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Book Review: *Handbook of Confucianism in Modern Japan*

Handbook of Confucianism in Modern Japan. Edited by Shaun O'Dwyer. Tokyo: Japan Documents/MHM Limited, 2022, 237 + xxxii pages. ¥28,875 (tax included). Hardcover. ISBN 9784909286086

Alex Haskins*

I. Introduction

Almost inevitably, with any "revival," there will be omissions. Drawing on his own previous work and enlisting the talents of scholars worldwide, Shaun O'Dwyer attempts to ameliorate one particular omission with the recent "revival" around Confucianism, particularly in Anglophone philosophical circles: that of Japanese Confucianism(s). As O'Dwyer and others tell it (and I happen to agree), "mainstream" assessments of Confucianism's modern genealogy reveal a Sinocentric bias, especially among political and moral philosophers and intellectual historians. To counter this bias, O'Dwyer and others hone in on modern Japanese Confucianism, spanning from approximately the 1850s to the present. The volume explicitly foregrounds the political in its chronological sweep (though without ignoring the economic, social, religious, etc.), emphasizing reflections on Japan's modernization, imperialism, and liberal democracy. It seems that the selection of these chapters was motivated by the novelty of the figure(s) featured therein (and they certainly merit additional inquiry, analysis, and research). However, the main aim is to caution philosophers, political theorists, and others against equating "Confucianism" (or "Ruism" or "Confucian" learning for those allergic to "isms") with China and/or trying to fit "Confucianism" into a Western liberal democratic mold. To the former

* Alex Haskins is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Politics and International Relations at Wheaton College. E-mail: alex.haskins@wheaton.edu

concern, it is true that China was Confucius' home and point of origin, but it is hardly sufficient to presume that the practice of "Confucianism" in modern Japan was mimetic or derivative (in some pejorative sense) of Chinese models. In this respect, the volume is indeed a helpful corrective and will (or at least should) inspire similar volumes for other contexts, as I allude to below. To the latter concern, O'Dwyer is (re-) sounding an alarm many (including O'Dwyer himself) in comparative philosophy and comparative political theory have been ringing for years. Dangers loom on the horizon if we continue to fold everything into Western (or Chinese) models. There is perhaps a lesson in there that goes beyond philosophy.

This book review proceeds with three core sections and a conclusion. In the second section, I provide an overview of the book as a way of summarizing some of the main claims made by each of the authors of the wide-ranging chapters. The third section briefly takes up a tripartite framework provided by O'Dwyer in the introduction—namely, that of "tacit," "subordinate," and "explicit" invocations of Confucianism in modern Japan—with the aim of highlighting potential strengths and limitations to such a framing. The fourth section centers on more conceptual considerations of the politicization of the "Kingly Way" (王道 *ōdō*) and the "Imperial Way" (皇道 *kōdō*) both in modern Japan and now. I assess the extent to which Jiang's and O'Dwyer's push for "conscientious" Confucianism is compelling and gesture toward work that remains to be done. I conclude with a brief overall assessment of the value of the book and how it might set up for future research.

II. Book Overview

For the book overview, I organize the chapters according to rough chronological focus. Chronologically, the *Handbook* begins with the Edo period (roughly 1600–1868) and chapters one and two largely focus here. (As an aside, several chapters bridge eras, hence why my localizing of chapters within certain periods is tentative.) Chapter one focuses on the Edo-period figure Matsumiya Kanzan (1686–1780). Song Qi demonstrates Matsumiya's both fiercely loyalist and deeply ecumenical

approach to three dominant religious and philosophical traditions of his time: Shinto (of Japanese origin), Confucianism/*Ruxue* (of Chinese origin), and Buddhism (of Indian origin). Matsumiya remains significant not only for his ecumenicism (and favoring of Shinto for Japan)—which was often paired with harsh criticisms of certain tendencies of "national learning" (*kokugaku*) and Ogyū Sorai's disciples—but also, as Qi contends, for how Matsumiya was taken up in the twentieth century by Japanese nationalists who aimed to enshrine State Shinto as official doctrine for an ascendant, imperial Japan. In chapter two, Han Shuting centers the late Edo/*bakumatsu* figure Sakuma Shōzan (1811–1864). In opposition to tendencies to overemphasize the impact of "Western learning" on Sakuma's outlook and reception in more recent scholarly literature, Han argues for the significance of Sakuma's grounding in, and political use of, the Confucian classics. Han further seems to endorse a kind of "early-modernization" theory (in opposition to "modernization" theory developed in the post-WWII U.S.) that would foreground Sakuma's (and others') reliance on Confucian thought as a way of recovering the positive contributions of Confucian learning for the modern era.

