

# Confucius and the Cultural Revolution: A Brief Comparison of The Two Anti-Confucian Campaigns during the Cultural Revolution

Zehao Zhou

zzhou@ycp.edu

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## Introduction

Confucius had a “roller coaster experience” since the Opium War. However, after the 1989 prodemocracy movement, the ancient sage was catapulted back into the present. In the 2008, 3,000 PLA soldiers dressed as Confucius’s disciples and performed during the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympic Games. Yu Dan, an arts and communications professor of Beijing Normal University and an avid popularizer of some of Confucius’s ideas, has become one of the most sought-after public speakers in China, frequently upstaging veteran Confucian scholars. The Chinese government has also invoked the Confucian values of virtues and harmony as the core elements of its governing philosophy and sponsored hundreds of Confucius Institutes across the globe. All signs seem to indicate that another “heyday” for Confucius has arrived.

However, this “Confucius fervor” is by no means reflective of the fate of Confucius in the entire history of the PRC. While 180 couples swore before a statue of Confucius to never get divorced during a recent cultural month in Beijing, it is important to keep in mind that forty-seven years ago in November 1966, some 200 college Red Guards from the Beijing Normal University also swore before Mao Zedong’s portrait in Tiananmen Square to pledge their resolve

to go to Confucius' hometown Qufu to destroy the "Confucian Curiosity Shop" and level Confucius's tomb. Eight years later in 1974, an unprecedented campaign known as the Campaign to Criticize Lin Biao and Confucius swept across China, turning Confucius into a top villain, a household curse word, and an ally of every enemy of Mao's revolution.

The vicissitudes of Confucius during PRC history give rise to several questions: What exactly happened during the two anti-Confucian campaigns during the Cultural Revolution and why did they happen? If Confucius and his doctrines were already so violently attacked in 1966, why were they so severely attacked *again* in 1973? What did Lin Biao have to do with Confucius anyway? What did the two campaigns have in common and in what ways were they different? This paper tries to find answers to these questions by comparing and contrasting the two anti-Confucian campaigns during the Cultural Revolution. It further attempts to explore the reasons for the eventful fate of Confucius during the Cultural Revolution and provide the context for the triumphant return of Confucius to China's political stage today.

### The First Anti-Confucian Campaign

The first anti-Confucian campaign took place at the start of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. In late August that year when the Destroy the Four Olds campaign was raging across China, Red Guards from both Confucius's hometown and other areas of Shandong, where Confucius's birthplace Qufu is situated, repeatedly attempted to raid the prominent, state-protected Three Kong Sites in Qufu, namely, the Confucius Temple, the Confucius Mansion, and the Confucius Cemetery. While the Red Guards regarded the Three Kong Sites as the root of all Four Olds, local officials considered them state properties that they were obligated to protect.

The Qufu local authorities put up fierce resistance against the raids and resoundingly repelled the Red Guards attacks with the help of the People's Militia and local peasants and residents.

News of the August defeat of the Red Guards in Qufu reached members of the Central Cultural Revolution Group (CCRG)—radical wing of Mao's government. Shortly afterwards, a counterattack was planned. In October 1966, instigators from the CCRG organized a special contingent of Red Guards from the Beijing Normal University to go to Qufu not only to finish off the work the local Red Guards failed to do in August, but also to “use the dead to attack the living,” namely, the central, provincial, and local leaders who protected the Three Kong Sites and humiliated the Red Guards. Among the prominent living targets were Mao's overt political enemy Liu Shaoqi, the president of the country, and his covert target Zhou Enlai, the country's premier and head of the State Council. They were considered to have played some role in either promoting Confucianism or protecting the Confucian monuments in Qufu.

Consequently, in early November, 1966, over 200 college Red Guards left Beijing for Qufu to raid the Three Kong Sites in the name of the Destroy the Four Olds campaign and with the blessings of the CCRG. Once there, they subdued the local officials and forged an alliance with the local Red Guards. Together, they mobilized the peasants, discovered “reactionary evidence” in the Confucius Mansion, and held anti-Confucian mass mobilization rallies. Then, joined by local peasants, they vandalized the Three Kong Sites and declared victory over the “root of all Four Olds.” A significant number of cultural and historical artifacts and relics of the Confucian establishment in Qufu were destroyed or severely damaged, particularly those associated with the Qing dynasty that were decreed by the CCRG as acceptable for destruction. The damage was especially significant in the Confucius Cemetery where Confucius's tomb was dug out and completely vandalized. Confucius endured one of the worst humiliations a Chinese could ever

imagine possible—the digging out of his tomb—by students trained to be teachers and by peasants, many of whom were Confucius’s own descendants. After the Beijing Red Guards left Qufu, peasants from Qufu and the surrounding areas thoroughly plundered the Confucius Cemetery for buried treasures despite repeated attempts by the Red Guards and local officials to stop the looting.

