

Globethics Repository



Chinese values : conception and practice : English synopsis

This page was generated automatically upon download from the Globethics Repository. More information on Globethics see <https://www.globethics.net>. Data and content policy of Globethics Repository see <https://repository.globethics.net/pages/policy>.

Item Type	Book chapter
Authors	Liu, Baocheng
Publisher	Globethics.net
Rights	Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International
Download date	2026-09-24 05:38:47
Item License	http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/4139395

English Synopsis of the Book Volume:



Title: 中国价值观：理念与实践

Subtitle: Chinese Values: Conception and Practice

Author: 刘宝成 (Liu Baocheng)

Series: Globethics.net China Ethics Series No. 10

URL:

https://www.globethics.net/documents/10131/26882181/GE_CE_10_isbn9782889313563.pdf

URL to Globethics.net Library item:

<https://repository.globethics.net/handle/20.500.12424/4136082>

URL to the China Ethics Series page:

<https://www.globethics.net/china-ethics-series>

Amazon link: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/2889314391>

Date of release: 2022

Abstract:

拥有悠久历史与深厚底蕴的中国，在当今全球舞台扮演着愈发积极且重要的角色。由24字组成的社会主义核心价值观，集中体现了中国官方所推崇的当代中国集体价值诉求与实践纲领，本书旨在从历史、政治与文化的视角，初步尝试发掘并解读其形成的根源及合理性，并帮助读者理解其背后根深蒂固的伦理价值体系。

China represents a profound, long history, a vibrant presence and an important role in the world. This book offers a profound and initial attempt to excavate and decipher the historical, political and cultural moral values of China. It shows the rationale and legitimacy behind Chinese socialist value propositions of contemporary Chinese nation. It contributes to the understanding of values and the appreciation of Chinese cultural norms with its nuanced approach.

CHINESE VALUES: CONCEPTION AND PRACTICE

ENGLISH SYNOPSIS

China, as one of the most ancient civilizations, has managed to stand on its own feet for five thousand years with resilience, tenacity, and now vibrancy. To many westerners, this nation remains an oriental myth.

It maintained a close-knit empire for two thousand years, bitterly experiencing a century of humiliation since the Opium Wars when Western powers pushed open its door with guns and cannons filled with gunpowder invented by the Chinese. Trade embargo and economic sanction by the Western world failed to baffle its communist regime after WWII. It emulated the Soviet political and economic institution, but did not fall apart like its teacher. As a matter of fact, the past forty years witnessed a burgeoning economy calibrated by its reform and open-door policy. Its political construct has disappointed all democratic liberals, but its singular ruling party continue to enjoy national popularity.

Words like democracy, equality, freedom and justice, all find their entry in the Chinese political dictionary while their interpretation and implementation remain divergent. The Chinese are officially atheists, but in folk life, they are polytheists vesting their faith in virtually all popular religions. They talk aloud about politics sitting around a lazy Susan laden with delicate cuisine, and Wechat news has become the main source of entertainment. But they care more seriously about which school their children are able to attend and how much of their medical bills can be covered by insurance. Their per capita income is only 1/5 of the western world, but their life expectancy is almost at par. They wear

Western suit and tie, but chopsticks are still their favorite tools at the dinner table.

Against Donald Trump's clamorous MAGA, Chinese president Xi called for great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. When Joe Biden is weaving democratic allies, still President Xi is proposing a shared future for all mankind. China is moving steadfast to the center of the global stage, but it is not ready to accept the existing world order, nor the notion of universal value or liberal internationalism.

Observation of behavioral traits may mislead a judgment. Obsession with superficial differences may conceal commonalities. For purpose of profound understanding, if not appreciation, into the social and cultural fabrics that have shaped the Chinese as who they are, one needs to dive deep into its inner layers of disposition, cognition and value proposition.

In view of China's consistent and long history, nothing can help to better explain its present and predict its future than revisiting its past. This book intends to capture the highlights of Chinese value constellation along its historical continuum – from legendary genesis through various imperial dynasties, all the way till the current new era - in order to vindicate the intrinsic quality of the 12-character socialist core values sanctioned and promoted by the state. It begins by examining the basic human nature and formation of collective conscience for humans to co-exist and interact with each other in order to identify where within the Chinese ideological paradigm it is positioned. A comparative view is adopted, drawing on the happenings and philosophies of other nations. More elaborate research is conducted over those environmental factors, preeminent figures, dramatic events that caused erratic deflections at particular historical junctures. A large portion of the book is devoted to the traditional philosophies and ethics – Confucianism, Daoism, Legalism and Buddhism that have conflated with time but continue to animate the Chinese mind-frame.

This book is an initial venture, knowingly it is impossible to cover all aspects of Chinese values, so profound and more often perplexing. Provided that certain perspectives can stimulate or provoke readers' contemplation, its objective will be fulfilled. Given the topic of book, one would naturally expect divergent and critical views.

Chapter I/II Human and Socialist Values

Human beings stand out amongst all gregarious creatures on this planet for the simple reason that they can act upon reason. While they acquire skills as how to get things done, they always inquire why things should be done in a particular way, and how it is going to impact others. In other words, they are ready to assign values to everything they encounter in daily life. I throw a dime into a begging bowl because I sympathize with sufferers in extreme poverty. I hate thieves because they unfairly dispossess other's property. I protect endangered species because the planet would be boring in the absence of biological diversity. These are simple reasons that prompt human action. By instinct, people tend to formulate their evaluative criteria revolving their personal loss and gain. They are thankful to those who have brought them benefits, and hateful to those who inflict harm. In light of their communal default, this tendency naturally evolves into social contract whereby people engage in reciprocal exchange. In a contractual relationship, either explicit or implicit, expectation is established between parties involved to deliver their respective promises. Therefore, credibility becomes a recognized value. This logic can be extrapolated beyond the concern over personal welfare. I've benefited from a helping hand in critical need, and thereby I applaud any charity work even though I'm not the direct beneficiary. While it is natural for people to act intuitively for their loved ones free from personal gains, then, how do we explain those people who are ready to sacrifice their lives for strangers or defending their country fellows against foreign invaders? At every critical moment

along Chinese history, there are people who stand out and die a martyr for what they believe to be a righteous cause. During World War II, if there is a good reason for Americans to defeat Japan for its surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, why did millions of American soldiers join the Allied Powers to fight against the Nazis on the European continent? This way, the instinctive feeling of empathy ascends to rationalized justice as a common value denominator. Swiss Guards went further to act upon their solid faith in Catholicism and have established an irreproachable reputation of protecting the Pope in the Vatican during the Sack of Rome since the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

Values are imbedded beliefs and traditions in a particular culture to ensure coexistence within the community. They are progressively formed in the lives of people through frequent communication and interaction. Though evolving over time, they are successive along generations. Some values may fade away or mutate while others can be strengthened through deliberate cultivation. Their mission is to validate the conduct of a society by defining the boundaries between what is commonly regarded right and wrong, acceptable and detestable. More subtly, they learn to balance over particular issues when virtues and sins are blended. They empower the mind of an individual and public opinions. After the emergence of government, these values are increasingly codified and determined by hard-n-fast rules enforceable by public power. Governments and laws are normally established to preserve social values through enforcement procedures. The judiciary system is to interpret the law and adjudicate behaviors. Various government institutions are therefore created to maintain proper functioning of the society. In turn, the behaviors of government and its officers are also constantly exposed to critical examination by public values.

However, values in its entirety cannot be completely substituted by explicit rules of law, because law only goes as far as to regulate behavior with regard to what is permissible and what is punishable. As for

what is hidden in the mind that justifies behavior, moral norms continue to play an indispensable role. Furthermore, a society would be operationalized in a more orderly and efficient fashion if tacit consensus in moral norms is available amongst its people. In addition to the hefty cost involved in legal enforcement, it is impossible to police everybody at any moment. Furthermore, law cannot act on its own to prevent the resurgence of undesirable behaviors because it can only punish those who actually break it. When people hold antipathy to the values that lawmakers aim to defend, a society will become chaotic.

Considering the complexity of human society, moral values are essential to maintain healthy relationships between and among individuals, organizations and governments. They provide constant and ubiquitous surveillance and guidance over everybody from idea to action. Anyone who contradicts well-established values will feel the pain of shame and guilt from within. Over the pressure of public opinion, offensive deviants will face the consequence of isolation, marginalization, and alienation as means of punishment.

In view of the natural inclination of risk aversion and interest pursuit, four instruments are available to orient human behavior: reward, education, coercion and inspiration. Human reaction to these instruments stems from body, mind and soul. These three interconnected parts play distinctive roles. Greek philosopher Plato conjured a dualist view. He believed that the soul is a higher existence; it is immaterial and immortal. He used allegory to depict the human body as a cage trapping the soul and restricting it from a higher plane. The soul leaves a dead body and enters another body to activate a new life. Nonetheless, Plato was not entrapped in superstition; he believed that one only gains true knowledge and understanding of reality through reason, which is the job of the mind.

The body is ready to respond to sensual pleasure and displeasure. Kids may do better homework on the promise of a favorite toy from

their parents, or otherwise face imminent spanking if they mess up. Caning in the form of corporal punishment in Singapore is highly effective to deter offences such as drug abuse, vandalism, extortion, and sexual abuse. Employees are motivated to work harder at the prospect of higher salary or promotion. Equally, they are more willing to help others if they realize such deeds are praiseworthy. The mind is responsible for processing information and making decisions. It functions on both intuition and rationality. The intuitive part is unconscious and emotional. It is the gut feeling or sixth sense that pulls the string behind instant reaction. The rational part is conscious and deliberate. It runs a reasoning process of cost-benefit analysis. Judgment and decision are made in logical cascades based on past experience, observable facts and scientific data. Intuition is not persuasive among equals of knowledge and status. That is why its unique role is too often set at naught in a democratic and informative environment. It reminds us of the famous saying by Albert Einstein, “The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift.”

Intuition-based leadership is heavily reliant on entrenched personal charisma or authority. Faith is an energizing power. Due to blind trust or fear, people do not have to activate their rational mind to follow direction set by the leader. A society or organization that rests on veneration for a single wise leader can be more efficient than those that entertain divergent voices. Alexander the Great is quoted for his famous saying: “An army of sheep led by a lion is better than an army of lions led by a sheep.”

Many leaders deliberately deify themselves with messianic discourse assuming that the majority are incapable of sound reasoning. They claim divine revelation and attempt to wrap all senses of their constituents with crafted messages. They stage ceremonies, build magnificent palaces, wear special costumes, erect statues, spread posters of their portraits

and pompous slogans, organize biblical studies, exercise demagoguery and mystify decisions. Most crucial of all, they seize all media apparatus to launch deluge of propaganda campaigns in order to solidify their desired image. Although such endeavor can expeditiously bring about group unity and collective action, the prerequisite here is that leaders are wise or authoritarian enough and remain so all the time. When people are led astray to a tipping point, civil commotion and revolution would flare up. Ironically, revolutionary leaders would very likely reemploy the same set of gimmicks to galvanize the morale of his followers. This has been the cyclical curse revolving along Chinese history. After the World War II, many nationalist leaders scuttled from national heroes into a stature of Caesar exhausting all means of deification and prosecution of dissidents. Most of them established totalitarian regimes promoting nationalism and communism. Some of them are still enshrined as fathers of the nation such as Mao Tsetung, Kim Il-sung and Fidel Castro, while others like Joseph Stalin, Muammar Gaddafi, and Muhammad Mubārak are crucified by people who used to vehemently support them. Nicolae Ceaușescu, the charismatic general secretary of the Romanian Communist Party, was dramatically overthrown by awakened people in the middle of his recalibrating speech during a mass congregation staged in Bucharest.

