Abstract

In 1982, Dr. Goh Keng Swee, announced that "Confucian Ethics" would be offered as one of the 6 options under the compulsory religious knowledge programme for Secondary 3 and 4 students. Following that, 8 foreign Confucian scholars, namely: Hsiung Chieh, Wu Yuan-li, Tong Te-kong, Wu Chen-tsou, Tu Wei-ming, Chin Chen-oi, Yu Ying-shih and Hsu Cho-yun, were invited to Singapore to help develop the conceptual framework for the subject. These 8 scholars and those who were invited in the next few years, held talks and seminars during their short visit and their comments were widely reported by the 2 local Chinese newspapers then -Sin Chew Jit Poh and Nanyang Siang Pau. The purpose of this academic exercise is to analyse these foreign Confucian scholars' comments featured in local newspapers, so as to determine their contribution towards the promotion of Confucianism in Singapore.

The first chapter gives some background information on Singapore's eagerness to promote Confucianism. The second to the seventh chapters then reveal my findings on the scholars' contributions in 6 different areas. They are: 1) to bring about the rise in public awareness on the issue of "Confucianism"; 2) to eliminate common doubts on Confucian teachings; 3) to convince the public that Confucian teachings are still useful in this modern society; 4) to give suggestions on the writing of the "Confucian Ethics" textbook; 5) to give advice on the language medium to be adopted for teaching and learning of the subject; 6) to set the direction for the Institute of East Asian Philosophies (IEAP) and to influence the Chinese Studies Department of the National
University of Singapore to offer more courses on Confucianism. The last chapter is a round up of the above chapters.

Now that the compulsory religious knowledge programme is no longer available, Singaporeans will soon forget that Confucianism was once a much talked about issue in the 1980s, not to mention their knowledge on these foreign Confucian scholars’ contributions. Therefore, this academic exercise will help to give some insights into their contributions and may be useful for those interested in doing research on the history or development of Singapore’s moral education.