### The Campaign against Lin Biao and Confucius

The Campaign against Lin Biao and Confucius of 1974-1975 is far more complex and perplexing than the 1966-67 anti-Confucian campaign. Its direct and overt targets were Confucius/Confucianism and Lin Biao, the disgraced former heir apparent of Mao who died in an apparent plane crash in Mongolia in 1971. Its indirect and covert targets were Zhou Enlai, who was viewed by Mao and his radical associates as a looming threat to their hold on power, and the party moderates behind him.

Mao had to take on Lin Biao not only because Lin betrayed and humiliated him, but also because his betrayal led to the overwhelming rejection of the Cultural Revolution, the crown jewel of his revolutionary career and legacy, from both within and without the party, as Lin Biao was practically synonymous with the Cultural Revolution. Defending the Cultural Revolution thus became a top priority or even obsession for the senile and aging Mao. To address the aftermath of Lin’s defection, Mao launched the so-called “Campaign to Criticize Lin Biao and Conduct Rectification,” but it was ineffective—Lin continued to be defined and viewed as an ultra-leftist, a symbol of the failed Cultural Revolution, and a glaring and painful reminder of Mao’s blunder of epic proportions.

Meanwhile, Mao had to deal with Zhou Enlai in the wake of Lin’s defection. Zhou was in Mao’s bad graces for several reasons. Lin’s sudden death left a huge power vacuum in the

government, as the military under Lin had previously occupied many important government and military posts. Zhou quickly filled these posts with large numbers of party moderates who were previously purged by Mao at the start of the Cultural Revolution. This move endeared Zhou to the party base and enabled him to gain significant power, but it happened at the expense of the radical camp in Mao's government. Zhou further antagonized Mao by conducting an aggressive and popular campaign against ultraleftism—a term directly associated with Lin Biao but implicitly associated with the Cultural Revolution, and, by extension, its creator Mao. Furthermore, to the chagrin of Mao and his radical followers who believed in permanent revolution and preferred chaos to order, Zhou took significant measures to reverse the radical course of the Cultural Revolution and return the chaotic life in China to normal. Last but not least, Zhou inadvertently gained tremendous popularity both at home and abroad through his role in orchestrating and hosting Nixon's 1972 China trip, causing tremendous jealousy on the part of Mao, who made Zhou criticize himself before his comrades during a criticism session in the Politburo despite his grave illness.

Zhou's sharp rise in power, influence, and popularity in the wake of Lin Biao's death both irked and alarmed radical cultural revolutionaries who viewed him as a "Khrushchev-like figure," an ominous term previously used to describe the now-deposed Liu Shaoqi. It was clear to Zhou's detractors that the premier had to be held in check, but they did not have enough tricks up their sleeves to dislodge the sophisticated and popular Zhou, who enjoyed significant support from the military and the public alike. Mao managed to humiliate Zhou through criticism sessions, but they were not enough to force him out. Zhou was a survivor and Mao needed a better plan.

In 1973, two years after Lin Biao's death, Mao stumbled on this plan. It was the Campaign against Lin Biao and Confucius—a seemingly perfect linchpin to tie all the pieces together. Through this campaign, he could ferret out and denounce his old nemesis Confucius one more time. More importantly, he could tie the now-vilified Confucius to Lin Biao, as a few Confucian quotes, such as “Restrain oneself and restore the rites,” were discovered on the calligraphy scrolls at Lin's former residence during a house search following his death. Associating Lin Biao with Confucius had the distinct advantage of turning Zhou's campaign against ultraleftism to a campaign against ultrarightism. Furthermore, in the so-called “571 Project Summary,” allegedly a blueprint for Lin's so-called coup, Mao was referred to as the “present-day Qin Shihuang,” the First Emperor of China. Some tenuous connections between Lin Biao and Confucius were thus made to discredit Lin who was now dubbed a “closet Confucian,” despite the lack of any discernible ideological and philosophical connections between the former Vice Chairman and the old sage.