The soul or psyche is widely held as an incorporeal essence of a being. Some believe it exists in all living creatures while others take it as the divine faculty reserved solely for human beings. In Islamic tradition, the name of Allah must be pronounced by the butcher upon slaughter of each halal animal. The soul is filled with distinctive qualities of emotion, conscience, empathy and passion. That is why it is in constant spiritual quest for aspiration and revelation. Socrates believed that the soul can be inspired by reasoning thus he spent his life to exhort people around him to excel in matters of the psyche. Many regions promote meditation as a pathway to revelation.

For everybody, life is short. There are moments of helplessness in everyone's lifetime. More dreadful and disturbing, is the thought of death. For either of the two reasons, people are transpired with a natural psychological inclination to restore peace in the mind. The belief in an all mighty, in various forms though, that is able to dissolve perplexity beyond reasoning, bring justice to misfortunes and forgive wrongdoings, helps alleviate one's anxiety and fear. The belief of an immortal soul is comforting at the thought of death since it is enlivening to imagine the infinite opportunities in acquisition to realize one's dreams. On this note, the notion of karma has been popular within religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. Although most Chinese are atheists and there are far fewer religious fanatics, they buy in the concept of karma in the circle of life as a matter of fairness. They believe that good or bad intent and deeds will eventually be rewarded or punished by a nebulous image in the heaven. And this can extend to their future lives or their descendants.

Values in Cultural Context

In a nutshell, culture is a dynamic process that provides distinctive identity and viable orientation to a particular group of people, or largely, a society. It is nurtured through socialization process among particular groups, attested in material and behavioral presentations, supported by cognitive construct, anchored in the value universe, and sanctioned by norms. It distinguishes human groups without and binds individuals within.

Culture can be expounded in a hierarchy composed of multiple interwoven and auxiliary layers (Figure 1). Explicit are distinctive manifestations that encompass language, habit or pattern of behavior, material expressions like clothing, cuisine, art, music and tools. Singular behavior can be erratic since it can be easily adjusted either by instinct or deliberation for momentary risk avoidance and benefit pursuit. Beneath

these expressive forms lies a set of norms that serve as normative judge and guide with regard to what is acceptable, praiseworthy or otherwise. Such norms can take four shapes with different degree of pressure and scope of jurisdiction: institutional, legal, contractual and moral.

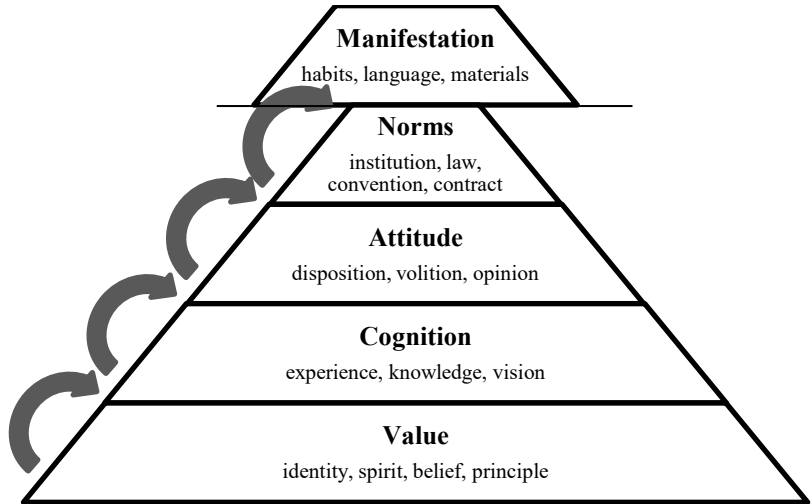


Figure 1: Cultural Hierarchy

- Attitudes - learned tendency to respond in a consistent way to a given object or entity
- Belief - an organized pattern of knowledge that an individual holds to be true about the world
- Value - enduring belief or feeling that a specific mode of conduct or form of relationship is personally or socially preferable to others

Moral norms, typically folklores, social customs and conventions, are soft and persuasive, from which deviation invokes opprobrium. Although it permeates every facet of social life, it is “circumstantial” wherein judgment is often dependent on the standpoint and interest of a

particular party involved. Institution are "integrated systems of rules that structure social interactions."²⁵⁶ As formalized mechanisms of social order created by government, organization, community and even families, it regulates behavior of individual members within a given community – a structured collective - in the form of explicit rules or disciplines, deviation from which shall invoke reprimands. For example, absenteeism from the workplace without notice and approval shall lead to salary reduction, demotion or dismissal. Hard and compulsory norms are enactments of laws and rules, enforceable by public power. Violation of which inflicts punishment deployable by governing apparatus - police, judiciary, and prison. A contract is voluntary agreement between individuals for the exchange of promises, based on which mutual expectations are established among parties involved. It can be social contract as informal as an appointment for a meeting, to which punctuality is valued as virtue and tardiness as vice. While creditability and accountability are at stake for social contract, formal contract binds the behavior of parties with specified rights and responsibilities, repudiation of which shall entail penalty on the strength of governing laws. Except for contract between individuals, the rest of cultural dimensions possess collective purpose transcending individual interests.

Experience through direct observation and actual engagement is the primary source of information that is confined to one's exposure. Notwithstanding the importance of direct experience, most knowledge is gained from secondary sources through reading and hearsay since physical energy and sensual ability are very limited. Immanuel Kant made very limited travels and maintained rigidly scheduled habits in his entire lifetime; it is reading, thinking and reasoning that elevated him onto the great philosophical height.

Attitude is a psychological construct, a mental and emotional entity that inheres in, or characterizes an individual or a human group. It is

²⁵⁶ Hodgson (2015), *Journal of Institutional Economics* (2015), 11: 3, p. 501.

formed by an evaluative structure precipitated through a responsive expression towards an object or entity. Opinion over a particular person, idea, event, environment, for example, can be described on various degrees between the extreme ends of positivity or negativity, optimism or pessimism, favor or disfavor. It is highly subjective depending on one's disposition, personality, knowledge, standpoint, reference line, and mood.

The functional attitude theory suggests that in order for attitudes to change (e.g., via persuasion), appeals must be made to the function(s) that a particular attitude serves for the individual. As an example, the "ego-defensive" function might be used to influence the racially prejudicial attitudes of an individual who sees themselves as open-minded and tolerant. By appealing to that individual's image of themselves as tolerant and open-minded, it may be possible to change their prejudicial attitudes to be more consistent with their self-concept. Similarly, a persuasive message that threatens self-image is much more likely to be rejected.²⁵⁷

Values are profound views over time, space, nature, organization, others and oneself, in which ideal, belief, spirit, and overarching principles are deeply embedded. They constitute the bedrock underneath that provides motivation and purpose to attitude, cognitive process, deliberation on norms, and ultimately determines consistent pattern of behavior. Behavior can change and adapt to new situations, but value is persistent and coherent. For instance, in the US congress, the Republican Party and the Democratic Party can work together defending a common notion of freedom, democracy and national interest, but differentiating value systems between the two parties often cause their members to be pitted against each other. Measured by ethical norms on a personal level, we can say one's value system is molded by his virtues or vices.

²⁵⁷ Lapinski, Maria Knight; Boster, Franklin J. (2001). "Modeling the Ego-Defensive Function of Attitudes". *Communication Monographs*. 68 (3): 314–324.

A value system is established and woven together by consciousness in the process of acculturation. According to Edmund Husserl, consciousness is our direct openness to the world, one that is governed categorically (normatively) rather than causally; that is, intentionality is not a property of the individual mind but the categorical framework in which mind and world become intelligible. His nuanced phenomenology assumes that consciousness living its own stream of experience is primary, and consciousness reflecting on those experiences as object of phenomenological viewing is secondary. French philosopher Maurice Jean Jacques Merleau-Ponty's under the strong influence of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger use the results of psychology and cognitive science to inquire into the foundational role perception plays in understanding the world as well as engaging with the world. He expounded on the naturalistic view that consciousness is inhabitant genesis. Such natural stance, however, do not follow the same way as naturalization. The naturalization implies a process of conversion, that is, the translation of something derivative and secondary into something considered epistemologically basic and grounded. The natural stance, he concludes, reveals the necessity of an immersion in the broad context of nature, a process required if we want to give a full and authentic account of these "things" that phenomenology aims to describe from a morphological point of view.

Chapter III The Formation of Chinese Civilization

Origin of Chinese Values

History is evocative. "Taking history as a mirror, one can know the rise and fall of the state," proclaimed by the second emperor Li Shimin who brought the Chinese Tang Dynasty to the climax of national unity and prosperity. To understand the present and predict the future, nothing is more reliable than a regressional exploration of the nation's historical

path. This is particularly true of China whose civilization has evolved and persisted without major fractures.

History is a relentless master. It has no present, only the past rushing into the future. To try to hold fast is to be swept aside.

---John F. Kennedy

It is no intention of this book to elaborate on history, but it is necessary to provide the poli-socio and cultural context behind the dominant ideologies within truncated historical episodes. Therefore, the book cherry picked the epoch-making events, preeminent figures and outstanding thoughts in chronic order that have left visible legacy on the present Chinese values.

The Genesis of the Chinese Nation

The concept of civilization is always open to debate depending on various definitions and narratives. Broadly speaking, it is the total sum of productive means and lifestyles of a human clan. The emergence of a civilization is hallmarked with the egress by a sizeable primitive tribe from the barbarian state dominated by nature into a distinctively sophisticated socio-politico-techno-economic construct. It is generally shaped by three quintessential advancements: written language, city and bronzeware. Written language helped spread information, share experience, and continuously supported the learning process throughout generations. When certain areas got more densely populated, urbanization was pushed forward with complex architecture and social caterings. As specialization resultant from division of labor began to bear fruits, society was able to afford a number of people engaging in political and cultural activities instead of everyone having to survive from hand to mouth. Technological progress through metallurgy boosts productivity and expansionism, and hence steadily fed into human supremacism.

In Chinese mythology, there is no unified all mighty lord who created and perpetually looks after everything. The universe and everything in it had been created by different figures at different times. Many different versions have evolved with time for want of systematic works comparable to Homeric epic poems or the Old Testament. The cosmos were originally an enormous egg-shaped entity in which the first living being by the name of Pan Gu had incubated for 18,000 years. When he grew to a gigantic size, he was flustered with his containment in the mess of darkness, salience and loneliness. He conjured a massive axe and split the entity. Those heavy and dark elements sank down to form the earth, and those light and clear ones drifted up to form the sky. Standing on earth and holding the sky, he was able to push them farther apart as his height grew day by day. After another 18,000 years when the separated realms finally got stabilized, he died in collapse. His breath turned into winds and clouds around four seasons; his voice into rumbling thunders; his eyes into the sun and the moon and his teardrops into stars; his skin into the vast land and flesh into fertile soil; his blood into rivers and seas; his bones into mountains; his hair into grassland and forest; his sweat into raindrops and dews. Ultimately, his stretching limbs set the four directions. With all living conditions set ready, creatures gradually emerge and thrive. Nüwa not only created human beings, but also patched the big hole in the sky to stop the flood. Hou Yi shot down nine blazing suns out of ten that scorched the earth. These creators are joyfully created and taken as legendary characters rather than incarnations of divinity. Instead, the Chinese are ready to pay tribute to those discoverers and inventors of practical utility. For instance, one was Sui Ren who invented fire by drilling wood with stone. Fu Xi invented a host of utilities like recording by making knots and fishing nets with rope, string music instrument, the Actogram for prediction. Shen Nong was the inventor of farming tools, herbal medicines, a calendar and an irrigation system. He also taught people how to weave, make pottery and

domesticate animals. Incidentally, they were all powerful tribal leaders instead of people of common clay.

