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One culture two systems: a cultural approach to Inter-Chinese politics

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Abstract

Extract:

In this article we seek to step beyond the problematic notion of "One China", politically speaking, by emphasizing "One Culture" constituted by different systems or a diversity of subcultures. In so doing, what is essentially an either/or choice transforms to a one-many realization.

"One Culture, Two Systems":

A Cultural Approach to Inter-Chinese Politics

by Martin Lu and Rosita Dellios[1]

In this article we seek to step beyond the problematic notion of "One China", politically speaking, by emphasizing "One Culture" constituted by "different systems" or a "diversity of subcultures". In so doing, what is essentially an "either/or" choice transforms to a "one-many" realization. The method employed to express this is the **Chinese** *culture mandala*. It is an image or representation (*xiang*) of the "one-many" relationship. It is not clear-cut in a constrictive, definitional, sense - and who would wish to define an inclusive oneness?[2] - but it is also not arbitrary in that a *mandala* is by nature an ordering principle. This article about inter-Chinese politics, particularly the China-Taiwan impasse, is written in the spirit of "one-many" thinking. We will therefore call upon pertinent considerations across many sectors of experience - indeed, across the manifested diversity of Chinese culture.

In Chinese philosophy (the essence of Chinese culture), "one-many" thinking finds expression in the Neo-Confucian perspective of *li-yi-fen-shu*: "The principle is one and its manifestations are many."[3] This doctrine was attributed to the Neo-Confucianists Chang Tsai and Ch'eng I. Liu Shu-hsien, a prominent contemporary new Confucianist, has applied Zhuangzi's value approach of *liang xing* (following two courses simultaneously)[4] to the elucidation of *li-yi-fen-shu*. As a result, the perspectives of both *li-yi* (the one principle) and *fen-shu* (many manifestations) are accommodated.

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[2] "The Way that can be spoken of is not the eternal Way." - Laozi, *Daodejing*, I.1.

[3] See Appendix 1 for a cross-cultural comparison.

[4] In Zhuangzi's well-known story of acorns-rationing by the Daoist monkey-keeper, both the monkeys' situational demands and the keeper's Daoist perspective are taken into consideration and harmonized. This is regarded by Zhuangzi as "following two courses at once" as a way of transcending the different systems of right and wrong. The story goes that a monkey-keeper once rationed acorns to each monkey so that three were received in the morning and four at night. The monkeys were unhappy with the arrangement, so the keeper reversed the order and gave them four acorns in the morning and three at night. This proved far more popular with the

18

Similarly, Chinese culture as "one" could accommodate the "many" economic systems and lifestyles of mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, which are also undergoing transformations all the time. For instance, in the 15th Party Congress in China, "Deng Xiaoping Theory" was enshrined as the party's guiding ideology. Consequently, "Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought and Deng Xiaoping Theory" with all their inherent diversity constitute a "unified scientific system imbued with the same spirit", according to party leader Jiang Zemin in his speech at the Congress. To illustrate the determination of continued economic reform, "public ownership" of the economy, the cornerstone of communist ideology, has been given a new interpretation to include the state- and collectively-owned companies, and even joint ventures at least 51% controlled by the state. So the communist ideology in China has become increasingly fluid and flexible, providing an example of "one-many" thinking at work.

Why "One Culture, Two Systems"?

Even with attention largely taken up by the Asian economic crisis over the past year, the implementation of an unprecedented political experiment in Hong Kong, that of "one country, two systems", is being monitored closely. Among the interested observers is Taiwan, for whom the "one country, two systems" formula was originally intended. Taiwan has consistently rejected this particular formula for reunification of "one country" (China), so the political deadlock between the "two systems" (socialistic Beijing and capitalistic Taipei) continues. Short of a military showdown far more serious than the missile crisis of 1996 and disastrous for all Chinese concerned, political leaders on both sides of the Taiwan Straits will have to find an ingenuous way of resolving the impasse. Under current global conditions, economy in the hands of culture could well provide a decisive influence. Already, the economic union of Greater China is underway and has been the primary agent of economic growth in the mainland in recent years. For instance, in 1994 investors from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan constituted 70 percent of the total investment, whereas only 7.3 percent came from the US, and 6.1 percent from Japan.[5] In 1998, with Japan in recession and the Asian economic crisis unabated, China was still standing, even striding. While neighboring economies were registering negative growth, China was set to achieve between 5 and 8 percent growth in 1998. If Asia was being dismissed as an economic disaster zone by investors, the same could not be said of China. And even if the much trumpeted Pacific Century is no longer equated with the Asian Century, or even considered worthy of its name, there is nothing to say it will not yet become the Chinese Century. Asia's economic Mandate of Heaven appears to have returned to the Middle Kingdom.

How does this reflect on Beijing-Taipei relations? Taiwanese dependence on a strong Chinese economy is such that an ideological enemy has turned out to be a powerful economic ally, even if unwittingly. Given time, and the effects of the Asian crisis which can only strengthen inter-Chinese cooperation, economic imperatives may help smooth

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monkeys. Hence without changing the number of acorns, the keeper's actions made the monkeys happier. See *Chuang-Tzu (Zhuangzi)*, (Fung-Yu-lan, trans.), Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1989, Ch. 2, p. 46.

[5] *Asia, Inc,* March 1996, pp1-2.

over the differences; but the trick is to switch from adversarial habits of mind to cooperative ones.

How might this be done? Through the lens of "one culture", it is possible to see many alternative sub-systems. Apart from "one country, two systems", there are other proposals to give some life to the political standstill between China and Taiwan. Among these are "one country, two governments" or some sort of federation or confederation.[6] To move beyond the present contestation requires long-range vision. As the Chinese saying goes, we should not "argue and fight for the gains of the present moment but strive for the future of one thousand autumns". In other words, Chinese governments should put aside the short term benefits, glory and even hubris of economic and political China, and aspire after the age-old ideals of cultural China. No Chinese government could afford to disregard culture altogether.

Traditionally, Chinese have always emphasized culture more than politics. The 17th century Chinese thinker Ku Yen-wu drew a distinction between *guo* (state) and *tianxia* (all under heaven). *Guo* is a political concept, whereas *tianxia* a cultural notion. The latter refers to Chinese cultural tradition and heritage. So there is an important distinction between *wangguo* (the change of dynasties or governments) and *wangtianxia* (the ruin of Chinese cultural values).[7] For Chinese people, the change of governments is not as profound and significant as the ruin of Chinese cultural values. Political unification in Chinese history has always been justified by culture in terms of the Mandate of Heaven (*tianming*) and not by force. This is why peaceful unification is the common aspiration of Chinese people.

According to the Confucian tradition, a true king could only unify the Chinese kingdom by practising benevolence. Chinese culture does not give blessing to unification for its own sake. Unification under the Qin dynasty (221-206 BC) lasted only for 15 years and was not highly regarded in Chinese history. If Hong Kong's reversion to China was unavoidable and even desirable, then the "one country, two systems" formula has its merits. It at least allows the lifestyle and system of Hong Kong to continue for 50 years, even if the crisis in global capitalism may not. Deng Xiaoping's "one country, two systems" should be commended for maintaining regional diversity without losing Chinese cultural cohesion.

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[6] On developments in late 1998, see 'Lee Calls for "Constructive Dialogue" with China, Urges Moves to Democracy', AFP, 9 October 1998; 'China Rules Out Federation with Taiwan', Reuters, 8 October 1998; and Julian Baum, 'Breaking the Ice', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 15 October 1998, available on Taiwan Security Research website: http://www.taiwansecurity.org/. On the high-level Koo-Wang talks of October 1998, see Lynne O'Donnell, 'Thaw Across Taiwan Strait' *The Australian*, 15 October 1998, p8, and Greg Sheridan, 'Taipei Pushes for Summit', *The Australian*, 15 October 1998, p8.

