and years of mutual connection, capitalists and workers have created a warm feeling between each other that is indescribable in words, binding them tightly to each other. Now, although the law makes explicit their respective rights and obligations, it necessarily tears apart that kind of bind. As a result, managers' efforts in corporations achieve nothing, and this is contrary to the purpose of management. I believe that on this issue, we need to do further and deeper research.<sup>31</sup>

Very obviously, Shibusawa was dubious of the effect of a law-centered approach of corporation management, and intended to retain the legacy of traditional Japanese management culture that cherished the personal relationship between employers and employees. We find that this distinctively Confucian method of management is very different from the Protestant one described by Weber as functioning through a workforce's impersonal conformity to vocational obligations prescribed by legal codes in a capitalist institution.

## Conclusion [87]

After understanding Shibusawa's contribution to the formation of Japanese capitalism, are we better oriented to debate the post-Confucian hypothesis? In particular, does the case of Shibusawa succeed in providing an instance of the social mechanism that was desperately needed yet lacking in the argument for the hypothesis?

From the perspective of the sociology of religion, Shibusawa's overt Confucian faith<sup>32</sup> and his decisive role in the formation of Japanese capitalism cannot be dismissed. According to recent scholarship on Japanese Confucianism, we also know that the case of Shibusawa as an independent Confucian businessperson propelling the initiation and advancement of Japanese capitalism was not isolated. Kiri Paramore argues that the infrastructure of knowledge, mainly referring to the central and local Confucian academies that the Confucian Tokugawa Shogunate helped to establish before the Meiji Restoration, was a "human conduit through which the onslaught of Westernization and modernization after the 1850s would be mediated."<sup>33</sup> Although not all Japanese learners of Western civilization mediated by this Confucian infrastructure of knowledge overtly identified themselves as Confucian as Shibusawa did, the phenomenon that people raised and educated by Confucian thought were among the pioneers facilitating the transplantation of Western capitalist institutions into Japan is by no means limited to illustrious individuals such as Shibusawa Eiichi. The perception that people under Confucian influence can play a major role in managing capitalist institutions is also applicable to contemporary Japanese entrepreneurs such as Kazuo Inamori 稲盛和夫.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, after weighing all these historical facts concerning the relationship between Japanese Confucianism and Japanese capitalism, if we ask whether a Confucian ethic, once decoupled from the traditional literati-official establishment of imperial China, can encourage the development of capitalism, we have to give an affirmative answer at least in the context of Japan.

However, the way in which Shibusawa fused his Confucian faith into Japanese capitalism also speaks to two distinctive features of Confucian religiosity, which is also

31 Shibusawa, *The Analects and Abacus*, 122.

32 Shibusawa's confession of Confucianism as his sole and only faith is evidenced in Shibusawa, *The Analects and Abacus*, 17.

33 Paramore, *Japanese Confucianism: A Cultural History*, 116.

34 Geoffrey Jones, "Gapponshugi in Global Perspective: Debating the Responsibility of Capitalism," in *Ethical Capitalism*, 159.

a hotly debated issue related to the post-Confucian hypothesis. First, different from the Protestant social mechanism that initiated European capitalism, Shibusawa, as an independent Confucian businessperson, was simultaneously a “preacher” of Confucian ideas and a business tycoon. This signifies that the social characteristic of Confucian religiosity implies no differentiation between priesthood and laymen; neither does a distinctively “religious” institution, like a congregation providing pastoral service, need to be established to transmit religious ideas into business practice. Second, related to the first point, Shibusawa not only understood Confucianism as a faith containing ethical demands, he also absorbed it as a legacy of practical wisdom so as to directly extract a corporation management toolkit for the imported *Gappon* organization. In my view, these two points enhance the challenge for any unreserved use of “religion” to describe Confucianism proper. They also remind scholars of the fact that in order to find the influence of Confucian ideas on society, whether religious or not, the seemingly obvious religious institutions such as congregations or temples may not be the best places to start one’s investigation. Instead, it may be more helpful to examine how Confucian ideas help to shape “secular” institutions such as the family, the school, the industrial and commercial corporation, and the government. In recent years, all these secular institutions have witnessed a powerful revival of Confucianism, especially on the Chinese mainland, and therefore we hope sociologists of religion can change their approach to some degree so as to more accurately locate the institutional basis of Confucianism across Asia.