Amongst the ad hoc myths and legends on genesis, it is observed that Creators in the Chinese eyes do not necessarily carry a divine will. Therefore, no monotheistic seed was sown in the national belief at the very onset. People choose to enshrine those real-life characters who brought them substantive benefits. As a matter of convenience, they are also eager to continually assemble all virtues and merits to glorify an individual into a sacred incarnation and elevate him as a celestial being, wherein those in power enjoy the privileged candidacy.

By the aforementioned standard Chinese civilization spans over 2,700 years despite its far longer history which is popularly taken as 5,000 years. Earliest written language discovered in oracle bones was used mainly to worship nature, more specifically the Heavens. The rituals and ceremonies were conducted in the sense of witchcraft other than religious practices. This has left significant bearing on Chinese belief in natural surroundings that have immediate impact on their lives instead of worshipping an abstract deity in its complete unity.

The origin of Chinese philosophy is identified in the Book of Change or I Ching, the oldest classic divination of cosmological text. It has created a key concept of yin and yang symbolizing two polar forces that constantly oppose each other but coexist in a revolving paradoxical equilibrium under the cosmic law, most notably the sky and the earth. It is further extrapolated to denote two distinctive sides of every composition – from the explicit day and night, man and woman, to the implicit masculinity and femininity, pride and humility, offense and defense. A dichotomous dialectics is developed to explain the formation and evolution of a wide array of physical and social phenomena. Readers may well note that Chinese scholarly pieces are typified with “on the one hand, and on the other hand.”

The core notion of yin-n-yang theoretical framework is harmony. The Daoist great polarity (*tai ji*) goes further to embrace inclusivity where yin finds accommodation within yang and vice versa. Each one acts as a constraining or offensive force at different times, but no one can eradicate the other. Discovery and mastery of the delicate balance between yin and yang which is the Dao requires superb wisdom. Dao, the big way of power resembling the law of universe, is so occult that it can hardly find any proper linguistic expression. But it is there, working all the time. Such delicate balance is posited as the doctrine of golden mean by the discourse of Confucius school. It is described as the heavenly mandate in popular Chinese culture. Towards it, Daoism takes a *laissez faire* approach – excessive intervention in what is endowed by heavenly mandate is injurious, whereas Confucianism takes a proactive approach resolved to decipher and implement the heavenly mandate to restore social order from chaos.

Henceforth, the Confucius school selected and revised a collection of classic literatures, namely the Four Books and the Five Classics to systematically promote the idea of nobility and benevolence. The Four Books are the Great Learning, the Doctrine of the Mean, the Confucian Analects, and the Works of Mencius. The Five Classics include the Book of Change, the Book of Poetry, the Book of History, the book of Rites, and the Spring and Autumn Annals. The nine works have mainstreamed Chinese literature and most profoundly the worldview of the learned class from intellegensia to officialdom. The collection was also ractified by the imperial court as compulsory textbooks for official examination. By Confucianism, people are born virtuous, and it demands lifelong dillgence to dust off unwholesome exposure via repeated self reflection and self discipline. The goal of nobility starts from streamlining family affairs to governing the state and eventually seeking a proper world order. With filial piety at the center, more rigorous ethical code of conduct had been forged at the Confucius inspiration in the ensuing

dynasties. Inculcation of moral obligations instead of individual rights is posited to transmute the instinctive drive for personal enrichment into caretaking an enlarged community. Filial piety to the parents naturally extends loyalty to the emperor parenting the state.

Mohism stepped beyond kinship affection by advocating generalized fraternity and went all out to deter wars between states. Its institutionalized structure represents probably the first non-government organization in ancient China. Because of their unwillingness to bend their principles for appeasement with the ruling imperial court, the Mohists as a coup soon disappeared in early Chinese history.

Most scholars are disdainful of Legalism citing its ruthless execution which led to the collapse of the overweening Qin dynasty that brought warring states into a unified empire. Nonetheless most dynasties scarcely spared any mercy prosecuting rebels and other criminals implementing legalist rules however they preached the notion of rule by virtue.

After thousands of years of distillation and sediment, the Chinese value boils down to an essential construct of internal holiness and external achievement.

Chapter IV Chronical Evolution of Chinese Values

Chinese Historical Highlights

As Benedetto Croce put it, all history is contemporary history (D'Amico 1999). For the most populous nation that has maintained high level of social, moral and political cohesion for 5,000 years with little rupture, it is necessary to delve into its historical context and visit its pathway before any compelling argument can be made with regard to China's present attitude, purpose and behavior. In other words, mere narrative exposition on the face value may be construed as misleading.

Thrived on the Yellow River and Yangtze River, China as one of the oldest and most precocious civilizations enjoyed high level of sufficien-

cy with abundant agricultural supplies, rendering little real need to explore and interact with the rest of the world. Although China boasts a big family of many ethnic minorities, unlike Europe, it has maintained a unified nation since the Qin Dynasty (221-207 B.C.) with neither frequent power shift nor division among different ethnic groups. With the Hans occupying absolute majority, its solidity is further entrenched by mandarin as a standardized nationwide language, Confucius doctrine and vertical pattern of governance under highly centralized imperial throne. Separated by vast ocean to the east and mountain terrains to the west, bordering flaccid kingdoms in the south, the only threat left was the Mongolian nomads who incessantly plagued the Hans with skirmishes. This led to the construction of the Great Wall as a human miracle to fend off their constant thrust from the north. In a large sense China chose to complacently capsule itself in most parts of history even when it was a gigantic superpower conditioned by its geographic location and guided by its ethnocentric philosophy.

China as a nation of initial unity was earmarked by the Xia Dynasty (2070 - 1600 B.C) which symbolized the end of the tribal society. An epoch-making legacy ingrained in Chinese political history is that the prototype of throne succession shifted from a merit-based abdication to a hereditary mode within the royal family. In a sense, the country became privatized to a family ever since. Naturally, the fate of the country with its entire people became utterly dependent on the inherent wisdom and morality of one single ruler beyond their selection. With few exceptions, it is the moral decay of last emperors that makes their dynasties ramshackle. Their indulgence in dissolute lifestyle got themselves blindfolded against reality and deaf to admonition. When corruption and oppression turned so viral that coup d'état, uprising of his people or foreign invasion would follow. This is the typical case why the Xia was replaced by the Shang Dynasty. Alas, such a feedback loop forged a

boilerplate for the dramatic rise and fall of all ensuing dynasties along Chinese history.

In West Zhou Dynasty (1046 - 771 BC) that succeeded Shang, political and social institutions became well established. Territorial estate was distributed by a common emperor among kinship clans and people of honor who would rule feudatory states. It prospered on four pillars of institutional foundations: feudal system, land slot system, patriarchal system, protocol and music system. During its greater part, the Chinese nation was largely ruled by virtue, thus people enjoyed internal prosperity and peace with neighboring states. Social order was clearly defined where hereditary peerages were assigned to a hierarchical class of nobility. The rest were left in serfdom – the working class as the case of European manorialism. That was the nostalgic era adored by Confucius as the most ideal society China should restore to. As a matter of fact, he spent his whole life with hundreds of his followers to canvass this *modus operandi* of political governance even knowingly it was a mission impossible at a time when a few ambitious states already began to flex their muscles to challenge the authority of the common emperor.

With the reeling throne of the common emperor, kingdoms under the system of subinfeudation entered into precarious power rivalry. The Spring and Autumn period (770 - 476 B.C.) was ushered in where various schools of thought – Confucianism, Daoism, Legalism, Mohism, to name a few - emerged in multitude to debate on the fundamental values of the nation and principles of governance. When Chinese traditional values are mentioned, substantial reference is being made to this period of pre-Qin civilization. In the philosophical and religious sphere, the ensuing two thousand years, except for the adoption of Buddhism, by and large, can be characterized by expansion, application and distortion of those schools other than completely newly creation.

The Qin Dynasty put an end to the warring state by vanquishing those kingdoms and built a unified juggernaut empire. Though short-

lived, it attained epoch-making achievements – shaping Chang'an the greatest capital city with magnificent palace and road connectivity to the rest of the country, rebuilding the Great Wall – in a span of 14 years. Most predominantly, it laid the institutional template of Chinese empires in succession and configured written language, standard of measurement and road rules. The swelling ascension of the Qin Kingdom was attributed to the enforcement of legalist doctrine, but its fiasco was also due to its judicial thuggery while the essence was to preserve totalitarianism under a system rule-by-law instead of rule-of-law. The holocaust of nearly 500 mavericks and obliteration of extant books in attempt to wipe out historical memory left an egregious mark on this emperor. Massive slave labor exploitation for infrastructure development led to its doom. It is the inflammatory ambition that inflamed peasant uprisings across the country.

After a bloody civil war, the country got reunited under the Han Dynasty in the hands of Liu's family. It is long-standing dynasty of more than 400 years (202 B.C - 220 A.D) with 29 emperors in succession. Confucianism was cherry picked as the sole ideological dogma since it is the best recipe for social order under perpetual peace and stability. When Confucianism was reengineered into a governing instrument, its original philosophical glamor began to fade away. When the Silk Road was pioneered, the first Buddhist temple appeared in China.

A warring state resurged amongst three kingdoms (220 ~ 280 A.D.) when the last Han emperor slid into decadence. Though little social progress was registered during their dramatic rivalry, the quasi-documentary novel titled *The Legend of Three Kingdom* on the strength of its household popularity imprints two profound ethical notions among the Chinese: the penchant for the leadership by royal blood decadence represented by Liu Bei who governed the Shu-Han Kingdom in the

south west; the faithful righteousness among the circle of individuals with shared interest in the form of sworn brotherhood.

The Jin Dynasty (266 ~ 420 A.D.) that followed adopted a *laissez faire* policy ushering in a blend of Daoism and metaphysics alongside Confucianism. The cultural sector - literature, calligraphy, sculpture and traditional Chinese medicine - liberalism thrived. It is noteworthy that Buddhism was further amalgamated into Chinese intellectual capacity and perpetuated into almost every facet of social lives. The rampant expansion of Buddhist temples riding on imperial franchise eroded into tax revenues and debilitated national morale for military service, thus eventually invoked massive eviction by several imperial courts.

With the resurgence of nomadic tribes in the north, the central China inhabited and ruled by the Han nationality was frequently plundered until the central kingdom retreated to south of the Yantze River.

The Sui Dynasty (581 – 619 A.D.) emerged to unify the country. However, the second emperor repeated the mistake and ended in the same fate of the Qin Dynasty enslaving people for large-scale infrastructure development, most outstandingly the 2000km Canal connecting Beijing and Hangzhou.

