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The Ideas about Postconventional Confucian Ethics of Responsibility 儒家後習俗責任倫理學的理念 by Lin Yuanze 林遠澤 is a distinguished work of comparative philosophy. It uses the theory of moral development from the West to interpret Confucianism, in order to rediscover the potential of an unfinished enlightenment within Confucian thought. Lin revises Lawrence Kohlberg’s theory of moral development with Carol Gilligan’s idea of responsibility as well as Karl-Otto Apel’s and Habermas’s concept of postconventional morality. Although bearing different concepts of morality, Kohlberg and Confucianism share the same idea as to how to reach the highest moral stage, namely, integration and differentiation—the two sides of the same process of moral choices. It requires one to include concern for others into one’s moral choices and also to put priority on others’ needs rather than one’s selfish interest. However, Lin does not agree with Kohlberg that the highest moral stage lies in the Kantian abstract universal moral principles, specifically the universal principle of justice. Lin takes the postconventional ethics of responsibility (PCER) as the highest stage of moral development for individuals as well as cultures. PCER is not only about principles. It must also have (1) the power to be realized in diverse contexts, especially when one has to suffer for the consequences of moral choices. For this reason, PCER also includes (2) moral practices established on the ultimate concern for the meaning of life, in which one is more motivated to take her own responsibility. In addition to psychological concerns, PCER also needs (3) to be secured by social communication and systems. Lin argues that although practical philosophy with all three theoretical forms based upon PCER has just started and has not reached agreement in the West, Confucianism did raise its own PCER through its “excellence within and outside” (neishengwaiwang 內聖外王), “the unity of knowing and doing” (zhixingheyi 知行合一), and coherence

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between Dao 道 and “life” (xingming 性命). This book aims at revealing the potential postconventional elements in Confucian thought, and constituting them in such a way that these elements work dynamically with each other. To achieve this goal, Lin does not stick to dogmatic Confucian forms and terms, but focuses on its original moral concern. He uses three main methods: reinterpretation, critique, and construction. Chapters 1, 3, and 5 reinterpret the relevant Confucian theories as primarily concerning the original moral experience in care relations among human beings while suspending diverse interpretation and formulation of Confucianism in history. Chapters 2 and 4 critically examine the basic theoretic forms of Confucianism in history in light of the highest stage of moral development. Chapters 6 and 7 give a construction of the original postconventional idea within Confucianism and argue that these resources might be used to solve practical moral problems and might be helpful in promoting enlightenment in the contemporary world.

Although sharing the same major theme, this book is a collection of relatively independent papers by Lin. In Chapter 1, Lin argues that Confucianism is a postconventional theory of responsibility which begins with “ethical relations and constant Dao” (renlunchangdao 人倫常道) and ends with the ideal personality of junzi 君子 (exemplary person) who carries out both ren 仁 (benevolence) and yi 義 (right, appropriateness). He reinterprets the traditional problem of the Confucian tradition, that is, the integration of ren and yi, as the same problem of the dynamic integration of Gilligan’s care ethics with Kohlberg’s abstract Kantian principles. By asserting the necessity to extend moral development to the stage of PCER, Lin argues that Confucian ethics can be both universally valid and action-guiding in concrete situations. Chapter 2 argues that Confucius himself rebuilt the foundation of concrete “ethical relations” that maintain social order on universally valid morality. Nevertheless, his disciples understood the universal morality in two different directions: zhong 忠 (doing one’s utmost) and shu 恕 (putting oneself in other’s place) by Zengzi 曾子; and “knowing through studying” (duoxue er shi 多學而識) by Zigong 子貢. Mencius inherited and advanced the former, Xunzi 荀子 the latter. Both of them found out that dialogues with the ancients and the hermeneutic interpretation of ancient books can help prevent moral relativism. In Chapter 3, “knowing and doing” (zhi he heng 知和行) in the “theory of the practice of cultivation” (gongfu lun 工夫論) are interpreted respectively as moral judgment and moral action in Kohlberg’s theory of moral development. “Excellence within and outside” (neisheng waiwang 內聖外王), that is, the achievement of the practice of gongfu, goes beyond the division of internal moral judgment and external moral action, and counts as the precondition of the ideal “doing as one knows.” Therefore, gongfu lun orients Confucianism toward a kind of moral practice driven by internal motivation. Chapter 4 criticizes one of the two main forms of Confucianism. In order to manifest the continuity of the development of Confucianism in history, Lin calls the two phases of Confucianism in history as ethical Confucianism and moral Confucianism instead of Confucianism in the Han 漢 period and the Song 宋 period. Ethical Confucianism is reconstructed on Xunzi’s thought. It enables one to find the proper way of life in society through fulfilling the requirement of li 禮 (ritual propriety) as certain norms. However, when combined with the divine cosmological law, yin-yang, and the five elements (yinyang wuxing 陰陽五行), ethical norms in the Han period retreated to the lowest state of moral development—that is, preconventional societies in which humans are supposed to obey religious rules and political authority. Thus, ethical