[7] Yu Ying-shih, 'Chinese Culture and Chinese', *Lianhezaobao* (*The United Morning Post*, the Chinese newspaper of Singapore), 27 June 1983.

20

The Politics of *Wen* and *Wu*

To appreciate the importance of culture in the Chinese polity across time, an excursion into the politics of *wen* (civility) and *wu* (martiality) is helpful.[8] In the traditional East Asian world order, China was a *wen*-based power, exercising ceremonial suzerainty through the tribute system. With the imposition of the European treaty system of international relations in the 19th century, China began to appreciate the importance of *wu*-based power in the service of national survival. Without the bargaining influence of military might, a country is not only humiliated but territorially dispossessed. Power came not from *li* (rules of proper conduct) which sustained the Middle Kingdom for some 2000 years but from the "gun barrel", as Mao Zedong later expressed it. This became amply evident when China lost Hong Kong to the British in 1842 and Taiwan to the Japanese in 1895. Adhering to the way of the sages (*wen* politics) would not do in an era characterized by gunboat diplomacy.

Equally, though, too great an emphasis on *wu* can be a handicap. Today's militarily strengthened China must take care not to place *wu*-power at the forefront of diplomacy - whether it be international or inter-Chinese diplomacy. To do so would go against the traditional and contemporary Chinese philosophy of employing *wu* for the purposes of deterrence and defense, not as a means of advancing state objectives. When *wu* governs *wen*, militaristic power politics prevail. In the language of old, legalism overtakes Confucianism. On this point of power politics, China has been at pains to point out that its defense forces do not pose a threat to its neighbors,[9] despite the use of *wu*-power as a deterrent in inter-Chinese affairs. In Taiwan, the ending of "The Period of National Mobilization for Suppressing the Communist Rebellion" in 1991 marked an effort "to move the [cross-Straits] discourse away from the use of force"[10] or *wu*-power.

Having suffered international censure for its use of force against students in Beijing, monks in Tibet and in the form of war games near Taiwan, Beijing's task became one of trying to recapture the moral initiative from the West (Taiwan's *de facto* patron) which proclaimed its values of human and democratic rights to be universal.

To this end, two phases may be identified. The first, in 1997, Chinese Premier Li Peng had expressed support of the Mahathir initiative calling for a review of provisions in the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and proposing during his visit to Malaysia in August of that year that China and ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) work more closely together. The proposal made sense not only in view of a stronger China-ASEAN linkage in their geographic and economic domains, owing to the recent inclusion in ASEAN of Burma and Laos, but also in their political and cultural assertion against Western world order dominance. For China, this represented

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[8] See Rosita Dellios, '"How May the World be at Peace?": Idealism as Realism in Chinese Strategic Culture', in Valerie M. Hudson (ed.), *Culture and Foreign Policy*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, Colorado, 1997, pp. 212-3.

[9] See, for instance, Yan Xuetong, 'China's Rise Will Contribute to World Peace, Not Pose Threat to Neighbours', *China Daily*, in *The Straits Times Interactive*, 21 January 1997, http:www.asia1.com.sg/straitstimes/pages/stfeal.html

[10] Lawrence C. Katzenstein, 'Change, Myth, and the Reunification of China', in Hudson, op. cit., p. 65.

an upgrading of *wen* politics and diplomacy as a source of legitimacy. *Wu* politics (pertaining to military activity), by comparison, was likely to be held in reserve in view of the threat perceptions it generated as China grew stronger. Such threat perceptions have been of particular concern within the Chinese world, and for this reason the way of *wen* - of China becoming more Confucian, not less - presents itself as the most potent preparation for unification.

The second phase, in 1998, has come closer to this preparation. Where *wu* finds its field of action in "power politics", *wen* might be said to exercise a power of attraction when "money politics" becomes counter-productive in issues of security and survival. This is precisely what appears to have happened with the "Asian meltdown". Nations were no longer judged primarily according to their politico-military capabilities and intentions, but in terms of "market confidence". Under these criteria, China, instead of being viewed primarily in terms of threat - that is, as an emergent militarily power of dubious intent - became pivotal to stability. This was achieved by:

- not succumbing to the Asian crisis with the nightmare scenario (for both the IMF and China) of an international 'bailout';
- not devaluing its currency which, had it happened, would have unleashed a second and more devastating wave of devaluations - in effect, Asian Crisis II;
- through successful summitry, not "losing" the United States, the way the United States had "lost" China and fallen into a Cold War relationship with Beijing in mid-century;[11]
- signing the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, thereby improving China's image on the issue it most needs to;
- exhibiting a visiting British Prime Minister who clearly appreciated good relations with China. Indeed, the Clinton-Blair visits of 1998 may be remembered most for removing the "curse" of Tiananmen Square and the diplomatic friction of Chris Patten.

If China has done well to re-establish its *wen* credentials, it has still to fully develop the project of diversity ("cultural sub-systems") in order to ensure cultural survival ("one culture"). This is no inconsequential matter. For instance, it would have been disastrous for China and Chinese culture if Hong Kong and Taiwan had suffered the same devastating destruction during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) as the rest of China. Hence from the perspective of Chinese cultural values, "one culture, two systems" could preserve regional diversity while maintaining China as a cultural unity until the two systems and lifestyles converge. Just as the national parliament of Taiwan had decided to "freeze" the provincial administrative structure without declaring independence, so China could give more room to the political "one country" interpretation without abandoning the concept of a unified China. This is why maintaining the status quo and promoting cultural and economic links is the best approach to the political deadlock.

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[11] The Clinton-Jiang summit was deemed a resounding success for Sino-US diplomacy. See, for example, Paul Kelly, 'China and US Take a Great Leap Forward', *The Australian*, 1 July 1998, p. 13.

22

Chinese "Culturalism"

Chinese as a people are known to be characterized by their culture rather than by their race. In their classical work, *China: Tradition and Transformation,* John Fairbank and Edwin Reischauer wrote:

> The significant human divisions within East Asia, as in the West, are primarily linguistic rather than racial. In both East Asia and the West there is a common misconception that these linguistic differences correspond to racial divisions, but in fact there is no more a Chinese or Japanese race than there is a German or Hungarian race.[12]

They further made the interesting observation that there is a difference between Chinese culturalism and nationalism in other countries. Nationalism is often related to a sense of competition, insecurity and fear of political and cultural control by other nationalist groups, whereas culturalism in the case of China is associated with a complete confidence in its cultural superiority. This superiority remains even at the time of military weakness that may lead to the danger of political control by other groups. The Chinese unified empire has always been associated with the Chinese way of life and Chinese culture.[13]

This predominant concern for culture rather than politics had not escaped the penetrating observation of Lucian W. Pye, who wrote: "China is not just another nation-state in the family of nations. China is a civilization pretending to be a state."[14] He further stated: "The overpowering obligation felt by Chinese rulers to preserve the unity of their civilization has meant that there could be no compromises in Chinese cultural attitudes about power and authority."[15] In the wake of the 1989 Tiananmen tragedy, Pye was enormously pessimistic about the erratic state of China's political culture. He was not hopeful that the reforms or any initiative taken by society would be sustainable, because the Chinese state (government) could be "erratic".