The Tang Dynasty (618 – 907 A.D.) generated a climax of openness and prosperity with long stability. Art and poem achieved its historical apex. Peace-making with the surrounding ethnic groups including inter-cultural marriage was highly effective. The cultures of neighboring countries such as Korea and Japan continue to exhibit the impact of Chinese Tang Dynasty. China towns sprawling around major cities in the world are still addressed as the Tangmen Street. Aside from court corruption and oppression-invoked peasant uprising, which is typical pattern for any falling government, the lesson for the collapse of the Tang Dynasty was technically due to its excessive devolution of military forces to local lords stationed along the country's border, who overthrew the last Tang emperor and split China into a dozen small kingdoms.

A defense minister Zhao Kuang-yin in one of the Kingdoms usurped the throne and brought China into one piece via strenuous conquest. When the Song Dynasty (960 - 1279) was established, Zhao created a precedent of removing his comrades-in-arms from their posts in a peaceful and humane way rather than adopting the conventional approach of political purge – killing the hunting dog after the hare is captured – for fear of potential power rivalry. The entire dynasty embraced liberalism accentuated with demilitarization. Literature and art together with technological innovations in porcelain, paper making, textile industries flourished. Commerce was highly developed and paper money appeared in the market. Various ports were open for external trade with 58 countries spreading across the Eurasian continent. Maritime sea routes were streamlined for regular commerce with south and southeast countries. Joseph Needham – the British scholar who is known for his work on the History of Chinese Science and Technology - credited the Song Dynasty with being nearly ripe for an industrial revolution that China narrowly missed. Confucianism ascended to national faith emphasizing on the harmony between earthly and heavenly worlds. With very few cases of court corruption, warlordism and social commotion, the central empire was preoccupied with the aggression from the ethnic forces, especially the Mongolian nomads, north of the Great Wall. Despite the century-long truce made, a civilized world was consequently conquered by the barbarians. In its place, grew the Yuan Dynasty (1271 – 1368) with capital established in Beijing. The nationalistic emotion against the northern conquerors continued to inflame until the last emperor of the Manchurian Qing Dynasty was evicted out of the Forbidden City in the beginning of the 20th century by the democratic revolution led by Dr. Sun Yatsen.

The Yuan Dynasty indulged in territorial expansion through military conquest but was incapable of governance. With exacerbation of racial conflict and government in malaise, the regime was ousted back to their

northern desert by rebels from the Han nationals. The Ming Dynasty (1368 – 1644) in the hands of the Zhu family enjoyed ruling by 12 succeeding generations. Like most of new regimes, the imperial court reduced tax burdens on people and eased up political tensions. The court implemented heavy-handed anti-graft campaign, which gained popular support. Three outstanding achievements were attained in the Ming dynastic span: 1) 7 rounds of great maritime expedition that reached as far as the coast of Africa, which consolidated the Indo-Pacific maritime sea routes. This oceanic maneuvers took place nearly a century before Columbus discovered America. Moreover, the fleet was far better equipped portraying the unrivaled navigational power of the empire. In parallel to the Silk Road on land, the current Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is largely there to trace this footprint along the ocean route. 2) the establishment and construction of Beijing as a magnificent capital city with its appearance as of today. 3) the compilation of the 60-volume Yong-le encyclopedia. The dark side of the dynasty is that it was infused with court rivalries and political prosecutions all along.

Again, the ramshackle late Ming Dynasty ushered in massive peasant uprisings for its corruptive court and triggered by the endemic pestilence. It was eventually conquered by the Manchurian - another nomadic tribe thrived in the northeast of China behind the Great Wall. That is the Qing Dynasty which ruled China for 268 years until 1912. Compared with the Yuan Dynasty, this regime was more adaptive to the Han culture and traditional governance although racial prejudice was officially deployed. The upheaval inflicted onto this regime operating under autarky was by and large foreign colonialism since the onset of the Opium War. Chinese national revolution broke out along two fronts - against foreign intruders as well as the Manchurian rulers. The achievements made by this last dynasty are manifold: 1) brought Taiwan Island under its reign from the Dutch and later the little Zheng's regime in exile; 2) streamlined large part of territorial demarcation with Russia through

bilateral treaties; 3) launched westernization movement to introduce advanced technologies and procurement of modern equipment from the West. The Opium Wars and the ensuing colonization in the mid-1800s inflicted a century of humiliation on the Chinese nation but meanwhile, awakened the dormant Chinese elites to explore avenues for restoration of their national power. After the Chinese navy was completely defeated in the first Sino-Japanese warfare at the tip of the 19th century, the bilateral Treaty of Shimonoseki imposed huge war repatriation and territorial concessions onto the Qing regime, which were far tougher than the Nanking Treaty with western powers at the loss of the Opium Wars. Chinese elites began to realize it was not enough to modernize the country's defense, and the entire system needed to be overhauled in order to animate China into the world of modernity. Democratic revolution led to the downfall of the last dynasty, but failed to reinvent a unified and independent China.

At the end of World War I, the Treaty of Versailles by Allied Powers at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 forged a decision to transfer the interest obtained in Jiaodong peninsula in Shandong province by the defeated Germany to Japan. This was a gross impediment to Chinese national sovereignty conspired by the betrayal of the Western world. The cowardly response of the Chinese government immediately sparked massive protest in Beijing primarily by university faculty and students, and soon spread across the country, known as the May Fourth Movement. Such diplomatic failure reinforced nationalism and cynicism among Chinese people over the western propaganda that "right prevails might", believing that "a weak country does not deserve diplomacy." They are more convinced by the disputable remark of Otto von Bismarck that "truth exists within range of the cannon."²⁵⁸ The success of the Russian October Revolution in 1917, combined with the outrage

²⁵⁸ Some argue that it is a Chinese invention since Bismarck never said that. But it coincides with Mao's famous dictum that "political power grows out of the gun barrel."

against the North government which succeeded the Qing imperial court, enlightened and hastened the intellectual pursuit of Marxism, which led to the birth of Chinese Communist Party in 1921 to disembark onto the path of socialist revolution.

Chapter V Century of Humiliation in the Aftermath of the Opium Wars

Crusade for China Road

The thriving of successive Chinese dynasties is closely linked to the institutionalization of rationalistic political Confucianism as an official ideology that legitimated the governance functions of the imperial state. Religions – most notably its indigenous Daoism, imported Buddhism and the addition of Islam - were confined to secular life, separate from government. Confucian curriculum served to steer the exercise of political authority. It enabled China to accomplish what few nations have ever attained: long period of political stability based on an orderly society on the merit of thorough ethical tenets, and an economy capable of supporting the world's largest number of population.

From Pride to Prejudice

Such state meritocracy was subverted when the central kingdom was twice completely conquered by the nomads from the north of the Great Wall. The nomadic rules under the Yuan Dynasty (1271 – 1368) and Qing Dynasty (1644 – 1911) were frequently challenged by the rebellions from various coups of the Hans until the last emperor was expelled from the Forbidden City.

The real shockwave to traditional Chinese ideology and institution took place during the intrusion of western powers to “slice the China melon” after the two Opium Wars in the mid of 1800s. Since then, Chi-

nese nationalistic sentiments shifted from persistent defense against the Mongolian nomads and rebellion against the Manchurian Qing government to hostility against western powers. At the turn of 1900s, the Boxers Organization as a secret society of peasants altered their mission from rebellion to temporal alliance with the ruling Qing government to drive all foreigners out of China. The urge in search for China's road – national independence and prosperity – among Chinese elites was prompted by the country's utter defeat in the Opium Wars (1840 – 1842, 1848 - 1860) when foreign allies predated the ramshackle Qing Empire with a swath of unfair treaties, which marked the beginning of the nation's Century of Humiliation.

Proud of its vast landmass and abundant resources, Chinese emperors felt little need to trade with the outside world. Besides, each new ruler who seized power via uprising or invasion tended to maintain watertight control over the society, hence rejecting commercial mobility. Overseas trade was completely embargoed by the imperial court of Qing Dynasty. At several requests from the British Crown, the emperor mercifully opened Macau and later Canton as the sole trading posts with the outside world. However, foreign merchants were forbidden to deal with individuals or private businesses other than the sanctioned monopoly, known as Hong in Canton. Voluminous import of tea, silk, porcelain and spices from China exacerbated trade imbalance since few European industrial products could be sold in return. Exchange rate between silver (the only acceptable currency in China) and gold brought by foreign merchants was evidently manipulated in favor of China. High import tariff levied by the government (20%) coupled by extortion of corrupted officials made normal trade with China virtually impossible. The East India Company began to have large acreages of opium planted in India and sold to China initially as herbal medicine since the late 1770s. Trade imbalance gradually reversed as addiction spread to an opioid crisis. Loss of labor productivity, corruption in officials and decay of morale

among soldiers, together with resultant hyperinflation, incited the Chinese emperor to completely ban opium importation and distribution in 1837. Unfortunately, the royal decree was recklessly ignored. Smuggle continued despite a slew of warnings and repellents. In June 1839, the emperor issued an edict ordering the confiscation of all the opium in Canton, and held a magnificent public burning event. British traders alone lost around 1,300 metric tons, without compensation. Defeated by the British navy since 1840, the Chinese were forced to sign the Treaty of Nanking (1842), ceding Hong Kong to the British, opening five new ports to foreign trade, and paying a hefty indemnity. The second defeat by the allied troop of Britain and France led to the Treaties of Tientsin (1858-1859) which included legitimizing opium importation for Britain, exuberant indemnity to Britain and France, opening all Chinese ports for foreign trade, permission of missionary service, extraterritorial jurisdiction by foreign consulates, national treatment to foreigners, and most favored nation treatment to all the rest of western powers.

By Chinese textbook, the year 1840 is a historical demarcation of when China slid into a semi-colonial and semi-feudal state. It also marked the beginning of Chinese modern history until the end of Sino-Japanese War in 1945 as part of the World War II, known as Century of Humiliation.

Misfortunes never come singly. At home, The Qing Empire suffered more than a decade of massive destruction by the Taiping Movement (1851- 1864) costing a death toll of 20-30 million. Along with trade, Christendom began to spread across China. Hong Xiuquan inspired by a pamphlet from a Protestant Christian missionary, joined hands with his follower Feng Yunshan who founded the God Worshipping Society on a miscellany of Christian, Daoist and Confucius faith. They eventually rose to a massive rebellion against the Qing Dynasty until the founding of their Taiping Heavenly Kingdom in Nanjing. The ensuing prolonged

civil war and the remnant commotions in the aftermath eroded the Qing Dynasty into a toppling state.

Westernization Campaign

Militarily, Chinese rulers learned the hard lesson in the face of motor vessels and fierce cannons in the hands of foreign intruders. Economically, the flood of foreign goods or localized manufacture using western industrial equipment devastated local farms and mills that were content with conventional autarky. Such brutal reality subverted the Chinese worldview. As such, a consensus was formed among Chinese elites and rulers “to learn foreign skills to combat foreigners.” They raised debts with the western world and began to import foreign armaments, machines and technology, build shipyards and railways, install telegrams, hire foreign advisors and establish schools to train technicians. Most ostentatiously, the largest navy force in the Far East was established. This is known in Chinese history as Westernization Movement (1861 - 1895). Nonetheless, beyond military and economic modernization, few were interested in conducting institutional reform. The proposition by later Qing reformer Zhang Zidong that “Chinese tradition is foundation, whereas western skill is utility” became a catchphrase of the time. It continues to mainstream the mind frame of Chinese leadership at present days wrapped under the popular notion of Chinese characteristics.

