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Confucian China Today: An Analysis of the Projection of 'Chineseness' through Tourism and Related Inscriptive Fields

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Title: Confucian China Today: An Analysis of the Projection of 'Chineseness' through Tourism and Related Inscriptive Fields

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Abstract:

In China today, many organizations are charged with the responsibility of recalling the mythical 'Confucian' past of China, in order to generate an inspiring national (even global) ideal for the present. Confucius is hereby seen to be the saving font of 'Chineseness', helping save modern-day Chinese people from alienation in an increasingly international and changeable world. This study will seek to understand how the current representations and interpretations found at Qufu and other places in China (significantly associated with Confucius) have been shaped through tourism and also through its cousin (or collaborative?) *declarative industries*, from the early days to the present moment ... in particular, over the last half-century. In many senses, Confucianism / New Confucianism is promoted today as the driving force of cultural creation in terms of family relations, work ethic, and personal cultivation in China, across 'the East', and indeed about the wider world.

This workshop presentation therefore seeks to critically reveal the following:

- What is Confucianism?
- What is 'New Confucianism'?
- Where/when are Confucianism and New Confucianism currently represented in and through tourism?

To this end, this presentation will particularly contour the parameters of Confucianism—or rather, 'New Confucianism'—today. It seeks to critically interpret the representation of China / 'Confucian China' through the inscriptive and performative power of tourism and its related industries during contemporary times.

Confucianism is believed to influence the political and economic dynamics of 'Chinese societies', as well as the personal, social, and cultural dynamics of everyday life across East Asia. Such research on one of the major Chinese cultural values is deemed by the presenters to be a timely investment today in order to generate advanced understanding of the culture and about the long-time inheritances of 'China'—the forty-centuries-old nation. A number of authors (like Liu, Wang, and Li) have argued that Chinese culture should indeed be based on Confucianism, but sustained debates exist over which Confucian values should actually form the core of Chinese 'traditional culture'. This issue remains the question which this ongoing study aims to critique.