But developments in the last few years have changed the whole outlook, showing that the Socialist state of China could take the initiative of reform and adhere to the program without being erratic. Moreover, post-handover Hong Kong has given no cause for political concern, as high profile visits by two influential world leaders, US President Bill Clinton and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, demonstrated. Beijing has not intervened in the civic life of Hong Kong, which might over time breathe a certain degree of liberalism into China's political culture and give more hope for resolving the present cross-Straits standstill. It has been said that Confucius was more concerned with the erosion rather than the abuse of authority. In this political culture of centralized authority, our present concern should not be whether there is any lack of authority in

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[12] John Fairbank and Edwin Reischauer, *China: Tradition and Transformation,* Allen & Unwin, London, 1989, p. 6.

[13] Ibid, pp. 178-179.

[14] Lucian W. Pye, "China: Erratic State, Frustrated Society," *Foreign Affairs,* Vol. 69, No 4, Fall, 1990, p. 58.

[15] Ibid.

China, but whether the regional diversity is allowed to develop and even flourish. The political structure of a loose and perhaps somewhat erratic center is not necessarily undesirable. Like the Indian *mandala* of Kaulilya's time (300 BC), the competing circles of political powers could move around and form new centers.[16] (This is further discussed in a later context.)

The question regarding post-1997 Hong Kong is whether it will be absorbed into China's collective system of socialism, or whether China will be influenced by Hong Kong's free and liberal system and lifestyle. Or, alternatively, especially in view of the cautionary lessons that might be drawn from the Asian capitalist-centered crisis, there could be a convergence of two systems. A hostile critic such as the British historian Paul Johnson would even use the image of a Trojan Horse to bring about change and "peaceful revolution" in China:

> I see the people of Hong Kong not so much as a shackled collection of captives, dragged into servitude, as the resourceful occupants of a Trojan horse, pulled within the defensive walls of the Communist citadel by a greedy and deluded ruling elite.[17]

One must not underestimate the tenacity of Chinese culture and its impact upon the various stripes of Chinese politics. Both socialism as developed in mainland China and democracy as evolved in Taiwan are bound to be tinged with Chinese characteristics. The resultant amalgam of Chinese and Western elements may surprise all expectations. Politics may be erratic in the short term whereas the lasting impact of culture is relatively stable. To understand the zigzag nature of Chinese politics, we need to examine its underlying foundation, Chinese culture. The economic significance of Chinese culturalism has been much discussed and clearly seen in the light of the perceived relationship between Confucian ethics and East Asian economies. But the cultural impact on Chinese politics has yet to draw similar attention.

Cultural China and Unification

The term "cultural China" is to be contrasted with "political China" (as when Beijing warns against the promotion of two Chinas), and "economic China" (as when we sometimes refer to the Greater China Economic Sphere). There is also the connotation that there is something unique and desirable about cultural China, which is lacking in political or economic China. Political and economic China could only operate under Chinese culture and cultural China, which is more fundamental. Cultural China emerges out of a deeply felt frustration and dissatisfaction among the intellectuals about the situation of political China. They hope that the promotion of cultural China would ease the tension within political China. Furthermore, cultural China could enable Chinese

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[16] Kautilya, the chief minister to the founder of the Mauryan Empire, Chandragupta, is thought to be the author of the *Arthasastra* which describes international relations as a mandala of *rajyas* - a "Circle of States". See Kautilya, *Arthasastra* (trans. R. Shamasastry), Mysore Printing and Publishing House, Mysore, 1967.

[17] Paul Johnson, 'A Contrarian View of Colonialism', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Special 1997 issue, p. 16.

culture to reach out towards the world through a "discourse community", which transcends geographical areas, ethnic groupings, languages and religions.

In 1987, the political impasse leading to the almost total lack of cultural communications on both sides of the Taiwan Strait had led Charles Wei-hsun Fu, a Taiwanese American academic living in the United States, to introduce the concept of "cultural China" to break the deadlock between Taiwan and China in a public lecture in Taiwan. He stated then:

> There are various implications of cultural China. First of all, we cannot continue to use the outdated political propaganda on both sides of the Taiwan Straits to resolve the difficult issue of the unification of China. The long political separation of the two sides has reached the stage of what Lao Tzu described as: Though adjoining states are within sight of one another, and the sound of dogs barking and cocks crowing in one state can be heard in another, yet the people of one state will grow old and die without having had any dealing with those of another.[18] . . . Should there be any linkage, hope, and basis for unification at all, it is nothing but the concept of cultural China.[19]

The ideal state for the Daoist is small in size and population, and it is fair to say that the concept of universal kingship presupposing a fairly large country is Confucian in origin. The pre-dynastic Zhou rulers had actually accepted the Shang's claim of authority even if the latter might not have had the actual military superiority. When the Zhou eventually came to power, in order to justify their overthrow of the Shang, their previous overlords, they developed the doctrine of *tianming* (the Mandate of Heaven). According to this political doctrine, the ruler's moral qualities may win for him authorization from Heaven (who reigns rather than rules the universe) to govern. On the other hand, if his conduct should be lacking in moral qualities, his Mandate from Heaven will be taken away. This belief of the universal kingship and the political Mandate of Heaven as an integral part of Chinese culturalism has had much bearing on Chinese politics ever since.

Confucius had inherited this tradition from the early Zhou founders, which is evident from the following passage in the *Analects:*

> When the Way prevails in the Empire, the rites and music and punitive expeditions are initiated by the Emperor. When the Way does not prevail in the Empire, they are initiated by the feudal lords. . . . When the Way prevails in the Empire, policy does not rest with the Counsellors. When the Way prevails in the Empire, the Commoners do not express critical views.[20]

This cultural quest for universal kingship (as exemplified by the early Zhou as the ideal socio-politico-cultural order) has been the driving force of Chinese politics ever since. The universal kingship should center around the moral qualities of the ruler to earn for him the Mandate of Heaven. Universal kingship may no longer be relevant to

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[18] Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching,* translated by D. C. Lau , The Chinese University Press, Hong Kong, 1982, Ch. 80, p. 117.

[19] Charles Wei-hsun Fu, *The Life of Scholarship and Scholarship of Life, (xuewen di shengming yu shengming di xuewen),* Zhenzhong Book Company, Taipei, 1993, p. 208.

[20] Confucius, *The Analects,* 16:2, translated by D. C. Lau, Penguin Books, London, 1979, p. 139.

contemporary society, but the cultural traces still remain. The cause of democracy, freedom and human rights has been advanced in Asia as a result of Western influence. But cultural adjustment is unavoidable whether in the case of socialism in mainland China or democracy in Taiwan. In Chinese societies, the community is always more important than the individual, and the interest of the community should always be above that of the individual. This cultural feature should be regarded as a strength rather than weakness, and should be revived in contemporary Chinese societies in instances where it has been allowed to be overtaken by power-and-money politics. As to the West, its comparative transparency and institution-building need not blind us to a larger picture of both positive and negative features. Commenting on American society in an interview, Lee Kuan Yew has observed:

> As an East Asian looking at America, I find attractive and unattractive features. I like, for example, the free, easy and open relations between people regardless of social status, ethnicity or religion. And the things that I have always admired about America, as against the communist system, I still do: a certain openness in argument about what is good or bad for society; the accountability of public officials; none of the secrecy and terror that is part and parcel of communist system.