As the saying goes: tradition is the enemy of progress. The single-wheeled modernization drive did not save the rotten Qing Dynasty with rampant corruption, bureaucracy and turf rivalry. The deadly defeat of Chinese Navy in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894 – 1895) inflicted another humiliation by the Treaty of Shimonoseki signed on April 17, 1895. China ceded the Liaodong Peninsula, Taiwan and Penghu islands to Japan, followed by humongous amount of war reparation. Social elites were awakened to blame the ailing government of the Qing Dynasty and thereafter requested a wholesale institutional reform. Meiji

Restoration was proposed as the benchmark to institute a political monarchy. Other reform measures included:

1. Education

- 1) To establish national academy in Beijing
- 2) To turn all learning institutions and even ancestral halls into schools and adopt curriculum for both Chinese and western knowledge.
- 3) To open university, middle school, and primary school at provincial, prefecture and county levels.
- 4) To encourage opening of private schools by individuals
- 5) To set up training schools with crack courses on translation, medicine, agronomy, commerce, railway, mining, tea and silk management
- 6) To send royal family members for overseas visits, and select students to study in Japan
- 7) To change the subjects of literature-focused royal examination to history, politics, current affairs and economics
- 8) To set up a bureau of translation
- 9) To set rule to reward publications and inventions, and recommend scientific talents

2. Economy

- 1) To recognize industry and commerce as the pillar of national economy, and to encourage private enterprises as the mainstay rather than relying on defective state-run enterprises.
- 2) To establish bureau of railway and mining, and bureau of industry and commerce with branches in all provinces
- 3) To organize farmers' association, open press on agronomy, purchase farm tools, adopt western farming techniques
- 4) To reward industrial production and process
- 5) To organize chambers of commerce, and promote foreign trade
- 6) To lift ban on Manchurian aristocrats to engage in trade, and force them to learn skills to make a living

3. *Military Affairs*

- 1) To adopt western style of military drilling from arrows to arsenals
- 2) To disarm ailing soldiers, cut military expenditure, and raise militia
- 3) To encourage manufacture of arsenals
- 4) To establish military academy

4. *Politics*

- 1) To create constitution and congress
- 2) To offer equal treatment between Manchurians and Hans
- 3) To cut down on redundant officials and bureaucracies, and reshuffle the cabinet
- 4) To establish think tanks in Beijing
- 5) To permit submission of proposals and opinions from local officials and general public
- 6) To allow freedom of press
- 7) To allow freedom of faith
- 8) To forge fiscal budget

Albeit approval by the young Emperor, all those measures toward institutional modernization were soon confounded by the coup of conservatives headed by Empress Dowager who controlled the imperial court behind the curtain. Since their promulgation in June 1898, they survived only a little more than three months, thus known as the 100-day Reformation. The young emperor Guang Xu was put into house confinement and reform leaders either escaped in exile or ended in massacre.

Chapter VI Chinese Socialist Road

Democratic Revolution

Despite its fallout, however, the vision and stamina for political change planted the ideological seed among many more Chinese elites, which led to the success of Democratic Revolution (1911-1912) headed by Dr. Sun Yat-sen. Dr. Sun received his college education in Hawaii and was strongly inspired by the modernized Japan at his time. The China League created in Japan by Dr. Sun and his comrades in 1905 started with a mission of “expelling the barbarians (the Manchurian rulers), restoring China, creating Republic, and equally distributing land.” After the last dynasty was replaced by the Republic of China, the China League was reorganized into the Chinese National Party – the first political party officially established in Chinese history. Its political mission was changed into a government “of the people, by the people and for the people”- a notion of liberal democracy and capitalism - sanctioned by constitution.

Unfortunately, the Republic failed to usher in national independence and economic prosperity; the country was still torn apart by warlordism, rampant corruption, economic depression, wealth polarization and foreign aggression. Japan seized the opportunity to occupy the northeast part of China.

In 1919, the May 4th Movement led by scholars and students broke out in protest of the unfair accord by the Paris Peace Conference. The peace terms set by the victorious Allies after the end of World War I ceded all privileges grabbed by the defeated Germany in Chinese Shandong province to the hands of Japan. The event agonized the educated Chinese youth to discover the root cause behind the ailing country and explore a new path to revive its dignity and glory. Institutionally, they attributed the country’s backwardness to its successive dynastic ruling. Culturally, it was the Confucius doctrine at the service of the royal court

that stifled social vibrancy and technological innovation. They championed Mr. Democracy and Mr. Science from Western Europe to substitute the homegrown institution and culture.

Although momentarily, if the attempt to install monarchy was comparable to the British 1215 Magna Carta a Libertatum, the May 4th Movement gave rise to a nationwide awakening analogous to the European Enlightenment in the 17th century.

The period of road search between the Opium War and May 4th Movement is characterized by Mao as the Paleo-Democratic Revolution aiming at overthrowing dynasty rules and foreign oppressions, which paved the way for dramatic change until Chinese Communist Party (CCP) assumed the helm to steer the political boat under the beacon of Marxism transshipped from the Soviet Union bearing a typical Leninist imprint.

Inspiration and Indignation with Russia

The protracted plight after numerous trials and errors – revolt, reformation and revolution – did not stop the search among Chinese elites for a therapy to revitalize the crippled nation in remembrance of its pride and glory. The birth of Russian Bolsheviks and its victory of October Revolution (1917) led by Vladimir Ilich Lenin tantalized a group of radical elites to form the CCP in 1921 aided by the Communist International (Comintern). As Mao Tsetung succinctly wrote in his “On the People’s Democratic Dictatorship”: it is the clarion artillery of October Revolution that sent the plume of Marxism to us laden with Marxism and Leninism, CCP navigated on a fresh mission to dismantle “the three mountains” – imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. Farmers and workers at grass root were mobilized to revolt against landlords and capitalists. The young CCP that began with 53 members[According to CCP First Congress by Comintern.] did not only survive the brutal civil wars and Japanese invasion, but also grew stronger until

state power was attained at the founding of the People's Republic in 1949 by Mao Tsetung and his comrades. At present, it is the world's biggest political party with more than 90 million membership.

Chinese elites began to introduce socialist ideas from Europe during the World War I, and the success of armed Bolshevik uprising which led to the establishment of Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic was advocated as a beacon for China probing in the dark for a new political road. China's need for radical change met perfectly with the expansionist ambition of Communist Russia, henceforth the founding of CCP at the guide of Comintern. Resolved with the vision of building a socialist China, the doctrine of Marxism with its roaring Communist Manifesto began to spread. That is why Marxism and Leninism are written permanently in Chinese constitution which legitimizes the CCP as the sole ruling political party.

Dr. Sun managed a coalition between his Chinese National Party (Kuomintang - KMT) and CCP compromising the request of Comintern aiming at a unified China putting an end to the state of warlordism. Chartered with the mission of public ownership, CCP instigated proletarian revolution with a slew of worker strikes against the bourgeoisie and peasant riots to seize the property of landlords. The CCP thus was considered as red bandits by the KMT government under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek as the successor of Dr. Sun. The fragile bipartisan coalition was soon superseded by horrid political prosecution over CCP members. Military confrontations escalated into civil wars between the two political parties as CCP grew stronger in military might. The Red Army led by CCP survived the recurrent encirclements by KMT embarking on the legendary journey of Long March, travelling thousands of miles all the way from Jiangxi province to northwest part of China close to the Russian border. The pathfinding attempt as a last resort of exodus to Russia failed in Xinjiang which caused the loss of Mao's brother. Alas! When God Closes a Door, He Opens a Window. While

KMT army was in unceasing maneuvers to wipe out the Red Army on its heels, the escalating Japanese aggression altered the picture. Chiang Kai-shek as a civil warmonger became increasingly detestable among Chinese people. As such, a second round of bipartisan coalition was formed awhile to fight against Japanese invasion. The Chinese proverb that brothers quarrelling at home join forces against attacks from without resonates with the western saying that nothing unites but a common enemy.

The 14-year Anti-Japanese War cost 21 million lives and an estimated property damage by \$100 billion.²⁵⁹ Nonetheless, China's victory concurrent with the end of World War II did not usher in peace for its people. The country continued to be torn by the 3-year earnest civil war between KMT and CCP until the Chiang coup was driven to exile on Taiwan Island.

The founding of People's Republic of China (PRC) in October 1949 opened a grand new chapter in Chinese modern history. Exactly one year later, when the nation finally was able to rehabilitate after decades of incessant warfare, it was embroiled in the Korean War contributing altogether 2.4 million voluntary soldiers and supply worthy of \$2.5 billion.²⁶⁰ At the nod of Joseph Stalin, the uncanny assault by Kim Il-sung on the Republic of Korea (ROK) crossing the military demarcation line invoked China's massive military participation to aid the Kim's Korean People's Army (KPA) against the U.S.-led United Nations Command contributed by 21 countries. In retrospect, for any party, U.S. and China included, the U.S. General Omar Bradley's famous rebuke makes great sense: it was "the wrong war, at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and with the wrong enemy." It was the Kim's capricious tail

²⁵⁹ 《1945年8月15日日本宣布无条件投降》，人民网，<https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E8%A7%A3%E6%94%BE%E6%88%98%E4%BA%89/6066>。

²⁶⁰ https://baike.so.com/doc/5352284-5587742.html#refff_5352284-5587742-5。

that wagged big dogs to engage in a quirky fight. Ironically, the Kim family continues to profit from such diplomatic heritage today.

The end of the Korean War marked the beginning of Cold War between the capitalist bloc and the Communist bloc led by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). In addition to casualty and property loss, the young People's Republic of China was placed in a hostile position by western powers suffering from trade embargo and military encirclement. National unification became a procrastinated dream when the U.S. tightened its protection over Taiwan. The Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and mutual Assistance²⁶¹ February 14, 1950 was a result of hard bargain by which USSR recognized PRC and promised loans to China in exchange for a host of privileges in northwestern and northeastern China. China had almost no choice but to lean heavily towards USSR in the fields of trade and technical support for early industrialization.

Rapid industrialization was the dire pursuit of Mao who envied the United Kingdom and the United States. The industrial achievement of Joseph Stalin after the Second World War was referred benchmark with admiration. But he narrowed the development marker down to the production of iron and steel in his disastrous "great leap forward" campaign (1958 - 1960). The resolution from the 8th Party Congress in 1957 was to surpass the United Kingdom in steel production and major industrial products within 15 years, and surpass the United States in less than 50 years. Initial industrialization of new China relied heavily on the support from the USSR which was respected as "comrade plus big brother". But the bilateral relationship was ruptured due to ideological differences and Mao's rejection of Soviet Chauvinism. Withdrawal of experts and demand for debt payment by Russia, coupled with trade embargo and economic sanction from the western world, China henceforth descended to complete isolation. With rural collectivization by people's commune

²⁶¹ 《中苏友好同盟互助条约》。

movement as the other leg, the “great leap forward” campaign cost more than 20 million lives out of hunger and stunning waste of economic resources. By 2007, Mao’s dream was more than realized when China’s steel production was five times of the United States. Today, when its steel quantity rivals the total of the rest of the world, China is facing an immense pressure for the reduction of excess capacity.²⁶²

Socialist Road by Default

In the early years of PRC, capitalism was still in nascence when factories in selected coastal cities began to mechanize assembly lines riding largely on assets left by fugitive foreign capitalists. For want of the rich context for Marxist socialism, China’s socialist efforts was concentrated on land collectivization. Pursuing the socialist objective for collective ownership of all productive resources, China however did not adopt the Soviet model of massacring landlords or capitalists. Through public and private partnership, capitalistic elements were nudged aside with time. The CCP gained popular support in the process of revolution offering legitimacy for poor peasants to rebel against landlords and divide their land and properties. Now that it is seated in full political power, the initial campaign was to encourage households to form mutual assistance groups, to be followed soon after by compulsory collectivization into people’s communes. With the completion of socialistic reformation, a full blow mandatory planned economy was ready to roll.