Even more importantly, Mao and his followers could use the campaign to establish connections between Zhou Enlai and Confucius. As a romantic revolutionary, Mao had long disliked Zhou for his irresolute support for the Cultural Revolution and other radical programs and for his middle-of-the-road political maneuvering, which Mao viewed as the “Confucian Way.” In point of fact, Zhou's lukewarm support for Mao's Cultural Revolution in late 1966 was also one of the reasons why radical Maoists made Zhou an implicit but important target of the first anti-Confucian campaign. Zhou was viewed by members of Mao's inner circle as a symbol of Confucian virtue, a “present-day Confucius,” and the “major Confucian within the party.”

Having discovered the tool that he could use to simultaneously target his explicit enemies of Confucius and Lin Biao and implicit foe of Zhou Enlai, Mao gave the go-ahead to launch the Campaign against Lin Biao and Confucius. The campaign took shape in 1973 when a number of editorials praising Qin Shihuang and Legalists were published and intense preparatory work for the campaign got underway. January 1, 1974 marked the official launch of the campaign when a joint New Year's Day message from three major party publications was issued. On January 18, Mao authorized the nationwide distribution of a booklet "Lin Biao and the Way of Confucius and Mencius," the signature document of the campaign that compared miscellaneous writings by Lin Biao with some quotations by Confucius and Mencius and linked Lin Biao with the "forces of restoration" represented by the old sages. Major mobilization rallies were held on the second and third day of the Chinese New Year in 1974 and an avalanche of anti-Confucian, anti-Lin Biao "study materials" was disseminated across the country, kicking off a massive, nationwide campaign that Wang Hongwen, CCP Vice Chairman and later a member of the Gang of Four, referred to as "the Second Cultural Revolution."

As a vilified foe of Mao, Lin Biao was always the apparent primary target of the campaign. However, veiled attacks against Zhou Enlai started from the inception of the campaign and intensified over time. Zhou was attacked on the January 25 mobilization meeting, which he had to attend on short notice. Soon, the campaign added a third target and became the "Campaign against Lin Biao, Confucius, and the Duke of Zhou." While the Duke of Zhou was Confucius's hero, this title happened to be a well-known respectful address for Zhou Enlai as well. A linkage between Confucius and Zhou Enlai was thus established. Zhou was further compared to Lu Buwei, the Confucian prime minister of the Qin dynasty, and to a few other historical figures that represented conservative and Confucian ideologies and interests. Attacks against Zhou even

spread to the provinces. Slogans such as “Down with Confucius of the Present Age” and “Down with the Political Department Chief of Huangpu Military Academy,” a title that Zhou once held, were found in Anhui province. Even more details about attacks on Zhou were revealed in the “confession materials” of the former Red Guards and radical leaders after Mao’s death and the fall of the Gang of Four.

Despite its organizers’ clear intention and efforts to use the campaign to further vilify Lin Biao, contain Zhou Enlai, and defend the Cultural Revolution, the campaign quickly lost its focus and was soon co-opted by various opportunistic forces that used the campaign to advance their own cause. Many suppressed former rebels attempted to vindicate themselves in the name of opposing “restoration,” a code name for opposition to the Cultural Revolution. Recently rehabilitated and reinstated old cadres who were attacked during the Cultural Revolution were attacked again as their return to power was viewed as evidence of “restoration.” In addition, factional and armed fighting returned; even PLA weapons depots were plundered. People would also use “Confucius” as a convenient label to smear their enemies. In one case, a provincial party chief was labeled “Kong the Third”; a prefectural party chief was called “Kong the Fourth”; and a county party chief was referred to as “Kong the Fifth”—all alleged followers of Confucius who was derogatorily called “Kong the Second” for his being the second child of his family.

With the campaign going out of control and Zhou Enlai effectively neutralizing attacks against him, Mao grew increasingly concerned and moved to rein in the situation. He issued statements to ban the formation of new factional groups and networking among them. The armed forces were explicitly told to stay in their barracks instead of participating in the campaign outside their barracks. Newspaper articles called on people not to use the campaign to settle old

scores but to focus on improving production. Other party publications explained that this was meant to be an ideological campaign that should stay in the reaches of the superstructure....

The Campaign against Lin Biao and Confucius started with a bang but ended with a whimper. With a loose definition, shifting targets, and rampant factional fighting and chaos across the country, its organizers had to abandon it without accomplishing the major goals of the campaign. In fact, Zhou Enlai became even more popular as the Cultural Revolution became even more unpopular. In February 1975, this ill-conceived and poorly executed campaign ended and was replaced by the campaign against bourgeois rights.

