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## Göttinger Vorträge zum modernen China

# Religious Dialogue: The Third Epoch of Confucianism in a Global Context

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Ort: Waldweg 26, ERZ N414  
Termin: 24. November 2009, 12.15

### Abstract

This talk includes four parts. First, it redefines “the third epoch of Confucianism” as a geographical enlargement from East Asia to the world rather than a temporal evolution only in Chinese context, and considers that the dialogue with Western religious traditions constitutes a leading project of this epoch. Secondly, it argues if Confucianism can be regarded as a religious tradition and in what sense this understanding is meaningful. Thirdly, it demonstrates there has been a strong dialogical dimension in Confucian tradition all along and this “dialogical-ness” should be understood as a distinctive feature of Confucianism. Finally, it points out three contributions that Confucianism as a dialogical tradition can at least make to religious dialogue in a global context. These three contributions are a principle of dialogue that advocates “harmony without uniformity”, a religious pluralism that refrains from both absolutism and relativism, and a theoretical and practical resource that entails multiple religious participation and multiple religious identities.