> But as a total system, I find parts of it totally unacceptable: guns, drugs, violent crime, vagrancy, unbecoming behaviour in public - in sum the breakdown of civil society. The expansion of the right of the individual to behave or misbehave as he pleases has come at the expense of orderly society. In the East the main object is to have a well-ordered society so that everybody can have maximum enjoyment of his freedoms. This freedom can only exist in an ordered society and not in a natural state of contention and anarchy.[21]

However much Chinese political and economic structures may transform, the transformations could only be carried out in the overall cultural universe of China. Cultural China could serve as a rallying point and community of discourse for Chinese and sinologists all over the world. According to Professor Tu Weiming of Harvard University, cultural China could be understood and defined in terms of three symbolic universes. The first includes mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, mainly societies with cultural and ethnic Chinese. The second symbolic universe refers to overseas Chinese communities all over the world. And the third consists of professionals, entrepreneurs, and sinologists who try to understand China intellectually and bring their conceptions of China to their own linguistic communities.[22] His most telling point is that in the last forty years cultural China has been molded more effectively by the third symbolic universe than the other two combined, which explains the thesis of his article, "Cultural China: The Periphery as the Center".

President Lee Teng-hui of Taiwan might have had this in mind in his inauguration address for the "International Conference on the Third-Wave Democracy", held in Taipei in August 1995, when he put forward the goal of "Building Up Greater Taiwan and Establishing New Central Plains" (zhongyuan, the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River). He could have echoed Tu's thesis that the center of cultural China does not need to be in Beijing, Xi'an, or even any part of the traditional cultural center, the

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[21] Quoted in Fareed Zakaria, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 2, March/April 1994, p. 111.
[22] Tu Wei-ming, "Cultural China: The Periphery as the Center", *Daedalus*, Vol. 120, No. 2, Spring 1991, p. 12-13.

26

zhongyuan. The cultural center could even be in Taiwan if it is built up carefully and with great effort. In the same speech, Lee mentioned that culture is the most crucial factor in Taiwan's success in political reform and democratization. In the latest straining of relationship between Taiwan and mainland China, the former appeals to democracy and its right to survive whereas the latter nationalism of the political greater China. It is clear that for the time being there is very little political common ground between the two. But both Lee and Communist Chinese leader Jiang Zemin have agreed that cultural exchange should be part of the basis for unification. So culture not only facilitates our understanding of Chinese politics; it may even play an important role in China's unification as well.

Yu Ying-shih, a much respected Chinese American scholar, wrote in 1983 that the attraction of Marxism for Chinese intellectuals came from the Marxist orientation to transform the world and not to interpret the world. This characteristic fits in well with Chinese philosophy. For instance, Confucianism is directed toward transforming the individual, family and society in general rather than explaining the facts about the world, which happens to be the prominent feature of Western philosophy. Yet interestingly, as a scholar of mainland Chinese origin steeped in traditional Chinese culture, Yu does not think highly of political unification under a greater China. He refers to the first emperor of the Qin dynasty (221-206 BC) and his cultural and political unification with much disapproval, as accords with the above-mentioned Daoist viewpoint, because as a result of the unification all regional cultures (the "little traditions") were absorbed into the much stronger "great tradition". Likewise, he argues that it is undesirable for the culturally more colorful and diversified Hong Kong and Taiwan to be swallowed up by Beijing after a political unification. He concludes that although he supports unification it should not be viewed merely from the political perspective. Again, only cultural China could provide an ideal arena for a non-political unification.[23]

Francis Fukuyama has put forward the now famous thesis that societies with different cultures are to be compared to wagons making the slow journey to their final destination of political democracy and economic freedom. There could be only different times of arrival but no question of whether they will eventually arrive at the destination. He is convinced that history would ultimately vindicate its own rationality.[24] If we accept his argument, even China will eventually reach this destination despite the twists, turns, and zigzags along the way. The political semantics of "unification" and "independence" do not need to be defined too clearly. We could all support unification in terms of cultural China, and there is no harm to argue for independence in terms of a different lifestyle. After all, China would allow Hong Kong and Taiwan to maintain their own social and economic systems.

Chinese language is well equipped to tread the semantic path of ambiguity; this cultural and linguistic trait should be utilized to cushion and minimize the present tension between the two political entities. It might be time that those participating in the

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[23] Yu Ying-shih, *Cultural Commentaries and Chinese Sentiments* (Wenhua pinglun yu zhongguo di qinghuai), Yun-chen Cultural Publisher, Taipei, 1993, pp. 235-257.
[24] Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man,* The Free Press, New York, 1992, p. 339.

discourse of cultural China are amenable to the Daoist wisdom of not taking the political form and its associated value judgment too seriously. "It is all a matter of perspectives and viewpoints," as Zhuangzi would say. Perhaps 20 or 30 years from now, the wagons of political democracy and economic freedom, albeit with Chinese characteristics, will eventually come to town. At that time, who would argue about the political issues the way we do now? The banner and discourse forum provided by cultural China could serve to keep all these issues in abeyance, while all members of the greater China community (including Tu Weiming's three symbolic universes) will continue with their life, work, and discourse. (See Figure 1 for an inclusive representation.)

Universal kingship with the blessing of the Mandate of Heaven is one example, noted above, of understanding Chinese rulers in the light of Chinese culture. In modern times, Mao Zedong and Chiang Kai-shek had exhibited this characteristic in their exercise of political power, and Deng Xiaoping was no exception. After the Tiananmen Incident (or "Massacre" for many Beijing critics), Henry Kissinger wrote: "No government in the world would have tolerated having the main square of its capital occupied for eight weeks."[25] Deng Xiaoping's decision in connection with the students at Tiananmen Square could have been informed to some extent by the political culture of universal kingship that any challenge to the central authority, if not firmly dealt with, would result in political instability and even the forfeiture of universal kingship.

Any attempt to understand political events of the world would only scratch the surface if cultural background is not suitably taken into consideration. As Samuel Huntington famously pointed out, with the end of the Cold War, culture has increasingly replaced ideology as the cause of conflicts in international relations.[26] The Sino-British disputes before the handover of Hong Kong could also be understood culturally rather than ideologically. From the Daoist viewpoint, political disputes and differences are not always a matter of right and wrong. The Hong Kong handover could be looked at from different angles. Despite the disputes, the British have undoubtedly contributed to Hong Kong's success and prosperity - otherwise there would not be such enormous endeavor to preserve its present system. China has also acted rationally in the lead-up to the handover. Taiwan might draw some valuable lessons from what has transpired before and after the event.

Discussion will now turn to various issues of Chinese politics in the light of the Chinese culture *mandala* as a hermeneutic symbol to unravel the often perceived inscrutability and mystery of Chinese politics.

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[25] Quoted in John Fialka, 'Kissinger's Ties to China Raise Concerns', *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 15-16 September 1989.

[26] Samuel P. Huntington, 'The Clash of Civilizations?', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3, Summer 1993, pp. 22-49.

28

The Chinese *Culture Mandala*

The term *mandala* literally means "circle" in Sanskrit and has the general meaning of a mystic symbol of the universe - or cosmogram. As a mystic symbol, it features strongly in the Indian generated religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Tibetan Lamaism, as well as in the Buddhism of Japan.[27] The *mandala* may appear in different forms depending on the scripture on which it is based, but it generally reflects the layout of the royal palace of a cosmic god. By meditating on the *mandala*, the devotee expects to identity himself or herself with the central deity surrounded by lesser deities and achieve supreme deliverance. But to be successful, certain rituals must be performed to engage effectively cosmic forces and deities. Sometimes a meditator would make a *mandala* of his or her own body for the sake of being unified with the cosmos.