#### A Comparison of the Two Anti-Confucian Campaigns during the Cultural Revolution

The 1966-67 campaign and the 1974-75 campaign were far more different than they were similar, although both are anti-Confucian in name. Their primary differences lie in their objectives, scope, participants, methods, and outcomes.

To begin with, the objectives of the two campaigns were worlds apart. The first campaign targeted the “Four Olds” and the incumbent party establishment and bureaucracy, but the objectives of the second campaign ranged from attacking Lin Biao and Zhou Enlai to defending Mao’s Cultural Revolution legacy. Besides, the scope of each campaign was different. The first campaign was mostly limited to Confucius’s birthplace Qufu and the surrounding areas. Its national impact was only made possible through a few *People’s Daily* editorials, the campaign’s nationally-circulated official newspaper *Denounce Confucius Battlefield Report*, and some other Red Guard publications. The second anti-Confucian campaign, on the other hand, was a massive movement that spread to every corner of the country with its scale viewed as next only to the start of the Cultural Revolution.

Moreover, the organizers and participants in the two campaigns were different. While the first campaign was engineered by Mao's top lieutenants in CCRG, spearheaded by some college Red Guards, and perpetrated by Red Guards and peasants, the second campaign was conceived by Mao himself, directly orchestrated by Mao's wife Jiang Qing, facilitated by the entire government and party apparatus, and implemented across the country at every level of society. The participants of the first campaign were mostly regional, but the participants of the second campaign covered the entire population. Everyone in China from senior citizens to kindergarten students was a participant.

Furthermore, the methods of each campaign were different. Physical violence dominated the first campaign and obliterated seventy-four percent of the material representation of Qufu's history and culture. By comparison, rhetorical violence and allegorical politics dominated the second campaign. Besides, other than the unexpected plundering of the Confucius Cemetery by the peasants, the first campaign was also far more organized and orderly than the second one.

Finally, the outcomes of each campaign were different. The first campaign resulted in the massive destruction of or damage to the Kong Sites, the sharp rise in status of the Beijing Red Guards that carried out the Qufu attack, and a license for Red Guards elsewhere in China to carry out similar attacks on the graves and cemeteries of historical figures, such as the attack on Mencius's tomb shortly after the attack on Confucius's tomb. The second campaign, on the other hand, led to confusion, chaos, anarchy, factional fighting, and economic decline across the country. It even caused confusion overseas as some Japanese visitors also expressed their surprise and puzzlement over the attack on Confucius.

Their wide differences notwithstanding, the two campaigns did have a few things in common. First, both campaigns deviated from their original goals. The first campaign aimed at

discrediting and weakening the party and government officials in the name of eradicating the vestiges of the past, but it ended up with a tomb robbing frenzy in the Confucius Cemetery.

Likewise, the second campaign started with clearly identified targets and objectives but ended with massive chaos and confusion and had to be aborted to avoid further damage.

Second, both campaigns served as a vehicle for the politicization of culture and history. While in the first campaign the grassroots Red Guards were motivated to go to Qufu to attack the Three Kong Sites, burn Confucius's statue, and level Confucius's tomb in the spirit of the Destroy the Four Olds campaign, the Beijing instigators of the campaign were interested "using the dead to attack the living," to wit, the State Council under Zhou Enlai and the party and government apparatus under Liu Shaoqi. The politicization of culture and history was even more apparent in the second anti-Confucian campaign as the living enemies of the party central leadership under Mao were far more important than the long-deceased Sage. The criticism of Confucius was always tied to a specific political objective, whether it was Lin Biao, Zhou Enlai, or "forces of restoration" attempting to reject the Cultural Revolution and reverse its course.

Finally, both campaigns were informed by irony and symbolism. Among the very few top CCP leaders who never chose to set foot in Qufu were Lin Biao and Zhou Enlai, yet it was precisely these two who were respectively accused of being a "closet Confucian" and "present-day Confucius." It never seemed to matter that Mao toured Qufu twice and used characters from Confucius's quotation, "The superior man should be slow to speak but prompt to act," as the first names for his two daughters Li Min (prompt to act) and Li Na (slow to speak).

Additionally, by the time of the second campaign, all backstage schemers and Red Guard leaders of the first campaign had already been either sent to Mao's jails, which was the case with CCRG members Chen Boda and Qi Benyu, or investigated for anti-Cultural Revolution

activities, as was the case with Tan Houlan, the female college Red Guard leader. Their crime, ironically, was not their involvement in the destruction of the Three Kong Sites. Rather, they were charged with using the destruction of the Three Kong Sites to attack Zhou Enlai. Yet another interesting example of irony was the role of Zhou Enlai in each campaign: Zhou was in the leadership groups of both anti-Confucian campaigns where he was the implicit target.