Chapters three through five focus largely on the Meiji era (1868–1912). Lee Yu-ting emphasizes in chapter three that the *Meiji Six* Magazine (Meiroku Zasshi) was largely in debt to Confucian-derived ideas. In contrast to narratives that would position the Meiji Six society and its publication as a repudiation of older (Confucian) ideals in favor of modern (Western) ones, Lee demonstrates through statistical analysis that such narratives are far from the truth. The Meiji Six society used Confucian-derived ideas and frameworks to debate, refute, appeal, and express a variety of views, while also retaining some level of deference to Japan's Confucian heritage. Mizuno Hirota's work (chapter four) on Tokyo Imperial University (now the University of Tokyo) and its relationship to the Confucian classics in its early history (from the 1870s and 80s onward) emphasizes the growing importance of teaching the Confucian classics among early scholars of the period, most notably Inoue Tetsujirō (1855–1944, who will reappear in several chapters). Mizuno's recovery is significant at least insofar as it challenges teleological narratives of Confucianism's move from a pre-

war political ascendancy to a "decline" in the modern (nineteenth–and twentieth–century) era; Inoue and others recognized the importance of not marginalizing the teaching of Confucian texts and this had (and has) ramifications both within Japanese academic circles and beyond, particularly in the fields of philology and philosophy. Yamamura Sho's chapter five considers how Inoue in the 1890s and early 1900s took a more "ideological" approach to Confucian learning and national unity in Japan. Yamamura contends that Inoue, in attempting to preserve Japan' social order from the detrimental influences of Christianity and other Western ideologies through Confucian Yangming learning, paralleled (and drew upon) earlier Edo-period Mito learning scholars.

The Taisho period (1912–1926) and pre-war/war time Showa period (1926–1945) chapters include chapters six, eight, nine, and ten. In chapter six, Masako Racel foregrounds the thought and advocacy of educational reformer Shimoda Utako (1854–1936). Racel depicts Shimoda as a complex figure; while, early on, she was an advocate for modernized women's education and critical of Confucianism's restrictive views on women (and thus, did not identify as a Confucian), she nevertheless defended the work of nationalist Confucian scholars like Inoue later in her life in order to resist radical Western ideologies like socialism and feminism, which she viewed as threatening Japan's national identity and Japanese women, in particular. Kang Haesoo's chapter (eight) shifts to colonial Korea (1910–1945) during the 1930s and 40s. Kang details how conceptions of "Imperial Way" (*kōdō*) Confucianism (as opposed to "Kingly Way" [*ōdō*] Confucianism, which feature in other chapters) were transmitted from the Japanese metropole to the colonial Korean Gyunghakwon [Gyeonghagwon] by the Korean graduates of the Daitō Bunka Gakuin, Ahn [An] In-sik (1891–1969) and Joo Byung-kon [Ju Byeong-geon] (1890–?). Beyond historical recovery, Kang's chapter also raises further concerns about this imperial legacy in the Korean Peninsula, particularly as we consider "unaccounted for" histories (e.g. Confucianism within the Park Chung-hee [Bak Jeong-hui] regime). Park Junhyun takes a more philosophical approach in chapter nine in locating "Imperial Way" discourse within Japan's broader history of philosophy, with specific emphasis on the first systematization of "Imperial Way" Confucianism by Takada Shinji

(1893–1975) during the 1930s and 40s. Park concludes that Takada was not simply a propagandist, but rather a measured scholar attempting to conceptually delineate imperial rule on grounds akin to those of the ideal rule of Plato's philosopher-king. Finally, Kyle Michael James Shuttleworth, in chapter ten, offers a new reading of Watsuji Tetsurō's (1889–1960) magnum opus, *Ethics* (1939, 1942, 1946), and attempts to absolve him of charges of totalitarianism (i.e. dissolving the individual into the state) even while leaving the possibility open that he could be charged with cultural conservatism (e.g. hierarchical gender relations), given his reliance on a certain Confucian understanding of the family. Shuttleworth notes, however, that even these charges of conservatism might be contested, given Watsuji's reconfiguration of filial piety, but that such efforts would require further research.

