

THE PROMISE OF WISDOM AND THE AFTERMATH OF *DAO*: GRASSROOTS CONFUCIANISM AND THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF WISDOM

Malinowski concluded *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* with a provocative comment on the ongoing WWI, urging anthropology to be accountable to the future of the world through the promise of wisdom. He called for going beyond objective knowledge production to learn from informants' ways of life. Since then, wisdom has been one of anthropology's ultimate promises. But how do we, as anthropologists, account for the praxis and politics of wisdom and avoid the promise and wisdom empty?

To establish accountability for wisdom is to break the veneer and gauge its depth. This talk explores this process through two complementary ethnographic phases that gradually revealed the depth of wisdom within *dujing*. The first phase recounts how *dujing*'s wisdom, which initially appeared empty, became "stuffed" with meaning. The second phase documents its subsequent "agitation" and eventual "collapse." The final section reflects on the meaning and ethics of this fieldwork. Ultimately, this talk critiques the implicit "solutionism" embedded in anthropology's established promise of wisdom and develops a processual, critical yet situationally sympathetic approach to establishing accountability for wisdom as well as its related cultural politics and knowledge economy.



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