State intervention infiltrated all walks of life and every corner of the country. In the countryside, people were confined to communes and brigades as production units. In the cities, people were assigned to work units designed by the central government. Economically, people lived on ration coupons dispensed by the state. Socially, marriage, travel, jobs

²⁶² China’s crude steel production was 8.32 versus 16.91 trillion metric tons of the world. Chinese government is committed to reduce its production by a measure of 1.5 trillion metric tons from 2016 to 2020.

were all subject to the approval of the unit sanctioned by the government. Class struggle was the mainstay in political life based on a unique caste-like system. In the countryside, according to the wealth conditions of their families before liberation, people by birth were classified into landlords, rich peasants, upper-middle peasants, middle peasants, lower-middle peasants, poor peasants and tenants while in the cities, capitalists, petite bourgeoisie and workers (also known as proletarians), when the first two were the victims of class struggle. With class struggle placed on top of the political agenda, coupled with rigid economic planning, social discrimination was rampant based on class status, and social mobility came to a standstill. The irony for land reform based class identification aiming at egalitarianism turned out an institutionalized political inequity and social animosity. Mao is a bellicose fighter sparing no moment of respite. He exaggerated ideological differences in governance into class struggle, which was climaxed into the 10-year Great Cultural Revolution (1966 – 1976). Massive commotions filled with betrayal, purge and killing among and between classified groups entailed, and the economy was brought to the verge of collapse.

The named heir Hua Guofeng after Mao put an end the Great Cultural Revolution but was removed within his term because he stuck to Mao's road which apparently run afoul to national burning desire for social transformation. Domestic reform and open-door policy was masterminded by Deng Xiaoping who resurged under the spotlight on political stage at the epoch-making Third Plenary Session of the 11th CCP Central Committee at the end of 1978. Economic reform in China is traced back to the introduction of household responsibility system in the countryside in 1982. Individual households were distributed plots of land on contract basis and were granted the freedom on the choice of crops and sales of their yields. Urban reform allowed people to give up their "iron rice bowl" and "jump into the sea (engaging in private enterprise)". Today, China's economic landscape portrays a triad structure

whereby state-own enterprises, private enterprises and foreign enterprise all find an important role to play.

For the past 40 years, China's course of transition has been characterized by political deregulation and market liberalization. There have been movements of swinging between radicalism and conservatism, but that didn't deviate the general trajectory for the nation to thrive.

The introduction of market principles began in late 1978 with Deng's announcement of an open-door policy, permitting foreign businesses to set up shops in China. Then came the de-collectivization of agriculture and permission to local entrepreneurs to start businesses. The reform approach was a tentative probing, "looking around while treading ahead ... crossing the river by feeling the stones." Deng was also known for "catism", his famous idea that it matters not whether the cat is black or white, as long as it catches mice.

The early reformers weren't held hostage to either Marxist stereotype, or to old expectations, metrics, or rewards. They had no past successes, no habits or practices or familiar behaviors to overcome. Ideology had failed them once. Therefore, there grew a strong detestation of dogmatism tendency of any forbidden zone that couldn't be tested. Such attitude is purported by Deng's thematic speech at the closing of Central Work Conference on December 13, 1978, which set the tone for the 3rd Plenary Session of the 11th CCP Congress that earmarked China's grand reform and opening in the following week: Emancipating Thought, Enabling Brain, Seeking Truth from Facts, Looking Ahead in Unity. His call for Thought Emancipation was later on widely interpreted as "reform has no forbidden zones, and development has no end points." Except for those political schemers, ordinary people couldn't care less about what type of systems should be put in place. The only yardstick to discern between good and bad policy is to see whether the biggest majority of people are able to walk away better off than they were *ex ante*.

Escaping from the Soviet socialist model, China had no existing system to emulate. It cannot be misconstrued that China was meandering without direction. Instead of engaging in a futile debate over whether China should follow the capitalist or the socialist road, Deng proposed a practical, non-ideological criterion for action during his famous Southern Tour in early 1992. He called it the “three conduces” (san you li): any action should be conducive to social productivity, to the integrated strength of the nation, and to the elevation of people’s livelihood (1992).²⁶³

A more stunning contrast with most of those developing countries is China’s remarkable success in poverty alleviation. In a matter of exactly 4 decades, China has successfully reduced poverty for 740 million people, and the rate of poverty occurrence has dropped by 94.4 percentage points – a grand chapter China has written in the human history fighting against poverty. According to UN report, as a result of progress in China, the extreme poverty rate in Eastern Asia has dropped from 61 percent in 1990 to only 4 percent in 2015.²⁶⁴ Within 5 years since 2013, 68.53 million people have climbed above the poverty line, a reduction of about 70 percent.²⁶⁵ This achievement does not satisfy President Xi’s ambition as he vowed to lift every Chinese citizen out of poverty by 2020. Amongst other means, whilst civil society is weak and corporate philanthropy is low, one of the unique approaches is to mandate sisterhood between poverty-stricken regions and more prosperous cities, SOEs as well as government agencies with preset quota for targeted poverty reduction. Patriarchal may it appear, it consummates the indigenous clan culture, and also conforms to Deng’s initial design for reform: let a few people and regions get rich first, and then they’ll help the poor to get rich. With shared prosperity remaining the chief objective for a

²⁶³ Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping, People’s Press, 1993, Vol.3, P.372

²⁶⁴ United Nations, The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015

²⁶⁵ Xinhua (2021). Timeline: China’s fight against poverty, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-02/24/c_139763961.htm.

socialist China under Xi's leadership, the next step for the new 14th Five-Year-Plan is aiming at rural revitalization. In addition to enhanced connectivity via physical infrastructure and digital communication, the government is resolved to introduce modern farming technologies, aggregate agricultural resources under cooperatives, push forward local urbanization by building small towns, in order to narrow the income gap between rural and urban areas.

China has forfeited Marxist or Leninist dogmatism, but to the disappointment of liberalistic scholars, it does not approach its transition by applying Western principles either. Its commercial practices, and trade and technology goals, reflect its ambition to be a globally successful socialist economy.²⁶⁶ As economists Ronald Coase and Ning Wang (2012) note, "China's economic reform was never intended to dismantle socialism and move to capitalism"; it "had been intended to save socialism" and become a great modern socialist power. Not until the 14th Chinese Communist Congress, held in 1992, did China decide to give a name to its brand of economics, adopting the phrase "socialist market economy." Market values are not intended to take priority over socialist ones. Such a faith that "only socialism can save China" to be followed by "only socialism with Chinese characteristics can advance China"²⁶⁷ is reinforced when China touted its ability to successfully construct its bulkheads to resist the devastating impact of the Asian financial crisis at the end of last century and the global financial crisis since 2008.

²⁶⁶ According to official Chinese data, real GDP in 1978 totaled 359.3 billion yuan, and in 2016, 73514.9 billion yuan (National Bureau of Statistics of China 2016). We cannot calculate the percentage increase using Chinese data because the value of the yuan changed seven times from the 1970s through 2015. According to World Bank Development Indicators (2016), China increased its GDP from US \$149.541 billion in 1978 to \$11.199 trillion, in 2016, an increase of 7.48 percent that exceeds the growth of all other countries during the same period.

²⁶⁷ Resolution of the Fourth Plenary Session of 16th CCP Congress, September 19, 2004.

When the world becomes reticent about Marxism after the fall of the Berlin Wall, China's enthusiasm resurged nearly 30 years later when recumbent president Xi Jinping reasserts the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)'s leadership in all walks of life. The celebration over the bicentennial birth of Karl Marx was presented as a nationwide fanfare even amidst the ongoing tough negotiations with U.S. delegation in Beijing signifying an imminent trade war between the two biggest economies. The political initiative is there to cement the legitimacy of CCP; it is found that Marxism dovetails with Xi's grand vision of shaping a shared future for humankind. This is partly witnessed by the donation of Karl Marx's bronze statue to his birthplace, the city of Trier in Germany.

This is an example of a general principle: a philosophy developed in a politically and economically advanced country, which is, in its birthplace, little more than a clarification and systematization of prevalent opinion, may become elsewhere a source of revolutionary ardor, and ultimately of actual revolution. It is mainly through theorists that the maxims regulating the policy of advanced countries become known to less advanced countries. In the advanced countries, practice inspires theory; in the others, theory inspires practice. This difference is one of the reasons why transplanted ideas are seldom as successful as they were in their native soil.²⁶⁸

Escaping from the Soviet socialist model, China had no existing system to emulate. Instead of engaging in a futile debate over whether China should follow the capitalist or the socialist road, Deng proposed a practical, non-ideological criterion for action during his famous Southern Tour in early 1992. He called it the "three conduces" (san you li): any action should be conducive to social productivity, to the integrated strength of the nation, and to the elevation of people's livelihood (1992).²⁶⁹

²⁶⁸ Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*, Book.III, Chapter XII, P.601, Simon and Schuster, New York, 4th Printing.

²⁶⁹ *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, People's Press, 1993, Vol.3, P.372

China continues to keep its pedal for institutional reform and opening to the outside world, but it does not prevent itself from a hybrid economic system where private sectors including foreign business entities operate side by side with state-owned enterprises (SOEs). While the former altogether accounts for more than 90% of employment and 83.7% of its export²⁷⁰, and almost all the economic growth, SOEs are still treated with special favor by government subsidies and state-owned banks. However, without a clear demarcation between roles of SOEs under state power and private businesses driven by market force, a fair level playing field can hardly be installed. Economic inefficiency aside, government officials and SOE executives in bandwagons shall continue to prey on private business owners and in turn fall prey to endless anti-graft campaigns.

Chapter VII Chinese Contemporary Values

Chinese Traditional Philosophy

The universe of Chinese culture is enveloped in one origin and three streams – Daoism, Confucianism and Buddhism. The Law of Change (Yi Jing) which took shape two millennia ago sets the keystone of Chinese traditional culture which embodies a holistic view of natural law and embraces a philosophy of dialectics. In essence, it substantiates that everything in the universe is in constant change, but behind the change there is constancy which is sanctioned by the law of change. Thus, the complicated world filled with uncertainty is made predictable at the mastery of this law. That is why it is still biblically cited in astrology and fortune telling.