Chapter seven, like (but perhaps more than) other chapters, is difficult to periodize since it evenly covers a range of time periods. Chang Kun-chiang explores the Edo, Meiji, and Showa periods in an attempt to illustrate how both Shinto-ized "Imperial Way" (*kōdō*) and "Kingly Way" (*ōdō*) Confucianism transformed roles over time. Through charting a variety of "contextual turns" brought about by scholars, military personnel, journalists, Buddhist priests, and others, Chang chronicles "Imperial Way" Confucianism's seed in late Edo, incubation in Meiji and Taisho, and maturity in Showa as well as the sustaining (but increasingly marginalized) influence of "Kingly Way" Confucianism in the production of this modern, "invented tradition."

The remaining chapters (eleven through thirteen) focus mostly on Confucian developments from the post-war Showa (1945–1989), Heisei (1989–2019), and Reiwa (2019–present) periods. Alexandra Mustățea (chapter eleven) revisits Watsuji, largely in an effort both to recover the significance of his reflections on Confucianism for Japanese modernity as well as to locate the significant role Confucianism played in Watsuji's work. She contends that if we understand Watsuji's *Ethics* as representing his search for principles of universal ethics and his *History of Ethical Thought in Japan* (1952) as representing his search for the particularity of those ethics within Japan, then we can begin to see potential for the universalistic value of Confucianism as a critique of totalitarianism and a defense of communal life. Moreover,

Watsuji's conception of Confucianism's dynamic relationship between the divergent historical forces of "tradition" and "creativity" (in opposition to Maruyama Masao's conception of Confucianism as a feudal-era holdover) complicates simplistic narratives of Confucianism's "decline" or "incompatibility" with modernity. In chapter twelve, Eddy Dufourmont explores the role Yasuoka Masahiro (1898–1983) played in giving expression to a new brand of post-war Confucianism that simultaneously distinguished itself from its disgraced pre-war forebears while also achieving much of the same effect of forging national identity, particularly by winning the allegiance and support of conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP or *Jimintō*) and business interests in the post-war era. However, Dufourmont concludes that, like Yasuoka's post-war influence, Confucianism (since the 1970s) has had diminishing returns, portending potential obsolescence in the near future. Finally, Dongxian Jiang and Shaun O'Dwyer use chapter thirteen to reflect on possible futures for "Kingly Way" Confucianism. In contrast to dangerous "exemplary" forms of nationalism (e.g. the Shibunkai of the 1930s, contemporary China), Jiang and O'Dwyer argue for a "Kingly Way" or "conscientious" Confucianism that can avoid cooptation from state-centric projects of global self-assertion while nevertheless affirming and propagating potentially universal Confucian values and practices.

III. The "Tacit-Subordinate-Explicit" Framework

Building on the book summary in the previous section, I now turn in the next two sections to my assessment of the volume as a whole. To take up the volume's tripartite *tacit-subordinate-explicit* framework first, overall, I find it a helpful heuristic (perhaps especially for those less familiar with Japanese or Asian history) that is potentially theoretically meaningful, though it suffers some from a lack of clarity on the criteria for inclusion in a given category. I walk away from this volume grateful for the attempt at systematization, but with enduring questions: What counts as "tacit" versus "subordinate" versus "explicit"? Are there clear criteria for inclusion into a given category? Are these im-

posed categories? Did the figures themselves think in these terms? And if they did, was it a principled commitment to a specific kind of Confucian influence or can it largely be seen as reflective of (the constraints imposed on them by) their times?

I offer three examples from the volume to flesh this set of reflections out, one from each of the *tacit-subordinate-explicit* categories. First, we might consider chapter three from Lee Yu-Ting on the *Meiroku Zasshi* (*Meiji Six Magazine*). O'Dwyer explicitly lists this chapter as an example "covering the tacit dimension to the Confucian influence in Japan's Meiji-era modernization" (xx). However, while as Lee acknowledges that "there is little direct debate over Confucianism in the *Meiroku Magazine,*" he qualifies this by noting, "references and allusions to Confucian ideas are frequent, and for diverse purposes" (34). To cite two examples, Fukuzawa Yukichi, whether strategically or genuinely, explicitly names (and blames) Confucianism for Japan's current subservient global status (36)—this hardly seems tacit. Further, Nishi Amane explicitly credits Confucius, Mencius, and other well-known Confucian figures and texts with positively informing Japanese culture (36)—again, it is unclear how this is tacit. Lee convincingly demonstrates (to this reader) that the number of times personages, texts, and Confucian-derived ideas are cited by the *Meirokusha* raises the question as to how this can be deemed tacit, even generally speaking. The *Meirokusha* were aware of their use of Confucian categories and often used them explicitly, regardless of it was for critical or celebratory ends. Lee's framework of Confucianism as target, pathway, or instrument is helpful in this respect, but I struggle to read any (or all) as being tacit. Indeed, Lee even notes that differences notwithstanding, hard lines cannot be drawn even between the latter two categories (42). This means that even if we could (rightly, I think) identify certain invocations of Confucian categories as tacit (however defined) or "subtle" (as Lee does on page 45), we would still struggle to know when its instrumental use is tacit/subtle or not, especially in the absence of clear criteria.