In terms of the use of symbolism, some particular examples are worthy of special mention. One is the exhuming of the tombs of the first and last three generations of the Confucius lineage, symbolizing the destruction of the beginning and the end of the Confucius lineage. Another salient example was the use of teachers (some Red Guards were junior faculty members), future teachers (students of Beijing Normal University and Qufu Teachers College), and regular students to dig out the tomb of Confucius, the “teacher of all teachers” whose birthday is celebrated as Teachers’ Day in Taiwan. No less significant was the use of a woman, namely Tan Houlan, the only female leader among the top five Red Guard leaders in China, to head the Qufu expedition to level Confucius’s tomb. Whether the choice of Tan as the Red Guard leader for the Qufu expedition was by accident or by design, the symbolic significance of this fact was not lost on anyone, considering Confucius’s alleged bias against women.

### Confucius and the Cultural Revolution

For over 2,000 years and across feudal, imperial, and republican China, Confucianism and the prominent Confucian monuments in his birthplace Qufu were subjected to numerous tumultuous dynastic and regime changes, foreign invasions, peasant uprisings, iconoclastic outbursts, revolutions, and even the multiple political convulsions of early PRC. Remarkably, they survived them all, that is, until 1966 when their charisma and invulnerability suddenly

failed. This naturally begs the question: What was so special about the Cultural Revolution that repeatedly turned the millennia-old Confucianism and Confucius's birthplace into the targets of the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution"? Sure, everything old was targeted in the Cultural Revolution—old customs, old ideas, old culture, old habits, and even old cadres and revolutionaries, but Confucius received "special treatment" and was attacked repeatedly and relentlessly on a large scale.

There are many answers to this big question, but a brief review of the place of Confucianism in early PRC history and a quick examination of the nature and purpose of the Cultural Revolution may bring to light some pieces of the puzzle. Confucianism lost most of its political clout in 1905 and 1911 and much of its intellectual orthodoxy during the New Culture Movement. After 1949, however, Confucianism was "retired into the historical museum" and escaped being classified as a religion. This non-religious status helped it to stay away from official scrutiny during the new government's reconfiguration of the religious field, whereby all five officially recognized religions in PRC were brought under tight government control. Confucianism consequently did not suffer as crushing a blow as other religions did. On the contrary, it even managed to put up a meaningful resistance to the hegemony of Maoism in the private sphere. Few communist cadres, for instance, would want their widowed mother to remarry and many would much prefer a son to a daughter.

The survival of Confucianism in early PRC was also facilitated by the inherent similarities and compatibility between the revolutionary/Maoist discourse and Confucianism, among them adherence to hierarchy, obedience to authority, and mixing of ethics with politics. In other words, the relationship between Maoism and Confucianism before the Cultural Revolution was one that was sometimes mutually exclusive and sometimes mutually

accommodating. To know the enmeshing of Confucianism in the minds of card-carrying revolutionaries, one needs to look no further than the use of Confucian concept of “cultivation” in Liu Shaoqi’s book *On the Cultivation of a Good Communist*, with frequent references to Confucius’s *Analects* and the *Four Books*, as well as Mao’s frequent and sometimes positive reference to Confucius in his writings and speeches, such as his admiration for Confucius’s simple curriculum of Six Arts.

The tolerance, and at times, the promotion, of Confucianism during the pre-Cultural Revolution PRC went so far that the following laudatory comments on Confucius were heard at the government-sponsored Confucius Forum in 1962, “Confucius lives in the mouths and hearts of the Chinese people” and “Human happiness is closely tied to just a few remarks by Confucius.” Indeed, like W.A. P Martin who once considered a “Confucius plus Christ” model to facilitate his missionary work in China, party officials and “ideology workers” seemed to have adopted a “Confucius plus Socialism” model to serve their ideological agenda.

Mao Zedong frowned upon these laudatory remarks on Confucius in 1962. As one who was busy intensifying his own cult of personality, Mao naturally considered such remarks as belonging to him only. But he did not openly express his displeasure in 1962 when he was sidelined by Liu and biding his time. He waited until 1966 when the time was finally ripe for him to settle some old scores. But Mao’s renewed tension with Confucianism had much more to do with the settling of old scores. As Mao aggressively pursued intellectual orthodoxy, political dominance, ideological supremacy, and moral authority in order to establish Maoism as the sole revolutionary creed of a brand new Maoist discourse, the old shared dichotomy of Maoism and Confucianism quickly shifted to a single Maoist monotheism. There was no more sharing, overt and covert, of orthodoxy, supremacy, authority, and prestige with the old Sage or anyone else.