²⁷⁰ Press Office of PRC State Council, White Paper on China and WTO, June 2018

It is intriguing that the world ushered in greatest thinkers, such as Socrates, Plato, Shakyamuni, Lao Zi and Confucius almost in the same era of human history – the golden age of philosophy. One explanation is that human civilization had advanced to such a critical stage that the society called for deep thought as how it could be better structured so that humanity could step up to time with renewed viability and vibrancy. Within China, it is the Spring and Autumn period (770 – 476 BC) when large number of schools thought surged in heated debate. Notwithstanding some of their intersectant or furcate views with regard to peace, order and humanity, each had its distinctive propositions and resorted to varying practices, and therefore resulted in different outcomes. While literally hundreds of schools blossomed, Daoism, Confucianism, Legalism and Mohism are the most well known. They have thrived and withered at different times notably at the discretion of the incumbent ruling class. Endured the test of time, extant Daoism has pervaded civilian life in folktales, medicine and iatrology, and religious abbey in retreat. Confucianism has engulfed the intelligentsia and has been adopted as mainstream ethics backed by the ruling class. Now that most of the indigenous ideologies are preoccupied with secular life, Buddhism is an extraneous religion introduced from ancient India via the Silk Road under the Han Dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD) to fill the gap of ultimate salvation. Mahayana Buddhism in particular as a religion in proper was gradually localized on the Chinese soil through vernacular interpretations and practices.

Daoism is the closest descendent of the Law of Change which has identified two rudimental opposing but coexistent forces – yin and yang – based on its philosophical dialectics. It has ramified in philosophy, religion and technology, all of which, together with many derivative sects, would claim their original revelations to Dao De Jing, the mystical works of Lao Zi that is still open for controversial interpretations. Riding on this principle, Daoism upholds the notion of *laissez faire*

(Wuwei), leaving the world in its natural course. The world and people would be alienated through artificial manipulation either in the form of moral education or political intervention. A perfect state of mind lies in the stage of infancy before a person gets greedy and brutal as he grows up. Simplicity, austerity and humility should be the healthiest way of life, which is in harmony with the Dao – the way. The role of government is to help people resist temptation and competition so that everyone can stay put in peace and complacency. By analogy, people can find the supreme quality of being in the property of water which always flows to the lower places but permeates everywhere, and penetrates everything.

Confucianism is neither interested in cosmological inquiry or scientific exploration, nor circle of life. “Before understanding life, how do you know death,” Confucius proclaimed. He also despised laborers as lowly and inventors as petty. It persists as a school of ethics which has mainstreamed Chinese culture since the beginning of the Han Dynasty primarily because it has been able to render the closest ideological service to the imperial thrones during peacetime.

The earliest proposition of Chinese national values can trace back to the great thinker Guan Zi who raised four fundamental moral principles: propriety, righteousness, integrity and shame. Propriety requires that one’s manner ought to conform to socially appropriate norms. Righteousness refers to being in right relation to others. Integrity is about accountability, consistency and transparency. Shame is a sense of guilt deeply embedded in one’s conscience with regard to vicious ideas and wrongdoings.

Confucianism advocates introvert conscientiousness and extravert benevolence. One of Confucius favorite disciples Zeng Zi extrapolated it into triple self-reflection on daily basis: 1) Have I done my utmost when giving advice to others? 2) Have I been faithful dealing with friends? 3) Have I practiced what I preach? This school of thought is

firmly convicted that people are born virtuous and thus everyone is endowed with the gift to ascend to a sage through transformative education. The fact that some people descend to an evil is due to their exposure to bad influence. The locus of innate moral quality is instinctive empathy, as touted by Mencius. When someone notices that a child is about to fall into a well, he naturally extends a hand, not because he wants to curry favor with his parents or earn a fame among the community, but rather out of his instinctive empathy.

Confucianism begins with personal moral cultivation which extends to multiple layers of delineated relationship from family to state and ultimately the world. Socially, relationship is defined between ancestors and descendants, parents and children, husbands and wives, elders and youngsters, rulers and ministers, as well as that between friends. A harmonious society rests on the recognition and fulfillment of one's respective role within each of these structured relationships. In other words, a society would become chaotic when rights and obligations attached to each one's defined role are either arrogated or reneged. He championed strong family loyalty, ancestor veneration, and respect to old. Within members under one roof, the male parent by their children and of husbands by their wives, recommending family as a basis for ideal government. He espoused the well-known principle "Don't do unto others what you don't want to be done by", as a universally accepted Golden Rule.

Daoism adheres to the value of individual freedom and conservation of life – a philosophy further stretched by Zhuang Zi. In fact, the technological part of Daoism is devoted to the quest of health and ultimately immortality, resulting in the advancement of alchemy, martial arts and herbal/mineral medicine. Confucianism propagates a gentrified society through self-discipline under institutionalized moral settings. A real gentry should stand ready to sacrifice his life for what is right, or the benevolence (ren). In a ruling position, benevolence can be exercised in two ways: 1) lessening tax burden on people; and 2) lessening punish-

ment on people and relying on moral education for socially desirable behaviors. Mencius noticed the phenomenon of voting with feet. He hence pointed out that a benevolent government will be able to attract talents and wealth from all around the world: public officers to serve in the court, farmers to plow in the land, merchants to trade in the market, tourists to travel in the country, complaints against sovereigns in their home state will be filed here. With that, a state will become invincible.

Mohism flourished during the Warring States era (479–221 BCE) on the heels of the Spring and Autumn period when invasion and conquest between states became the name of the game. It defies preference and prejudice based on blood connection and class distinction by advocating universal fraternity among all people and peace between all states. It denounces lavish lifestyle and promotes frugality. All believers in Mohism had to lead an ascetic life. Like Confucius, Mohist also trained followers to serve various governments. However, he introduced rigorous disciplines on integrity and cohesion in his constituency. His followers ought to pay a portion of their income back to their organization for common welfare and had to be ready to resign from any posts if justice risked distortion. Unlike Confucianism which is preoccupied with ethical canons or Daoism with abstract discourse and metaphors, Mohist nosedived into moral argumentation with analogical reasoning. Its epistemology is closely associated with consequentialism relying objective test. Ethical normativity is placed on three standards: historical experiences of those sacred leaders; the perception of ordinary people; the actual benefits to the country and its people. In contrast with Daoists who were dedicated to the discovery of panacea, Mohists devoted their wisdom to the invention of practical utilities with profound knowledge in mechanical engineering. Pragmatism is another salient feature of Mohism. It is the antithesis of Daoism that discouraged promotion of talents for fear of triggering envy and rivalry. It is also antagonistic to Confucianism to place great emphasis on elaborate funerals. Unfortu-

nately, Mohism perished at the beginning of the Han Dynasty simply because as a tightly knitted organization, it was unwilling to submit to the imperial court.

The school of Legalism is mesmerized in the notion that people are born evil and therefore need to be punished to keep order and peace in the society. Although this school of thought developed in the Spring and Autumn Period or the East Zhou Dynasty, it is fully embraced and strictly implemented in the Qin Dynasty (221 – 206 BC) which unified the entire country by conquering a host of warring states through years of military maneuvers. Ying Zheng, the complacent conqueror, triumphed as the first emperor and envisioned himself a perpetual sovereign rule. It replaced the manor-like feudal system of governance with the town and county-based centralized administration via bureaucracy, which forged a template for most of the subsequent dynasties, and is still valid today. Unification took place in every facet of the society – languages, measurements, roads, vehicles - based on harsh laws and brutal punishment. In order to unify ideology across the country, they went so far as to burn all books except those practical ones on farming, forestation, medicine, and of course the embellished history of Qin Dynasty. Unsurprisingly, the landscape of independent belief and free thought halted into exile.

Now that legalists believed people are inherent sinners, they remained silent on whether this hypothesis should equally apply to the ruler. Isn't it an irony? Among virtually all the classical political literatures, few propositions are available on the check and balance of power. That is "rule by law", not "rule of law".

Along its history, China's governance largely depicts a swinging pendulum between two ruling traditions, the Confucian and the Legalist. However, the tension was resolved without consistent effort toward establishing a social contract between the rulers and the ruled, which in turn diminished the ability of the state to make credible commitments.

Socialist Core Values

Chinese leaders have a strong tendency to express their central plank with slogans. Such short sentences, phrases or simply a collection of characters often appear in rhythm and are considered forceful and communicable to the public. The linguistic feature of Chinese – one word carries one independent meaning – offers a better utility. The tradition of Chinese classics such as the Law of Change, the Analects of Confucius, the Classic of Virtue by Daoist, all tend to infuse profound meaning into short phrases. Chinese poem structures meanings and imagination in balance and rhythm. Popularized parlance by propaganda cannot be taken so lightly as political clichés; they are often raised based on the assessment of present situation, and are wrapped with explicit agenda. Once introduced, more often, they signify a sweeping national campaign that may last for years, by which a host of constituencies will be impacted. For one example, seven months after the campaign on “practice is the sole touchstone of truth”, China dismantled political stereotype and adopted its reform and open door policy.

Nowadays, everywhere, from sky bridges to high rises, from traffic islands to school gates, the big banners of socialist core values are on ostentatious display. They are the national values of prosperity, democracy, civility and harmony; the social values of freedom, equality, justice and the rule of law; and the individual values of patriotism, dedication, integrity and friendship.



Figure 2: 24-character Core Socialist Values

This set of values outlines an ideal Chinese society China strives to construct with unified efforts cascading along the three tiers – nation, society and individuals – starting from building a nationwide consensus. It is an amalgamation of traditional Chinese ethical propositions and western concepts consummate with the evolving realities both on domestic and international fronts. As a systematic national moral construct, it was officially promulgated at the 18th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in November 2012 during the power shift from Hu Jintao to Xi Jinping. It encompasses 24 Chinese characters (12 characters in English) covering three dimensions: prosperity, democracy and civility, harmony at state level; freedom, equality, justice and rule of law at societal level; patriotism, dedication, integrity and friendship at personal level. In December 2013, Guideline on the Cultivation and Implementation of Socialist Core Values was issued by the CCP administrative office. Very soon, billboards, posters and banners at all public

venues – schools, hospitals, shopping malls, buses, parks, sky bridges - displaying the Eight Honors and Eight Shames raised under Hu's administration were replaced by these 24 Chinese characters.

The Eight Honors and Eight Shames was raised by the CCP party secretary Hu Jintao in March 2006 initially as a "new moral yardstick to measure the work, conduct and attitude of Communist Party officials", but was soon expanded to all Chinese citizens. Compared with the core values propagated by Xi, it was more of a practical checklist of “dos and don'ts” in juxtaposed antithesis:

"Honor to those who love the motherland, and shame on those who harm the motherland.

Honor to those who serve the people, and shame on those who betray the people.

Honor to those who quest for science, and shame on those who refuse to be educated.

Honor to those who are hardworking, and shame on those who indulge in comfort and hate work.

Honor to those who help each other, and shame on those who seek gains at the expense of others.

Honor to those who are trustworthy, and shame on those who trade integrity for profits.

Honor to those who abide by law and discipline, and shame on those who break laws and discipline.

Honor to those who uphold plain living and hard struggle, and shame on those who wallow in extravagance and pleasures."

The key values highlighted here are patriotism, stewardship, enlightenment, diligence, unity, honesty, lawfulness and frugality.

Reform and Opening

As the famous saying by Guan-zi, a renowned minister who empowered the Qi state in the Spring and Autumn period two thousand years ago, only when the granaries are full, will people follow appropriate rules of conduct. These moral values are sustained by the continued increase in the nation's disposable income.