O'Dwyer enlists Masako Racel's chapter as an example of a "subordinate" use of Confucianism (xxi), but again, I struggle with where to draw the line between "subordinate" and "tacit." Racel, for her part,

convincingly demonstrates Shimoda Utako's complex relationship with Confucianism throughout her life, as I noted above in the book summary. To say that a move from being critical of Confucianism's restrictive views on women and lack of identification with Confucianism to (strategically, perhaps) embracing Confucianism to resist the tide of radical Western ideologies like socialism and feminism is "subordinate," might be correct in some sense (and I am sympathetic to reading Shimoda this way), but when put in conversation with the *Meirokusha* (to stick with the example—but others could be used), I am less clear on what constitutes a "subordinate" use of Confucianism, even if we account for differences in historical context. Shimoda may have strategically subordinated Confucianism toward the end of female empowerment and anti-Western Japanese identity formation, but I have trouble seeing (at least some of) the *Meirokusha*'s uses of Confucianism (either for reifying tradition or critically overcoming it) as being any less "subordinate." Maybe both Shimoda's and the *Meirokusha*'s usages are "subordinate." But then what difference is there between a "subordinate" use and a "tacit" one? Are these meaningful distinctions?

To round this out, we might consider the categorization of Han Shuting's chapter on Sakuma Shōzan as an "explicit" use of Confucianism (xxii-xxiii). Sakuma's usages are explicit according to O'Dwyer because he used (1) a classic Neo-Confucian approach to justify the publication of a dictionary and to study abroad and (2) Confucian ideals and exemplars to justify arguments for studying Western technology (xxiii). Again, though, arguably the *Meirokusha* and Shimoda (among others) were engaged in similar methodologies, contexts notwithstanding. Lee and Racel note that regardless of critical or celebratory posture, the *Meirokusha* and Shimoda were influenced by Confucianism and used Confucian categories toward a range of ends. Does that mean Sakuma's usage is "subordinate"? Or is it "tacit"? Or, on the contrary, can we read the *Meirokusha* and Shimoda as engaging in "explicit" uses of Confucian categories? This is not to say the *tacit-subordinate-explicit* framework is meaningless, though; I happen to think it can do helpful conceptual work. That said, greater synthesis and clarification across chapters is needed to do this.

IV. State Co-optation

The rest of my review will be dedicated to exploring the theoretical and political stakes of (what I take to be) one of the primary objectives of the volume—namely, the recovery of a kind of Confucianism from historical abuse and co-optation by the state. This is most explicitly stated in O'Dwyer's and Jiang's final chapter, but several other chapters speak to this aim in one way or another. To focus on the final chapter for a moment, O'Dwyer and Jiang argue for a "conscientious" Confucianism that can avoid cooptation from state-centric projects of global self-assertion while nevertheless affirming and propagating potentially universal Confucian values and practices (186). Whether we consider the Shibunkai of the 1930s, contemporary China, or perhaps other historical examples in other chapters, the message seems clear enough—Confucianism has been politicized in ways that have given it a bad reputation. Rather than allow actors like Xi Jinping, the CCP, and (perhaps) the new meritocratic Confucians (e.g. Jiang Qing, Daniel Bell and Wang Pei, Tongdong Bai) to define what Confucianism is for our contemporary moment, O'Dwyer and Jiang argue (somewhat similarly to Sungmoon Kim and others—though there are significant distinctions), that we need to recover alternative, less-state centric forms of Confucianism.