Apart from its mystic and symbolic meaning, the term *mandala* also has the general meaning of a "circle" or "wheel" with a set of directions or spatial relationships around a central point. Its meaning has been extended to the political sphere to refer to the circle of kingdoms giving allegiance to a ruler with power, charisma and merit. O. W. Wolters has discussed the historical political patterns in Southeast Asia in terms of *mandalas*:

> ... a *mandala* represented a particular and often unstable political situation in a vaguely definable geographical area without fixed boundaries and where smaller centres tended to look in all directions for security. *Mandalas* would expand and contract in concertina-like fashion. Each one contained several tributary rulers, some of whom would repudiate their vassal status when the opportunity arose and try to build up their own networks of vassals.[28]

The significance of the political alliance is that the loosely defined sphere of influence could only be maintained by the power of the center. The vassal kingdoms are also secondary centres in their own right. If the primary center becomes weak, the secondary ones may opt for independence or shift allegiance to another power center. To fully appreciate the political culture of *mandalas*, we need to understand the source of power for the center, the ritual role played by the king, and the processes of formation and dissolution of a *mandala*. Generally speaking, agricultural production and trade built the economic basis for the earliest *mandalas*, which in turn were constantly reinforced through marriage, tributary relations, and ritual means.

It has been argued that in Southeast Asia the development of the *mandalas*, in the main, followed the Indian rather than the Chinese model despite proximity of China. It was more difficult to emulate the Chinese model, owing to the relative complexity of its cultural components such as ancestor worship, sacrifice to Heaven and recruitment through civil service examinations. The model had to be adopted along with its

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[27] Mircea Eliade et al. (eds), *The Encyclopedia of Religions*, Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, 1987, vol. 9, p. 155.
[28] Colin Mackerras (ed.), *Eastern Asia: An Introductory History*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1992, p. 95. Cf. O. W. Wolters, *History, Culture, and Religion in Southeast Asian Perspectives*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 1982, p. 17.

accompanying cultural elements, whereas the Indian model could be more easily adapted to local situations. Furthermore, the Indian *mandalas* did not have the control of a central authority as sophisticated as their Chinese counterparts. As a result, they were less stable and the question of legitimacy and succession was always present. One way of legitimizing kingship was the identification of the king with the divinity through ritual means.

The ancient Chinese also believed in such linkages between certain symbols and cosmic forces, or between microcosm and macrocosm, which are much elaborated upon in *The Book of Changes (Ijing)*. Heaven is the center of the macrocosmic *mandala,* whereas the emperor (the Son of Heaven), authorized by Heaven to rule, is the hub of the earthly *mandala.* The Chinese Mandate of Heaven dictates that the emperor must emulate the moral paradigm of Heaven as closely as possible to maintain the charisma, power and influence of this earthly *mandala* center.

As the flourishing of this earthly *mandala* contributes to the stability and well-being of the Chinese world, it has enjoyed both cultural prestige and blessing in China. Consequently, most rulers in Chinese history have been primarily preoccupied with the preservation of the Heaven-endowed Mandate and *mandala.* Any inkling of possible challenges to their authority had to be dealt with firmly to preclude the possible crumbling and eventual loss of the Mandate. Their firm actions have carried all the cultural weight of continuing the sacred universal kingship. Thus "the rites and music and punitive expeditions should be initiated by the Emperor [or any contemporary Chinese ruler]", which has been enshrined in the *Analects* of Confucius. The above cultural belief with all its moral and political implications could be called the Chinese *culture mandala.*

With economic reform in China, we might easily forget the accompanying cultural heritage of central political control. The phenomenon has appeared in South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore. What has been happening in China is part of this cultural heritage. In a speech given to members of the Drafting Committee of the Hong Kong Basic Law on 16 April 1987, Deng Xiaoping stated that China's open policies in economy must go hand-in-hand with the "insistence" of socialist institutions under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. Whenever there was a clamp-down of capitalist liberation in China, outsiders were quick to pronounce that there was a change of policy. According to Deng, the "insistence" was part of the Chinese constitution; there had not been any change. It was just that the critics paid attention only to the economic reform and not to the "insistence".

He also explained why student demonstrations at Tiananmen Square were dealt with so "sternly". Apparently, with the disastrous disturbance of the Cultural Revolution in mind, he emphasized that China needed political stability, which was the main condition for economic development. In the same speech, he also mentioned that since the Opium Wars, for one and a half centuries, the unification of China (referring to Taiwan and Hong Kong) had been the common wish of the Chinese people. Significantly, most Chinese (to the extent that they consider themselves Chinese) would not quarrel with this statement in general. Such is the impact of the Chinese *culture mandala.*

The notion of a Chinese *culture mandala* with a strong political center may be in conflict with the Western values of democracy and human rights. But Deng Xiaoping was not the only Chinese leader taking issue with the West on such matters.[29] Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew had also made known his opposing views on a number of occasions. Even President Lee Teng-hui of Taiwan has often been criticized by his political opponents for being dictatorial. He also has to pay at least lip service to the cultural and political heritage of the "unification of China", which in Western minds often adds to the conceptual confusion of the distinction between "Taiwan" and "Republic of China" (Taiwan's official name). Yet Taiwanese and Chinese politicians make much capital out of the purported distinction. This is another example that no one could properly understand Chinese politics without being initiated into the Chinese *culture mandala*.

"One Country, Two Systems": The Sino-British Disputes over Hong Kong

The rationale behind "the country, two systems" is that, on the one hand, there is need to maintain the unified Chinese empire (thus one country) and, on the other, both socialism and capitalism have their merits (thus two systems). The two systems are more than simply two different economic systems, but two different ways of life in their economic, political, and social aspects. In fact, the main obstacle to the implementation of "one country, two systems" does not lie in "one country", after which both China and Taiwan aspire, but how the two diametrically distinct lifestyles could be reconciled with each other. Hence if the ideal of the unified Chinese kingdom is to be fulfilled, there is a need for the two systems or lifestyles to converge, not necessarily through one system being absorbed by or assimilated into another, but through creative cultural transformations of both.

Specifically, a socialism suitable for China should not mean the extreme leftism as demonstrated during the devastating Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), nor should democracy necessarily be equated with Western liberalism. Thus socialism could be implemented with Chinese characteristics, and democracy practised with Confucian attributes (see Figure 2). It is in this context that Chinese culture including Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism and even Sino-Asian values (not the cronyism and corruption, as identified through the Asian crisis rhetoric, but in terms of the ethical and community values of the traditional discourse), would have a bearing upon the reconciliation of the two systems. Viewed in this light, Cultural China or the Chinese *culture mandala* is not purely idealistic or academic in dealing with Chinese politics on

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[29] Indeed, he was not the only Asian leader. However, we confine ourselves here to Chinese leaders and "Chinese values" rather than Asian leaders and "Asian values" for the very reasons which distinguish the Chinese *mandala* model from the Indian variety - namely, as noted above, the Indian *mandala* adopted by Southeast Asians did not have the control of a central authority as sophisticated as its Chinese counterpart. This meant it was less stable and more open to challenges to legitimacy and succession. Transporting this comparison to the current period of Asian crisis, "Asian values" might be blamed for assisting the collapse of the "tiger economies", but "Chinese values" may one day be applauded for the survival of Chinese "dragon economies". This speculation is informed by a history of culturally-mediated survival spanning some 5000 years.

both sides of the Taiwan Straits. With hindsight, if we review the Sino-British disputes over Chris Patten's democratic reform in Hong Kong, they are not merely a case of democracy versus authoritarianism but a clash of cultural values. Perhaps we could learn some lessons from this episode and apply them to the cross-Straits relationship between Taiwan and China.