The reform and opening policy adopted in the end of 1978 turned China on a decisively new track of economic growth. Post-1978 China saw average real growth of more than 9 percent for 15 consecutive years.

Dignity rests upon decent livelihood whereas poverty is the source of all sins. Except a few saints, ordinary creatures are largely animated by material benefits at sight. And they immediately get wiser when free decisions are permitted. At the run-up of rural reform, the number of beggars substantially reduced when collective farms were redistributed to individual households who were permitted to grow and sell their own crops. The sense of private property simmered in at the onset of housing reform wherefrom individuals were able to purchase houses on their own. And their room decorations turned on a new look, a stark contrast with the dormitories allocated by the state. Private businesses thrived from self-employed proprietorship to sizable companies when the first Law of Incorporation was promulgated in 1994. Foreign companies with technology, management expertise and export channels flocked in the special economic zones (SEZs) identified in the southeast China at the allurements of tax incentives and cheap labor. More than 300 million peasants migrated to the coastal cities for higher paying jobs leaving behind their families in the countryside. The government is happy to accumulate a large pool of foreign currency reserves due to the inflow of foreign investment and domestic export. With international currency in hand, China is able to purchase modern equipment and technology to upgrade its industrial structure and infrastructure. Recent years have

witnessed hundreds of millions of Chinese tourists overseas. Chinese eyes have opened to a real globalized world and their true position amongst other nations.

Accession to World Trade Organization (WTO) at the opening of the 21st century was a milestone step forward for China to integrate itself to the globalization process, to be followed by a dozen free trade agreements with major partners. Although breathtaking steps have been made for alignment with international rules, doubt is still lingering in the air as whether China is committed to the rule book with global partners for trade and investment. By no means is China there to deliberately disavow its contractual obligations. While China is making its efforts to climb the learning curve given it is yet relatively a new entrant on the global stage despite its size, mutual adjustment is required for constructive cooperation. Nonetheless, a sense of nationalism beyond the notion of patriotism is on the rise within the mind of Chinese particularly in resentment to U.S. hegemony. The propaganda machine is roaring to garland the country as the champion for globalization while a large portion of its policy remains protectionist. In recent years, the so-called wolf warrior diplomacy filled with tantrum marks a swerve from its traditional style of humility and sobriety, which has taken the world by quite a surprise.

Commentary and Conclusion

Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) analyses charitable behavior around the globe by looking at three aspects: 1) Helped a stranger? 2) Donated money to a charity? 3) Volunteered time to an organization? Annual reports on World Giving Index (WGI) are published based on these findings. For the past decade, notwithstanding its colossal economy and aggressive growth rate, China is the only country that persistently appears in the bottom 10 for all three measures. Readers are likely led to

an impression that China is a callous nation. But the question is: how can an immense population manage to coexist without sympathy and empathy towards each other?

China as a most populous nation with long history and rich civilization has managed to survive numerous upheavals between times and has maintained its social cohesion, political stability and economic drive for prosperity. The cornerstone at constant work is its tenacious value system deeply seated in the mindset of its people, which is reflected in their reasoning and behavior. For a society that has long downplayed the rule of law, morality based on self-prudence and mutual assistance is essential to peaceful coexistence among its people. Unlike the Western world where ethical conduct is largely cultivated by church and bound by social contract backed by the rule of law, moral development and its exercise revolves around the family as the centerpiece. Large portion of mutual assistance and aid take place between sisters, brothers and cousins within the kinship nexus. Such organizational fabric expands to community management and state ruling in which the leader functions as the head of an extended family. Transfer of tax money is made to families and regions in penury at the discretion of the patriarchal government. Congressional budget debate or referendum is placed on the back burner. Sisterhood is formed between rich cities in coastal regions and identified poor counties in the remote hinterland. Unlike India which levies corporate social responsibility tax to aid the poor, Chinese government agencies, state-owned enterprises, state-run universities are required to dispatch a special envoy bridging wherewithals between the haves and have nots. Millions of college graduates are incentivized with a promise for career promotion to settle in those poor villages as first secretaries disseminating fresh knowledge, ideas and skills such as how to run e-commerce platforms to sell local produce. In a matter of 8 years since 2012, 99 million people are lifted above the extreme poverty line with decent food and clothing. However, all of these efforts appear un-

canny to the WGI computation scheme, but they are more effective under the Chinese cultural context.

History has good times and bad times. In every historical period, there is a predominant value that holds people together in popular unity. In good times Chinese people yearn for noble rulers infused with paternalistic affection, and in bad times they pray for white knights to safeguard social justice. It is interesting to note that an apparently chaotic state where kingdoms competed on divergent principles and practices allowed for higher mobility of social strata, via which intellectual celebrities and military strategists stood out in eminence notwithstanding the mishap inflicted on ordinary people. A unified China under strong rulers maintains social stability in which the common clay enjoyed a peaceful life, ideologies and values became monolithic, which gradually eroded into social and intellectual vitality dredging the feet of social progress.

For China, unity under one man appears to be the choice of its enduring history. This explains why civil wars always heed the feet of victory over a common enemy – either domestic rulers or foreign invaders. For instance, with the downfall of the common enemy – the Qin imperial ruler, leaders of allied uprising coups, most notably the Han coup led by Liu Bang and Chu coup led by Xiang Yu, lost no time to fight against one another for the empty throne. There ought not to be parallel rulers under the sky, a popular term so widely believed in along the entire Chinese history. Compulsive revolt against an oppressive ruler in a desperate situation or motivated by the envy for the magnificent throne, in the absence of pursuit for social justice, without the proper institutional settings to check the power of the reeling throne, has resulted in a cycle of political oppression followed by revolts. “Alas, a great man should lead a life like him!” exclaimed by the uprising leader Liu Bang who eventually overthrew the Qin empire watching the magnificent palace and ostentatious imperial parade when he was tolling in the labor camp in the capital city. The same pattern of civil war was repeat-

ed between the communist led by Mao Tse-tung and the nationalist by Jiang Kai-shek until the former won out, and the latter exiled in Taiwan. As of today, unification across the Taiwan Strait remains the top political and popular agenda. The difference is that the communist power remains popularly entrenched because it is devoted to ideals of social development although singular leadership is still much desired.

Aside from tendering sacrifice to ancestors that bears certain religious flavor, Chinese people are generally atheists. Without fundamentalist faith, they are complacent with what and where they are. They maintain an optimistic disposition and self-conserving habitus. They are pragmatic and agile to opportunities and risks. They may not be as creative and brave but are extremely diligent. They work and save for their children instead of their own pleasurable life. They are ready to trade justice for harmony. They are receptive and adaptive to new ideas and different ways of life. They can be submissive to authority, but remain allegiant to the clan they identify with. In the meanwhile, at every critical moment, be it decaying government, social turmoil, foreign invasion, or natural calamity, there are always elites who stand up and defend its core values at all cost. These heroes are celebrated as sacred gentries by Confucius and portrayed as national spines in the discourse of the incisive writer Lu Xun.

The Opium Wars in the midst of 1800s awakened the nation's repose. While the Qing court was forced to open its door for external trade, humiliation was inflicted onto the arrogant sovereign. In the past two thousand years, the change of emperors and dynasties resultant from revolts and court coup d'état was unable to square the vicious circle of despotic reigns. This time, however, when bullied by stronger foreign powers at sight, Chinese elites began to acknowledge how far the country who overslept the industrial revolution had fallen behind the Western world, thenceforward set upon a solidary journey in search for a recipe to revive the nation's glory. From backwardness in weaponry to techno-

logical advancement, they went on to explore institutional reform. Kindled by the Russian October Revolution, Coaxed by the Russia-based Third International, the young CCP was resolved to install socialism pursuant to Marxist theory of proletarian revolution emulating Leninist practice. This led to the establishment of new People's Republic under the communist regime. When socialism was forgone in disgust by most fellow countries at the tip of last century, its Chinese version has jauntily withstood the sweeping challenge. This proves that this poli-economic construct disseminates successfully in congruence with Chinese characteristics, much like the domestication route of Buddhism imported from India. The reform and open door policy initiated in 1978 gradually reconciled political idealism with economic pragmatism. Nationwide enthusiasm rallied in fervent pursuit of material well-being following a unique process of deregulation and privatization. With regard to Marxism and socialism, as touted by CCP, the Chinese practice is neither a deviation nor betrayal but rather a majestic enrichment. By letting a few people and regions get rich first, Deng Xiaoping proclaimed, it aims at a shared prosperity, which is the essence of socialism, by allowing for proliferation of wealth from the rich to those poor people and underdeveloped regions. Based on the conviction that poverty is not the feature of socialism, however equal people might be, the reform offered opportunity for the able and lucky pioneers – both in business and local governance, into new frontiers previously forbidden under the mandatory planned economy.

Dialectical materialism developed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, objective reality perceptible to the senses is independent of mind or spirit. Ideas could arise, therefore, only as products and reflections of material conditions. That explains why material prosperity occupies the top priority among Chinese socialist values. In fact, Guan Zi, as early as two millenniums ago, raised his resounding assertion: only when grana-

ries are full, will people appreciate manners; only when well clothed and fed, will people care about honor and shame.

The socialist China, since her founding in 1949, can be broadly classified into four phases, each carrying distinctive value propositions. Under Mao's reign, an equalitarian society in autarky was sought after with infiltrative class struggle. Deng ended the catastrophic Cultural Revolution, unlocked the dogmatic socialist stereotype, unleashed the drive for economic prosperity, and opened China to the outside world. Jiang and Hu pushed forward the globalization markedly by accession to World Trade Organization, which entailed a swift change in the country's legal and political structure in line with global rules. The revision of CCP mission by Jiang and the notion of scientific outlook by Hu command attention. The current Xi's era since the 18th CCP National Congress attaches paramount importance to the faith of CCP. Riding on the rich tradition of moral education, and in view of the perplexing ideologies for a nation under rapid transformation, he has brought forth a deluge of new concepts for ideological reinforcement. He addressed the 19th CCP Congress that worldview, life-view and value view are the circuit breaker. Across the nation, he relentlessly propagates confidence in the unique road, theory, system and culture. The socialist core values remain the most popular to ordinary citizenry.

Major crisis is the touchstone to the value and character reposed in a nation. Being the epicenter of the pendent Covid-19 pandemic, despite its enormous population, China has so far managed a thumping victory with minimal casualty. The whole nation was mobilized to stage a stout fight against the virus attack. The notion of benevolence from political leaders and professionals is put into bountiful practice where human life is given full attention setting aside economic considerations. Medical staff risk their lives toiling on their duty. In contrast with some other countries that adopt social Darwinism of mass immunity, the weaker class, especially the senior, is given higher priority in medical treatment.

Citizens are willing to restrain their freedom in compliance with the harsh rules of lockdown and social distancing.

On the other hand, the purported “wolf warrior diplomacy” in recent years has sparked cynicism from the world community; China has forsaken its traditional modest or even polite behavior, and has become assertive in its proposition and stands ready to denounce criticisms with full-blown confrontational rhetoric. Accusations and criticisms are indiscriminately viewed as hostility or envy over China’s rise. Wounds left on the nation by western powers since the Opium War have formed scabs that continue to stir Chinese painful memory. A reciprocal adaptive process is required to readjust their perception over a more constructive role of China in the world community in the 21st century.