The historical case studies in this volume underscore this point in several ways. We might consider three examples. First, Qi's focus on Matsumiya in chapter one reminds (or informs) the reader that historical cooptation of Confucianism is arguably as old as Japanese modernity. Though Matsumiya held his own partisan loyalties in his time, his effort to synthesize Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism can be seen as genuinely ecumenical and even-handed, even if it was put by Matsumiya toward partisan, pro-Shinto ends. Moreover, when we turn to the twentieth century, we witness how such measured approaches can (and were) politicized toward problematic imperial ends. Second, Chang's survey of the contextual turns of "Imperial Way" (*kōdō*) and "Kingly Way" (*ōdō*) Confucianism from the Edo to Showa periods in chapter seven reminds us that a variety of contexts and actors can (and did) contribute to the politicization and marginalization of

salutary forms of Confucianism over several centuries. The obstacles facing modern or contemporary Confucianism, then, have deep roots and ostensibly require sustained, coordinated action to overcome. Finally, Dufourmont's sobering analysis of Yasuoka's and the LDP's politicization of Confucianism in the post-war era reminds us that, even though Confucianism is not enjoying the heyday it once did, this is not pure happenstance. In fact, we might go as far as to conclude that it was precisely because of such politicizations of Confucianism before, during, and after the war that we find ourselves where we are in the twenty-first century. Confucianism's potential obsolescence in Japan is a product of politicized abuse toward nationalist ends.

When we consider what led to such co-optation, the answers seem to cohere across the volume as well. In many cases, state co-optation of Confucianism was facilitated by scholarly and/or lay concerns over a sense of insecurity or loss of Japanese culture. To take but one instance of this, consider Yamamura's analysis of Inoue in chapter five. In the context of mid-late Meiji, Inoue was concerned by what he perceived as an increasing Western influence on Japan and its loss of a certain sense of its culture and social order. Of course, Inoue's approach can be problematized in several ways, not the least of which being his reliance on Yangming learning, which many nativists of previous generations would have viewed as "too Chinese" and not "properly Japanese." However, the point still remains: since the Meiji era, Japan was becoming too Westernized, too democratic, too Christian. Therefore, Inoue enlisted his philosophical talents toward the end of shoring up Japan's social order. Regardless of his motives, this approach opened his recovery of a certain kind of Confucian learning up to state co-optation. As O'Dwyer notes, like Martin Heidegger and Carl Schmitt, Inoue Tetsujiro's early work is largely understudied due later state co-optation (xxiii). Such concerns about state co-optation of Confucianism appear less the exception than the norm; perhaps, co-optation is even cyclical in nature.

This brings us back, then, to O'Dwyer and Jiang and the critiques and solutions they pose to Confucianism's marginalization. As a reminder, generally, they take issue with forms of Confucianism co-opted by the state for "exemplary" nationalistic purposes. In particular,

though, they take issue with contemporary efforts by Jiang Qing and Daniel A. Bell to systematize a theory of Confucian polity. While they remain sympathetic to Jiang's issues with the Western imposition of liberal democratic norms across the globe, chief among O'Dwyer's and Jiang's concerns is a "total ignorance of the role Confucian Kingly Way ideology played in the justification for Japanese imperialism" (194–5). They worry that Jiang Qing is insufficiently attentive to the ways his project of Confucian revival can be coopted by the state—namely, Xi Jinping's CCP—to the detriment of Confucianism in China, Japan, and elsewhere. Jiang Qing is not solely to blame, though. Chinese Straussians (e.g. Liu Xiaofeng) and others have reinforced such approaches to China's Confucian heritage. In response, O'Dwyer and Jiang—following Stephen Angle, Joseph Chan, Sungmoon Kim, and others—push to "stake out a space for Confucian values reconfigured within a protected domain of conscience, belief, and associational life, guaranteed by basic liberties and freedoms of association" (197). In affirming such political and legal commitments, conscientious Confucians might concede the contingent and particular East Asian cultural origins of different Confucian practices and doctrines but, importantly, they deny the state any exclusive authority to define those practices and beliefs, thereby allowing potentially universal Confucian values to be indigenized in different contexts in ways suited to those contexts (197–8).

However, even though O'Dwyer and Jiang present compelling critiques and solutions, some unresolved issues and tensions persist for this reviewer. For starters, both Kang Haesoo's recovery of Anh and Joo's complicity in the Japanese empire (chapter eight) and Park Junhyun's recovery of Takada Shinji's philosophical defense of the Japanese empire (chapter nine) raise questions about how to assess intent, effects, and the constraints of one's given context. Are we to blame Anh and Joo with the same degree of scrutiny as Takada for aiding and abetting the Japanese empire through Confucian justifications? And to what extent can we say that Anh and Joo were simply a product of their time or less culpable given power differentials and the non-ideal or constrained circumstances in which they found themselves? Or is there something to be said for strategic appeals to the state for greater ends? Does it