The Maoism-Confucianism on-and-off alliance had now given way to a head-on collision between the two. It was no wonder that by December 1966, Mao had already identified the eradication of Confucianism in every aspect of the Chinese life as one of the main tasks of the Cultural Revolution.

Mao should be given credit for taking on Confucius as an adversary. The nature and the purpose of the Cultural Revolution made conflicts between Maoism and Confucianism all the more pronounced and inevitable. Confucianism emphasized order, stability, harmony, and moderation but Mao launched the Cultural Revolution to get rid of order, stability, harmony, and moderation to achieve his political objectives and revolutionary ideals. Confucius embraces antiquity and cherishes the past, but Mao was for a new society and perfection in future. Confucianism is not meant to be exclusivist but Maoism was. Confucius is of the view that all men could acquire virtue, but Mao's class struggle theory completely rejects that notion. Confucius insists that, "The superior man is not a utensil," but Mao exhorted people to behave like "a screw in the machine," as exemplified by his favorite model PLA soldier Lei Feng. Confucius's golden rule was "Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you," but the inverse of this is precisely what Mao's class struggle and proletarian dictatorship mandated.

In short, the advent of the Cultural Revolution threw the differences between radical Maoism and Confucianism into sharp relief. It was only natural that Mao wanted to remove his competition by removing Confucianism from the Chinese psyche and everyday life.

As a romantic revolutionary and a practical politician at the same time, Mao was opposed to Confucianism but he was not opposed to using Confucianism as an instrument of power struggles and political expediency. Fortunately for Mao, the Cultural Revolution provided him with the optimal opportunity to do both. The cynical use of Confucius for political gains was

evident not only in the first anti-Confucian campaign when the Red Guards were urged to use the dead to attack the living, but it was especially the case in the second anti-Confucian campaign when the list of the so-called pro-Confucius individuals also happened to be a *Who's Who* of Mao's long list of enemies. Confucianism became the magic wand that radical Maoists used to discredit and attack anyone to their disliking. A CCP document released at the start of the Campaign against Lin Biao and Confucius titled "A collection of pro-Confucius and pro-restoration remarks by reactionary, landlord, and bourgeois scholars since the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement" includes as many as fifty eight individuals and covers the "pro-Confucian remarks" during all important historical periods since the May 4<sup>th</sup> era. Individuals singled out as pro-Confucius include prominent anti-Confucius scholar Hu Shi, CCRG chief Chen Boda who ordered the leveling of Confucius's tomb, and Chen Duxiu, the founder of the anti-Confucian New Culture Movement.

In a nut shell, the Cultural Revolution was a watershed moment that fundamentally changed the place of Confucianism in PRC history. Understanding the trajectories of Mao and Confucius in both early PRC and the Cultural Revolution can help us better understand not only the two anti-Confucian campaigns during the Cultural Revolution, but also the place of Confucianism in China today.

### Concluding Remarks

This paper has provided a brief overview of the two anti-Confucian campaigns during the Cultural Revolution and offered some explanations for the massive attacks on both Confucius's birthplace and doctrines. In doing so, it has also provided some historical context for Confucius's recent return to the spotlight of China's political stage. Needless to say, our struggle to

understand the place of Confucius and his ideas continues, but we are by no means alone in this struggle. In his *My Country and My People*, Lin Yutang describes Confucius as “the most terrible underground leader in Red China today,” while Kong Fanyin, a native of Qufu and a prominent descendant of Confucius, recently argued that Confucius would join the communist party if he were alive today. These contradictory statements about the role of Confucius bespeak the challenges we continue to face when it comes to understanding the role of Confucius in the Chinese society. Indeed, the remarkable return of Confucianism to the limelight in China today has brought with it many big questions to ponder over: Why has Confucianism staged such a strong comeback? Is the revival of Confucianism in form or in substance? Why does the Chinese government seem to prefer Confucianism to its own long-held political ideologies? Is Professor Yu Dan going to dominate the public stage on Confucius for long? Will the expensive enterprise of Confucius Institutes continue to grow unchecked? And, last but not least, if Confucianism is truly experiencing an unprecedented revival, why is there such a vibrant and blossoming evangelical Christian community in Qufu, Confucius’s own backyard, today?