Last but not least, I will raise two points to reflect upon the meaning of this study of Shibusawa as a case of business history for today’s business education.

First, since Japan became a powerful engine for the development of capitalist economy in Asia, scholars frequently addressed the topic of the “model” of Japanese capitalism. Here is a recent effort to define this model: “We can define the Japanese model as a constellation of institutions (including political institutions, intermediate associations, financial systems, labor relations system, and interfirrm networks) linked together into a distinct national system of economic governance.”<sup>35</sup> From a microscopic view, some institutional features of Japanese corporations have also been mentioned by scholars to account for the Japanese model of capitalism, such as the “three sacred treasures” of lifetime employment, the seniority system, and enterprise labor unions.<sup>36</sup> Compared with some Western free-market models of capitalism such as the one in the U.S., this Japanese model appears to be more holistic, more long-term oriented, more person-centered, and less individualistic. According to Steven K. Vogel, these features of the Japanese model still subsisted even after the financial crisis of the 1990s spurred the Japanese economy to learn more from the American model in order to increase its own resilience and flexibility.<sup>37</sup> However, concerning the issue of the sociocultural roots of the Japanese model of capitalism, it cannot be said that scholarship is as abundant as that describing the model *per se*.<sup>38</sup> In this way, a solid study of how Confucian businesspersons such as Shibusawa Eiichi shaped the formation of Japanese capitalism in its initial period can shed light on our understanding of this important issue. At least two major benefits can be gained through such a study: one, it can increase the cultural competency of non-Japanese corporations in their engagement

35 Steven K. Vogel, *Japan Remodeled: How Government and Industry Are Reforming Japanese Capitalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 8.

36 Fridenson and Kikkawa, “The Crisis of Capitalism and the *Gapponshugi* of Shibusawa Eiichi,” 185.

37 Vogel, *Japan Remodeled*, 218–220.

38 A delightful exception in this regard is the research by Peter Drucker, the so-called “father of modern management,” on Confucian ethics and its influence upon the management culture of modern Japanese corporations. See Peter Drucker, *The Ecological Vision: Reflections on the American Condition* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 207–212, 400–403.

with Japanese industries during the process of international business. Two, valuable wisdom embodied in the Confucian philosophy of management, as it has been successfully applied by Shibusawa, can be learned by non-Japanese business practitioners so as to improve the quality of management in a non-Japanese context. Considering the fact that major East and Southeast Asian countries and regions such as China, Korea, Vietnam, Singapore, Chinese Taiwan, and Hong Kong were all historically embedded in a Confucian cultural soil, and all of them are now vigorous players in international business under a shared structure of global capitalism, it is even more urgent for business researchers to explore the sociocultural influence of Confucianism on Asian business.

Second, the Confucian ethic conceived by Shibusawa that prioritizes the public good over individual self-interest is notably different from the Protestant spirit of capitalism analyzed by Max Weber and the thought of classical Western economists such as Adam Smith, as briefly mentioned above. In this sense, can the study of Confucian businesspersons provide an alternative model of capitalism that is more favorable to the sustainable development of human civilization in an era when talk of the “crisis of capitalism” has almost become banal? In this regard, I share a cautious, yet optimistic mood similar to Tu Wei-ming’s when he articulates: “The capitalism rooted in Confucian ethics may turn out to be more consequential for the twenty-first century than the classic capitalism fashioned by the inner-worldly asceticism of the Puritan ethic.”<sup>39</sup>

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39 Tu, *Confucian Traditions in East Asian Modernity*, 10.