matter at all that some of Anh's and Joo's Korean contemporaries (e.g. the Donghak revolters, Seo Jae-pil, Choe Ik-hyeon, Shin [Sin] Chae-ho, etc.) held few qualms about subtly and outrightly criticizing the Japanese empire, often from (neo)Confucian perspectives? How do we assess intent, culpability, and agency in such circumstances? This series of questions is relevant because we might also introduce them to the debate between democratic Confucians and meritocratic Confucians. Appeals to, and complicity with, the state are not always regarded as negative aspects.; indeed, such strategic actions are often the basis for realistic (i.e. non-quixotic) political and social change. Further, if meritocratic Confucians are making their case strategically (or, at the very least, within the constraints of being under the CCP as perhaps other, geographically dispersed Confucians may not be), how does that affect the terms of the debate? Is working with the state to enact genuine, Confucian-based political and social change always wrong? Do Confucians not have the agency to attempt to co-opt (or at least pressure) the state in return? Or does the state (co-optation) always win out in the end?

The second set of unresolved issues and tensions are related to the first set, and they deal with the relationship between state partiality and criticism. To return to chapter one, we will remember that Matsumiya Kanzan balanced his ecumenical outlook on the three religions (Shinto, Confucianism, Buddhism) with a preference for Shinto, at least in Japan. And while this led to co-optation some two centuries or so later, it seems relevant to note that, within his context, his partiality to Shinto did not prevent him from criticizing would-be "co-religionists." Regardless of his motivations, Matsumiya was a strident critic of *kokugaku* scholars as well as Ogyū Sorai's followers. In other words, preference for (or even partiality toward) the state need not equal blindness or an inability to critique. Meritocratic Confucians, at least on my reading, have not baptized the CCP and absolved it of any wrongdoing. Similarly, democratic Confucians seem less than willing to endorse everything that liberal democracies claim is good for the world. Put simply, there is much grey area, and all sides seem willing to engage in considered and measured critique. This should not prevent robust debate. It is merely a call to clarify the terms of such debate and

ensure that our own preferences and ideological commitments do not stand in the way healthy and vigorous dialogue. Any vision and political alignment can be accused of being co-opted by *some* state (or states)—meritocratic and democratic, included.

Finally, I would like to consider the question of totalitarianism. O'Dwyer and Jiang (and perhaps other authors in the volume) are (rightly!) concerned with the potential rise of Confucian-inspired totalitarianism. Still, I cannot help returning to the chapters from Alexandra Mustățea and Eddy Dufourmont and querying what counts at "totalitarianism." As reminder, both Mustățea and Dufourmont are engaged in projects of recovery. Mustățea balances Watsuji's *Ethics* and *History of Ethical Thought in Japan* to encourage us to see potential for the universalistic value of Confucianism as a critique of totalitarianism. Dufourmont problematizes simplistic readings of Yasuoka Masahiro as a totalitarian in favor on one that might view him as conservative—though, that is also up for debate. In short, both Mustățea and Dufourmont challenge dismissive impulses toward categorizing certain political and intellectual moves as "totalitarian." This seems like a fruitful approach not only with Watsuji and Yasuoka, but perhaps also with meritocratic Confucians. Could they be engaged in a similar endeavor to those of Watsuji and Yasuoka—namely, critiquing totalitarianism in terms that might read as "totalitarian" itself? Given our current geopolitical climate, it might be tempting to assuage fears that meritocratic Confucianism could usher in a China-led "Asian Century" in opposition to the longstanding hegemony of Western liberal democracy (Auslin 2017; Zhu 2017). And perhaps such moves are necessary. But part of the challenge here is that it seems we are still very much beholden to outmoded debates that hamper our discussions—debates that include implicit assumptions about "the end of history" (Fukuyama 1992), "clashes of civilizations" (Huntington 1996), and "Asian values" (Jenco 2013), among others. What might it look like to uphold Confucian values as of global significance without reducing them to their compatibility with liberal democracy? How can we ensure Confucian legacies neither harbor a Sinocentric bias, limit human flourishing, nor become fetishized as culturally specific objects of inclusion in a (still?) globalizing world? These are thought-

provoking questions that, in my opinion, merit sustained consideration and the *Handbook of Confucianism in Modern Japan* gestures at them in productive and insightful ways. Its contribution is likely to stimulate further research, hopefully extending to the examination of Confucian legacies in Southeast Asian contexts (such as Vietnam, Singapore, Myanmar) and diasporic communities. On that account, I wholeheartedly recommend it.

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