

Confucius in a Business Suit:  
Civilizational Norms in  
the Twenty-First Century



Stele Rubbing of Confucius  
(551-479 B.C.)  
Édouard Chavannes, *Mission  
Archéologique dans la Chine  
Septentrionale* (Paris: Leroux,  
1909).



Buddhist symbol, the *chakra*

Depiction of Laozi



# Elite vs. popular spectrum

**CONFUCIANISM:** A form of culture, an ideology, a system of learning, a tradition of normative values

**BUDDHISM:** Monasteries, nunneries/monks, nuns vs. lay believers

**DAOISM:** philosophic system, system of practice (*taiqi, qigong*); village ritual specialists

# Historical Phases

## 1. 1916-

New Culture Movement Attack on  
Traditional Norms

## 2. Maoist period, 1949-76

Cultural Revolution, 1966-76

Anti-Confucius, Anti-Lin Biao, 1973-74

## 3. Revival, 1980s-

New Confucianism

Buddhist, Daoist revival

# Confucianism in China Today

- Academic learning, part of global conversation on Confucian-type capitalism, East Asian identity
- Policy references
- For daily life: Yu Dan's *Analects*
- “Soft power”: Confucius Institutes
- Civilizational symbol for foreign audiences