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The Traditional Chinese Philosophy and Modernization

1) A Serious Conversation Between Confucius and John Dewey: Getting Wisdom Back into Philosophy
------ By Roger Ames (United States)

Abstracts:
Human wisdom is a necessary precondition for world peace and social harmony. Neither Confucius's China nor Dewey's America on its own has been able to produce the quality of wisdom needed to provide international leadership in a troubled world. Even though Pythagoras declared that "philosophy" is "the love of wisdom," following the scientific turn of Aristotle and his search for apodictic "truth," the word "wisdom" disappeared utterly from the narrative of Western philosophy and has not been seen again these two thousand years. I will argue that the pragmatic theory of truth is an attempt to reinstate "wisdom" as a central philosophical concern. And even though the Great Learning established self-cultivation 修身 and the pursuit of wisdom as the central philosophical concern for the Chinese philosophical tradition, China has been plagued by a kind of cultural parochialism and self-sufficiency--China as the Chinatown of the world--that has precluded her from taking her rightful place as a world leader. China's recently acquired world status requires from her a new sense of international responsibility to 平天下. Perhaps the resources of these two traditions can be combined to achieve what neither of them has been able to achieve on their own.

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2) The I Ching & Kant — A Dialogue Between Chinese Culture and the Modern World
------ By Kaozheng Chu (China, Taiwan)

Abstracts:
The Opium War in 1840, regardless of its nature showing the greediness and arbitrariness of Western colonial imperialism, the war, actually shattered the entrenched imperial dreams and arrogance of Chinese people thoroughly. Since then, in order to extricate itself from the humiliation and poverty, in order to make China re-establish itself in the world, bureaucratic and progressive intellectuals chose "modernization" as the very target they would pursue. On the other hand, it was affected by the Enlightenment movement that Europe was able to completely step into the modern society. And Kant is regarded as the most influential modern philosopher, who is also the first European thinker criticizing the colonial imperialism. Logically,
the Chinese intellectuals pursuing the “modernization” should carefully study the ideas and works of Kant, the modern European philosophical giant. But as a matter of fact, Chinese unrest political environment gave people little time to think about the future and little space to take any practical action. As different events broke out, ways of Chinese “modernization” varied, including Westernization movement, political reform, Republican law and inputting democracy and science. The forms of these movements also varied. Chinese people first adopted different political reforms and revolutions to sharpen their weapons, but at last they choose the New Culture Movement. Deng Xiaoping first took "peace & development" as the guiding principle dealing with foreign relations in the new era. What’s more, Hu Jintao set "harmonious society" as the highest socio-economic development goals in the new century. "Harmony" and "peace" is also the theme of this Chinese studies forum. Actually, "He (harmony)" implies tolerance and coexistence. “Harmony but with differences” means different values, lifestyles and socio-economic systems coexist with tolerance and mutual respect, or even a way of learning from each other. The I Ching was regarded as the most important book since the early years of the Qin and Han dynasties of China. The way of thinking that reveals in the book has extremely profound influence and becomes the very base of Chinese traditional culture in all areas and all times around. Until now, we still can find its wisdom light shining continuously in the country. This unique way of thinking can be called “Tai Chi Thinking”, which reflects the overall thinking and dialectical thinking, “Tai Chi Thinking” emphasizes on advocating the distinguished mind, while opposing to distracting such a kind of mind with powers. “Tai Chi Thinking” stresses the neutral position. It asks people to hold and make use of the “neutral” and avoid “extremes”. Besides, “Tai Chi Thinking” also sheds its light on the combination between Yin (negative) and Yang (positive), mutually aids between Gang (strong) and Rou (mild), everything should go with the time and so on. On the other hand, on the bases of his Critical Legal Studies, Kant not only talks about the way to keep the legal rights relationship among people in natural state without conflict in ‘Metaphysical Elements of Laws’ (1797), but also emphasizes on how to deal with the contradictions of three powers as well as the conflicts between citizens and the government. In other words, the Legal (peaceful) Philosophy of Kant is Friedensphilosophie, which tries to explore the way of establishing a universal harmony of human’s external relationship. In "Perpetual Peace" (1795), Kant further explores how to establish a rational international order, in particular calling for the international community respecting the autonomy right for all peoples to develop themselves, and resolutely opposes the powerful impose their will on the weak ones. “The I Ching” and Kant can be considered as two academic peaks of China and Western world. What’s more, Kant doesn’t have such prejudice as “Western Culture Central Theory”, which developed itself with the expansion of colonial imperialism. Thus, unlike most western scholars, Kant philosophy doesn’t neglect the far-reaching influence of Chinese culture to the European Enlightenment Movement. Therefore, it makes the fairly assess of compatibility between Chinese traditional culture and modernization possible. “The I Ching” is the representative of China's traditional culture, while Kant’s philosophy reflects the brilliant achievements of
modern Western ideological community. Both of the two theories spontaneously embody the idea of “harmony but with differences” and against the hegemonic actions. This mode of thinking helps the developing countries to rebuild their confidence, creatively choose the way that adapt to their own national conditions. What's more, it helps the world to adjust the relationship between South and North, set up a multi-polar international community, and gives suggestions to Anti-terrorism actions.