Traditionally, China tends to insist upon its rightful place under Heaven. Cultural sensitivity was ruffled in the process of Chris Patten's democratic reform in Hong Kong. Summarizing the Chinese and British arguments over Hong Kong's political reforms, the following points may be made. From the Chinese angle, Britain took Hong Kong by force during the Opium Wars, and should return it to China without any condition. When negotiating with Beijing over the composition of the Legislative Council (Legco), Britain had blatantly breached earlier understanding with China (after much compromise from the latter). The British approach had been legalistic, capitalizing on the loopholes of the Basic Law to expand the electorate base of selecting the Legco members. From the Chinese cultural perspective, the British were insincere and unforgivable, which is tantamount to the waging of the Third Opium War. Culturally, Chinese tend to shy away from legalistic negotiations. They like to reach broad understanding first, and then fill in the details in a spirit of cooperation.

From the British point of view, Britain had a "moral responsibility" towards the Hong Kong people after 150 years of colonial rule. There was a basic distrust of Beijing's ability and intention to maintain the current lifestyle of Hong Kong for 50 years in view of the Chinese record on human rights in the Cultural Revolution and the Tiananmen Massacre. Since the reversion of Hong Kong to China was irreversible, the only way to protect the interests of Hong Kong was to put in place the full democratic structure before 1997 so that any drastic change by Beijing would incur the criticism and hostility of the Hong Kong public and the international community. The strategy was to make it a legal *fait accompli* particularly if Beijing were to give its explicit or implicit agreement.

It is an irony of history that Patten could resort successfully to public opinion in Hong Kong to support his reform proposal. In keeping with the Confucian prescription of moral cultivation, all "patriotic" Chinese including the present leaders in Beijing should engage in self-examination pondering why the people in Hong Kong strongly favored more democracy three years before the colony's recovery to the motherland. There was a clear tendency for Hong Kong under Chris Patten to drift away from the central authority of Beijing in defiance of the Chinese *culture mandala*. This was all the more reason why Beijing was nervous and angry. Meanwhile, the inexorable law of the Chinese *culture mandala* will continue to operate, attracting and dispelling the peripheral elements depending on the charisma, moral qualities and political power of the central authority.

In a lecture at Hong Kong University on 14 December 1992, Singapore Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew said that Hong Kong deserved democracy only "if you can divorce yourself from China and tow [Hong Kong] 2,000 miles away. If you can't, I say look at the realities close to it".[30] In his view, the realities were that China would not allow

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[30] *The Economist*, 19 December 1992, p. 24.

Western democracy to be introduced into Hong Kong, which could subsequently destabilize politics in China. Deng Xiaoping was known to admire Singapore's combination of high economic growth with social discipline and political control. In a speech to Hong Kong's business leaders on 7 May 1994, Lu Ping, Director of China's Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office, also pointed out that Hong Kong had always been an economic city, never a political city, and this was where its value to China lay - thereby implying that Beijing would not allow Hong Kong to be politically active. This leads to the conclusion that political development in Hong Kong cannot be entirely separated from that in China.

Deng Xiaoping often emphasized the importance of clamping down on criminal activities along with implementing the economic reforms and open-door policies. In 1994 Chinese President Jiang Zemin also told visiting Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad in Beijing: "Without the resolute measures taken then (during the June 4, 1989 Tiananmen Incident), China would not have enjoyed today's stability."[31] He repeated the same message to President Clinton in 1998, on nationwide television. Such is the (moral) confidence of this stance that it can now be performed openly and unselfconsciously. The Chinese leaders' stress upon discipline and order appear to be justifiable and in harmony with the Chinese *culture mandala*. To illustrate the point, the law and order situation in China could sometimes become uncontrollable. As an example of this deteriorating situation, in April 1994, 24 Taiwanese sight-seeing visitors along with their Chinese crew were murdered (burnt to death) by robbers on board a boat at Qiandao Lake in Zhejiang province. Corruption, vice and criminal activities have all been rampant. Moreover, regional autonomy has also challenged the central authority.

Socialism with Chinese Characteristics During Capitalism's Crisis

Chinese all over the world have been searching for their cultural identity in different ways. Riding on the crest of the economically booming Greater China, some Chinese even argued that the 21st century would be the Chinese century, a view which must now take into account the prospect of a global recession. This is not necessarily bad for China, although it is clearly not good either. If we are to witness the collapse of Capitalism at the end of the century, mirroring the collapse of Communism but a decade earlier, who but the Chinese would trumpet the virtues of "Socialism with Chinese characteristics"? Adversity has been shown on more than one occasion, and for more than one society, to act as a spur to cultural resources of adaptation and survival. China's are well developed for this task, while its advantage of numbers - including the diverse communities of Tu Weiming's three symbolic universes - ensures a "critical mass" should one be required.

Whatever the global economic outlook, Greater China will undoubtedly play a vital role in the new century, which was almost unthinkable only a few years ago. The market economy in China ("Socialism with Chinese characteristics") in the last few years has greatly improved the livelihood of its people as never before. Hong Kong has just

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[31] *Far Eastern Economic Review,* 9 June 1994, p. 22.

started to experiment with "one country, two systems" with some confidence. Taiwan's democratization in the last 10 years resembles a miracle, albeit with enormous social price. The diversity of the above three systems must be preserved in the interest of Greater China, economic, political and cultural. To achieve this goal requires political tolerance and cultural adjustments.

For instance, sinicizing the market economy of the West has been relatively smooth because commercial "bottom lines" tend to be universally respected. But preconceived political and cultural norms, principles, and values regarding democracy, human rights and racial biases are more deeply rooted, and not as easily transplanted between different cultures. It has become more and more of a consensus that Truth - whether in terms of human rights, democracy, market economy, or cultural values - is no longer cherished as something absolute and universal.

Truth and Transformation

Truth is not necessarily the product of liberty and equality as advocates of liberal democracy like to maintain. For even J. S. Mill was criticized by one of his contemporaries for "making a metaphysical statement about the nature of truth, assuming truth to be necessarily inconsistent with authority and necessarily the product of free discussion."[32] Indeed, Francis Fukuyama himself observes that, for the traditional Japanese, his or her sense of worth lies not in the individual but in belonging to a group (a company or a nation) whose good reputation wins recognition. In other words, the Confucian quality of cherishing the community rather than the isolated individual may be a great improvement over, and even superior alternative to, the worship of liberty and individuality in Western liberal democracy.

As we turn to John Rawls, the question confronting political liberalism is: how is it possible to have a stable and just society whose free and equal citizens are deeply divided by conflicting and even incommensurable religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines?[33] To achieve this goal, it is important to establish principles of justice specifying basic institutions of society and also to form an overlapping consensus of people subscribing to pluralistic "reasonable comprehensive doctrines".

Yet in a Confucian society, the overlapping consensus is more than the political concept of justice as fairness and the basic institutions mentioned above. Its members may even share common values of the good, which make the society more cohesive and harmonious than a typical society of liberal democracy in the West. Liberal democracy, in the Rawlsian sense, does not allow political principles to be informed with the content of any particular culture or tradition. The result may be more tolerant and liberal, but spiritually and culturally more deprived. Thus liberal democracy may be suitable for a culturally pluralistic and potentially conflicting society in the West, but needs to be fine-tuned to be in harmony with a homogeneous society imbued with Confucian ethics within Greater China.

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[32] Gertrude Himmelfarb's Introduction to John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*, Penguin, 1974, p. 39.
[33] John Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1993, p.133.

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Liberal democracy may or may not be the end of history, but in order to be relevant to Greater China it must take into account Confucian values. The social harmony and economic prosperity of the Chinese societies of Singapore, Hong Kong, China and Taiwan have clearly demonstrated that, while liberal democracy has already exerted its impact in this region, it has yet to face up fully to the challenges posed by Confucian ethics in political, economic, social and even ethico-religious arenas. The creative transformation of these societies is still continuing unabated. The exact outcome may not be known for many years to come, but the challenges could only be ignored at the peril of Western liberal democracy. Is it possible for liberal democracy to shape its new destiny in cultural China by being both liberal and Confucian?

