



A Letter of Gang Xu to His Readers on Confucius Studies

Every scholar cherishes and protects his ideas, especially those of significant social or historical implications. I am no exception. My thought that connects Confucius to professionalism was conceived about a dozen years ago; it produced its first incarnation in 2009: the name of my business. Over the past decade, however, I have carefully kept the idea to myself, quietly testing alternative interpretations against my hypothesis, often on my way back home from another visit to a New England independent boarding high school. The idea has survived numerous challenges from my own brain exercises and gained support from recent researches in other fields. In my initial plan, I would start to work on a book on Confucius and professionalism when I get into sixties, when I expect my business would run itself.

However, my business services had to be suspended and my life has been endangered. In the past two and a half years, I have been living a semi-hiding life. I relive my early fear back in China thirty years ago, where an individual's life could be easily destroyed, deliberately and tactically, by corrupt governmental officials, only this time in Boston, only worse, but still connected to China.

These two scholarly articles on Confucius and the origin of *Ren* 仁 are produced in such a context, years ahead of their initial schedule, for the following reasons:

First, I believe the work is of critical importance to China and the Sino—U.S. relationship for many decades to come. Confucius has been consecrated and brand managed over the past two and a half millennia to support an institution that Confucius would resist to if he were still alive. Limited by his time, some of Confucius' thoughts are not that great from a modern perspective. What he had impacted, or pre-conditioned, on a major civilization is the notion of professionalism, though spelled in different terminology and barely practiced in China today. Professionalism is not just about manners and attitudes. It is also humanity. It raises up individuals with a sense of grace and purpose. It is a value that different societies or different people within a society could share with, regardless their ideologies or partisan affiliations. It would be a common ground for China to work with the Western world in the future.

Second, I am not sure if I will still have time or freedom to work on an academic piece after I start my public accusation against a criminal network(s) or industry in MA judicial community. I expect that my life would soon enter into a phase of responding to various attacks and smears as well as to investigations and questions. If history is any lesson, I am certain that I will be eventually murdered one way or the other at some point. Given so many uncertainties about my future, I hope to make sure to leave to this world something that might be of value and relevance at this critical moment of human history.

Third, these articles, together with my past essays, will hopefully serve as exhibits about me: where I am from, what kind of person I am, and what I hold so dear to my heart.

The work however took me much longer than I had expected. In the past two and a half years—and it is getting worse in the past one and a half year—I became routinely lost in front of a computer, staring at the screen blankly: that threatening tone, that condescending glance, that sinister smile, that lie again, that sturdy shoulder muscle..., here and there, would suddenly flash into my mind and then stay there and refuse to go. On some days I could not even finish a paragraph of a hundred words. When I revised my manuscript a few days ago, I caught some typos but my attention could last only a few minutes, then I became lost again. I am sure there are many more typos in the articles, but I have exhausted my resources and time allocation for the work, I beg your forgiveness.

I also beg your understanding on my reference section. References is a critical part of any serious scholarly work. I should have cited original publications for all my notes. However I have to resort to some online sources of uncertain academic rigor in some cases, as I was not prepared to finish the articles this early and I had not started to purposefully collect original references yet. I wish I could still have a chance to revise the articles someday, when my conditions improve and when I can have someone help me retrieve those missing original references.

Thank you very much for your interest in my pieces.

Gang Xu, Ph. D.
March 20, 2019