3) Pu Learning and Positivism
------ By Xirong He (China)

Abstracts:
It is a problem to understand the classical Chinese philosophy according to the framework of the Western philosophy. One of the examples is to correspond to Pu Learning (literally, a simple style of learning, came forth in Qing Dynasty, also called Han Learning) with the positive science. There has been a kind of viewpoint in the academic circles since modern time, which is that China has had a modern scientific method and a scientific thought from the early of Qing dynasty. In concrete speaking, that regards Pu Learning in Qing Dynasty as the western positive science. In fact, we know that positive science is a scientific type that is from western Revival of Learning and created by Bacon’s remark of "knowledge is a power". And later it was extended on philosophy called “Positivism”. There were two characteristics in this philosophy: Firstly, it emphasized the principle of positivism, namely, it emphasized the values of experimental facts and scientific method, and only positive sensational experiences are the objects and souses of knowledge, and also being a cognitive scope of mankind. Secondly, it opposed the western traditional metaphysics, and thought that the mission of philosophers is to generalize and describe scientific knowledge in phenomenal field but pay no attention to metaphysics since it is beyond sensational experience. Actually, Pu Learning, as a fruit out of the Chinese academic soil, had its own way to go. It differs from positive science in various ways. The characteristics of Pu Learning were not same with above-mentioned of the positivism. Firstly, in purpose, the scholars of Pu Learning who made a critical interpretation of an ancient text are not only for academic to do purely research but also to reach Dao and to save the life through exegetical studies and textual research. It is for finding Dao (metaphysics) from Qi (concrete things), which was coincident with the pursuing of Chinese traditional philosophy. Secondly, in contents, Pu Learning had the property of the study of Confucian Classics (经学). It researched mainly on classical texts but those learning such as philological studies (小学), historiography, astronomy, and various learning were not independent courses but dependencies of classical texts. Confucian Classics had the property of ideology from its beginning, and it was the top authority, and its contents can only be believed in unconditionally, but can not be judged and examined. Thirdly, in methodology, the characteristics of Pu Learning are followings: (1) The principles of certificate were "to prove classical texts by classical texts" (以经证经),
and "to search not far away from ancient" (去古未远). Namely, it certificated texts by texts, and certificated authority by authority. It took the names to certificate the realities, and then to highlight heavenliness of the classical texts. This method is contrary to the method of the positive science. (2) The authenticated norm of "no believing it unless there are some cites" (无征不信), and "don’t established it if only have one cite" (孤证不立). Namely, it requests "searching all of sources" (遍为搜讨). But the method of searching all of sources differs with the method of experience positivism alike because it searches only from texts. This “all” is relative and not same with the western positive science which objectivity takes facts as the foundations. (3) The textual researching attitude of seeking truth from the fact and inquiring into doubt. Seeking truth from the fact here mainly to mean the classical textual meaning, related with two points above, it is impossible to seek truth from the fact since its standard is the authority of classical texts. Of so have many scholars combined Pu Learning with the positive science, and it is relevant to the western learning’s influence since modern time. Some Chinese scholars accepted the west learning simultaneously to treat Chinese philosophy by the standard of the west philosophy. Hence the phenomenon of a farfetched comparison and misunderstanding etc were appeared. This phenomenon was unavoidable at that time but it needs to re-think today. Certainly, the attitude and the spirit which emphasized that academic researches need to according to seek the fact and the truth by positivism influence modern Chinese scholars a lot, and it made Chinese academic culture experienced again the pattern of “letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend”. The studies on the various schools of thought prospered once more which was a clear proof. But the scholars who accepted positivism were all inevitably taking western views to explain Chinese culture thereby misunderstanding and farfetched phenomena was appeared, such as Yan Fu, Wang Guowei, Hu Shi, Feng Youlan, and Jin Yuelin, etc. They criticized transcendent and rational metaphysics by positivism, but didn’t know that Chinese metaphysics is not a type like the western; and on the contrary the metaphysics they wanted to establish has the character of ontology, which was just they wanted to criticize. The appearance of these theoretical antinomies because part of the limitation of the times, and also because the scholars at that time had no explicit understanding for different types of philosophy between the west and the Chinese. Going along the west philosophical road, it certainly would appear that positive science and humanities dislocated. China has been influenced so much by the west philosophy from the beginning of modern age that it separated itself from the tradition to a certain degrees. From the relation between Pu Learning we can see a spot that how the west positivism influence China and how Chinese scholars misunderstand both of them.