Mandala Modeling

These cultural patterns also have an impact on China's "place" in the wider Asian and global affairs. After all, the Middle Kingdom was ultimately conceived of as a unity of civilization, of "all under heaven", in relational concord. This cultural approach can be expressed in mandala symbolism. The Chinese *culture mandala* is premised on a living center of Chinese culture, represented by the *yin-yang* symbol of complementary differences. Those differences may alter with circumstance, for example the dynamic China-Taiwan differences manifesting at present. But the center, a sigmoid line, represents the continuity and wellspring of Chinese culture. When *yin* and *yang* embrace each other, they reveal that they are not a world that can be divided into black and white, communist and capitalist, authoritarian and democratic, but black-in-white and white-in-black (see Figure 2). From the *yin* and *yang* is born a multiplicity of sub-cultures, all related to each other and their parental source, the *yin-yang,* which itself issues from the sustaining unity (and deep experience) of Chinese culture. Here lies the source of both nourishment for the many and self-realization for each. Like the *yin-yang* symbol, the surrounding mandala (Figure 1) also contains counterpoised qualities, in symmetrical harmony, for its task of transforming China into its rightful place under the cultural universe. This would entail the globalization of China through external engagement but under the tutelage or charismatic attraction (*laihua* - "come and be transformed") of Chinese culture. Thus, the way of the sages is enacted in the cultivation of the inner self (unity) and the outer multiplicity of relations. In this form, the globalization of China also entails the Confucianization of a hitherto *ren*-deficient world. *Ren* (human-heartedness), the highest Confucian virtue, finds its outward expression as *li* (rules of proper conduct) - the substance of tradition Chinese international law.

Ren is an underutilized concept in the West, where one finds a bleaker appraisal of human propensities under conditions of power and influence. Thus, where the Western-tutored world sees in power a corrupting influence, and hence the need for "checks and balances", the Confucian disposition is to view power as the opportunity to exercise virtue. Of interest in this respect is the Chinese word *de*, meaning both power and virtue (as in the *Daodejing* of Laozi). So too, *xin* means heart-mind. It is no coincidence that moral power is said to be gained by winning the hearts and minds of the people. More to the point in terms of leadership, if mind has a heart (figuratively speaking), then it will be virtuous.

Depicted as a mandala, the Western balance-of-power concept is brittle without a moral center (see Figure 3).[34] If, however the UN, were to be reinvigorated so that the global interest (including human and environmental justice) prevailed, the Western mandala would converge with the Chinese, producing a macro version of Figures 1 and 2. These, it will be recalled, address the China-Taiwan convergence of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Democracy with Confucian Attributes. Here, in Figure 4, there is a *yin-yang* core of Global Relations with *Ren* Characteristics and Pluralism with the Global Interest.

To sum up, Chinese culture has proven its resilience whereas political and social systems are subject to change throughout the ages. Apart from "one country, two systems" currently being put into practice in Hong Kong, we need to seriously consider "one culture, two systems" to break the political deadlock between China and Taiwan. Chinese culture could accommodate both "Socialism with Chinese characteristics" in mainland China and "liberal democracy with Confucian features" in Taiwan. With Hong Kong as the buffer area and thousands of Taiwanese businessmen operating in China as mediators, the two distinct social, economic and political systems will converge rather than go their own ways in the near future. Similarly, at the macro level, "global relations with *ren* characteristics" promote one world; while the complementary principle of "pluralism in the global interest" allows many sub-cultures to flourish without fear and in the interests of civilizational vigor. As the Chinese saying goes, we should *qiu tong cun yi* (seek common ground while reserving differences). At this historical juncture, only Chinese culture could accomplish this difficult task for cross-Straits relations and, in doing so, prepare the platform for inter-Chinese stability upon which other global-order architectures will depend.

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[34] Also shown in Dellios, "'How May the World be at Peace?'": Idealism as Realism in Chinese Strategic Culture", in Hudson, op. cit., p. 207.

36

APPENDIX 1: "One Culture, Two Systems" as a Cross-Cultural Concept[35]

Chinese culture does not have a monopoly on the concept of *li-yu-fen-shu*, and its expression here as "one culture, different systems". It is found in many spiritual traditions, through corresponding ideas. "Unity" is of a similar quality to the center of the *mandala*, an Indian cultural form. The *mandala* center provides an integrative, ordering, force of the surrounding spheres of multiplicity. Mandalas are also cross-cultural, but with particularly pervasive usage in Hindu and Buddhist cultures. In Buddhist thought, the center, which represents perfected Buddhahood, can be either concentric or polycentric. Such an apparent paradox may be explained in terms of a dynamic relationship of intercausality: "Each entity is the cause of the whole and is caused by the whole."[36] Moreover, each sentient being harbors the potential for Buddhahood, thereby holding the center within. This accords with the Hindu claim that "the seeker is none other than the sought".[37] The Western tradition also speaks of a center which reflects multiplicity-in-unity. Hence the cosmic dances of classical Greece were an initiation into the divine mysteries. The dancer was:

> . . . teased out of thought by a circle whose centre is nowhere and whose circumference is everywhere. In it all contraries meet.[38]

As to Christian Neoplatonism:

> . . . the Neoplatonic circle of emanation and return manifested itself most widely in the concept of *circuitus spiritualis*, a powerful current of "love," or cohesive and sustaining supernatural energy, which flows ceaselessly from God down through the successive levels of even remoter being and circles back to God - the force that holds the universe together and manifests itself through human awareness as the yearning to return to an undivided state.[39]

There are similarities here with the Sufi idea of a circle of existence in which "the higher world of love and Unity" and the lower world of multiplicity engage in "a constant traffic of ascent and decent: From the One to the Many, and from the Many back to the One".[40]

Finally, to Song Dynasty China (960-1279 CE):

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[35] The cross-cultural examples in this section are derived from Rosita Dellios, 'Reconceptualising Development as a Culture Mandala', conference paper, *4th International Conference on Development*, jointly organised by Institute for Malaysian and International Studies (IKMAS) of Universiti Kabangsaan Malaysia, and the International Institute for Development Studies (IIDS) of Calcutta, Bangi, Malaysia, 2-4 September 1997, pp. 20-22.

[36] Adrian Snodgrass, *The Symbolism of the Stupa*, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, NY, 1985, p. 125.

[37] See, for example, Arvind Sharma, 'Hinduism', in Arvind Sharma (ed.), *Our Religions*, HarperCollins, San Francisco, 1995, p. 11.