4) Towards a Multiculturalist Approach to Contemporary Chinese Discourse
------- By Xu Shih (China)
Abstracts:
Discourse/Communication Studies has been introduced into China at least since the late eighties when China opened up to the West. During this time much work has been done in digesting, interpreting and reproducing this tradition and to some extent it has been applied to certain Chinese phenomena. More recently, however, debates have been initiated in various social science disciplines regarding Chinese academics’ ‘aphasia’ and so ways of re-discovering, re-claiming or re-constructing Chinese voices and forms of scholarship. In this article, I critically review the past and present of Discourse/Communication Studies in China and on that basis propose a paradigm shift in terms of new research directions and strategies for Greater China.

5) The Question of Emancipation in Japanese Modern Thinking on China — Mizoguchi Yuzo’s Identity Strategy
------- By Chih-yu Shih (Taiwan, China)

Abstracts:
The paper breaks modern Japanese thoughts on China into four categories, depending on which of the compliant and the resistant approaches to Europe-centrism and which of the separatist and the empathic approaches to China the particular narrative takes. In each category, an example is given. The four selected are Shiratori Kurakichi, Naito Konan, Takeuchi Yoshimi and Tsuda Soukichi. Mizoguchi Yuzo tries to mediate among them, looking for ways to reach a genuinely multi-polar world, where even China is able to “Other” Japan. However, he continues to base his China-centric agenda on some Japanese self-understanding, to the extent that he is unable to define the boundary of his “fundamental China.”

6) Confucius Philosophy and the Modernity
------- By Batir Tursunov (Uzbekistan)

Abstracts:
During many centuries philosophy of Confucius and his followers played invaluable role in the history of the Chinese thought and served as the cultural pillar of Chinese society and state. In spite of its antiquity and the complexity of history, the Confucius’ teaching with its distinctive philosophical traditions does not loose its importance. To a large degree this phenomenon may be explained by the significance that Confucians have attached to issues of morality, ethics and politics. Due to this fact Confucian philosophy functioned as the spiritual tool of upbringing and education for the Chinese society. In particular this factor, which had immanently humane character, predetermined the universalism of the Confucian philosophy. Its so called “anthropologism” stipulated not only its intellectual longevity, but also maintained
interest to its axiological system, which is now being actively interpreted by many scholars in different ways. In fact, this tendency proves that Confucian philosophy has its future even in the era of globalization, characterized by active and multifaceted dialogue of the world civilizations. Undoubtedly, the Confucian thought with its unique cultural, moral, ethical and political values should find its further interpretation to build better human life in the 21st century.