[38] James Miller, *Measures of Wisdom: The Cosmic Dance in Classical and Christian Antiquity*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1986, p. 227.
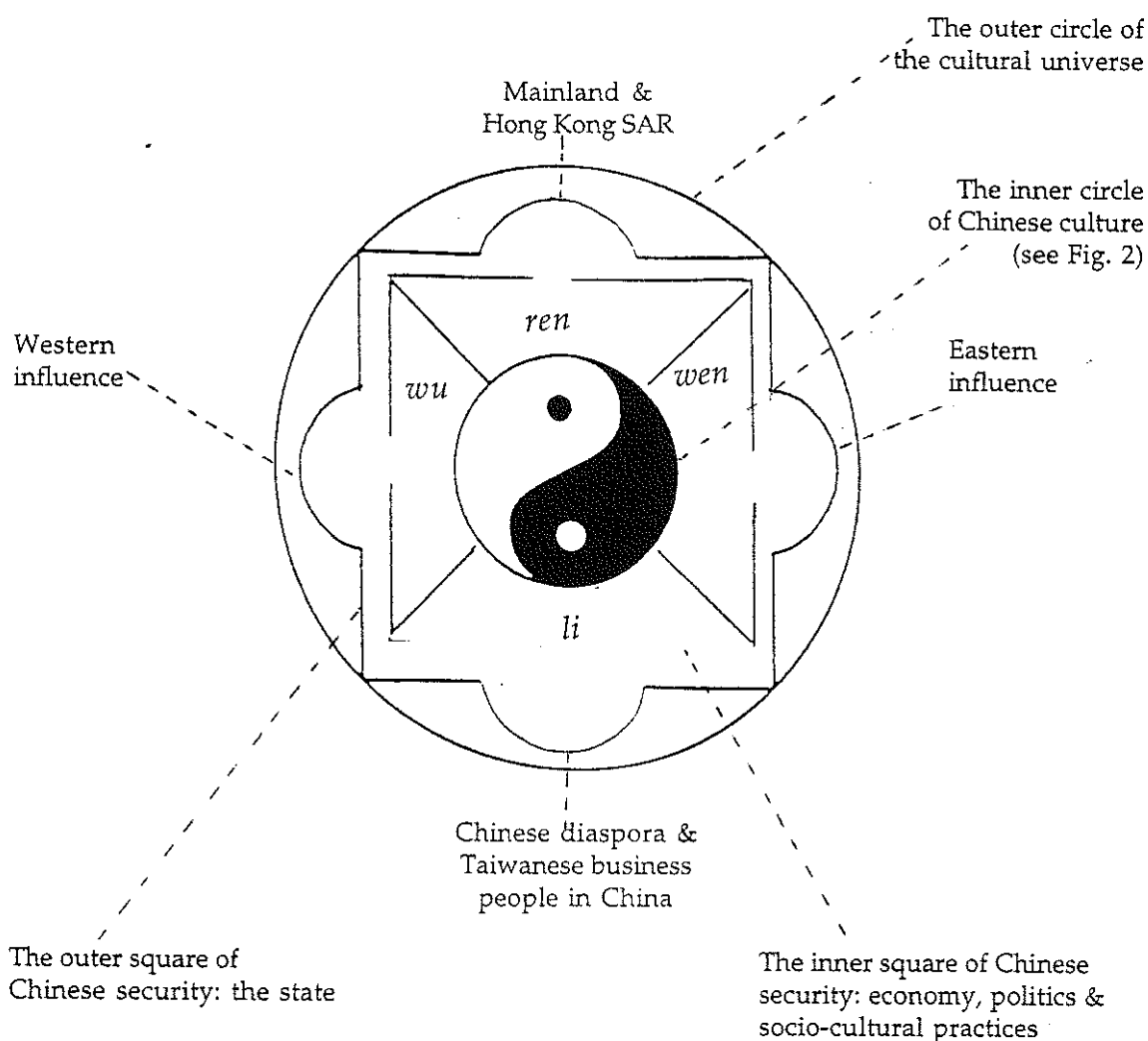
[39] M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature*, W. W. Norton & Co., NY, 1971, p. 152.

[40] Hossein M. Elahi Ghomshei, 'Poetics and Aesthetics in the Persian Sufi Literary Tradition', *Sufi*, Issue 28, Winter 1995-96, (pp. 21-27), p. 23.

37

Man is born after heaven-and-earth.
His mind existed before heaven-and-earth.
Heaven-and-earth emerge from me.
What more is there to say about it?[41]

The above examples are cross-cultural instances of unity-in-diversity thinking. *Li-yi-fen-shu*, like *ren* and *wen*, resonates universally.

Fig. 1: The Chinese *Culture Mandala*

The outer circle of the cultural universe

Mainland & Hong Kong SAR

The inner circle of Chinese culture (see Fig. 2)

Western influence

ren

wu   *wen*

li

Eastern influence

Chinese diaspora & Taiwanese business people in China

The outer square of Chinese security: the state

The inner square of Chinese security: economy, politics & socio-cultural practices

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[41] Shao Yung, I-ch'uan chi-jang chi (Collected Poems of Shao Yung), 19.12b, quoted in Kidder Smith, Jr, Peter K. Bol, Joseph A. Adler, and Don J. Wyatt, *Sung Dynasty Uses of the I Ching*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1990, p. 133

38

Fig. 2: "One Culture, Two Systems"
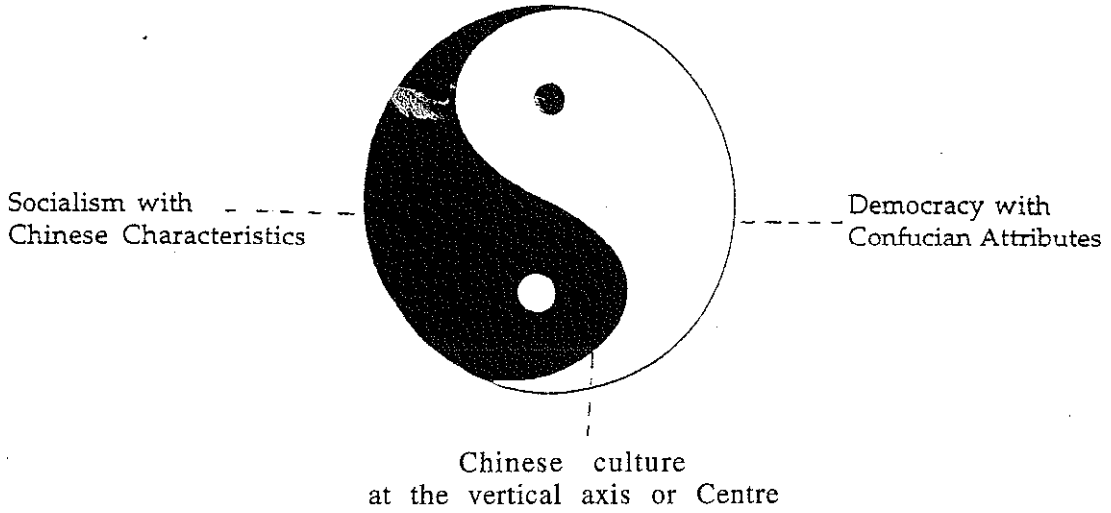Represented as a *Yin-Yang* Relationship

Socialism with
Chinese Characteristics

Democracy with
Confucian Attributes
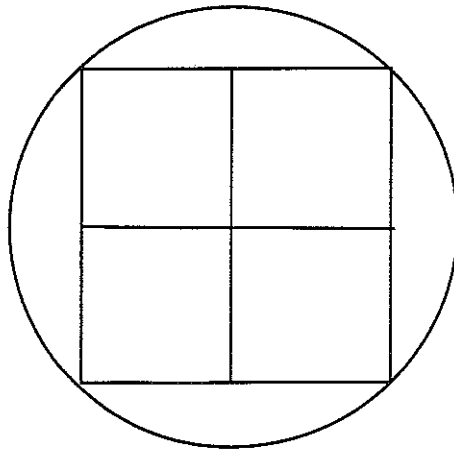
Chinese culture
at the vertical axis or Centre

Fig. 3: Western Balance-of-Power Mandala

39

Fig. 4: The Global *Culture Mandala*

The outer circle of
the cultural universe

Islamic/Middle Eastern
influence

Western
influence

Chinese &
Eastern Asian
influence

ren

wu

wen

li

Global Relations
with *Ren* Characteristics

Pluralism with
the Global Interest

Hindu/Indian influence

The outer square of
global security: the UN

The inner square of global
security: economy, politics &
socio-cultural practices

40