

河北师范大学

硕士学位论文

论东西方文化的民族个性特征

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Abstract

This paper is mainly concerned the contrastive description of Sino-western cultural traits which are (1) in the relationship between man and nature, western people tend to think that man can conquer nature while in China we take man and nature as a unity; (2) in handling the relationship between man and society, Westerners emphasize the sense of competition and the strength of individual personality while we think highly of collective consciousness with well-balanced view between extremes; (3) in the relationship between man and himself in his moral improvement, they would rely on the discipline by religion while we advocate introspection for self-cultivation. The other aspect of the essay is what are the causes of the cultural differences between China and the West. First, an analysis is made concerning the effects which different geographical condition and different social structures have borne on the shaping of two different styles of national characteristic and cultural personality. Furthermore, language and culture are closely related and a language necessarily contains the underlying spirit of a national culture. So in the course of the discussion on these Sino-Western cultural traits, the distinguishing features of both languages are also characterized throughout the paper. Besides, the interaction of culture with its language is emphasized in the paper. On the one hand, culture restricts language. A rough analysis of some Chinese character is enough to show that the

philosophical view of “unity of nature and man” has left its clear marks on the Chinese language, and the different tendencies toward laying emphasis on the collective in China and on the individual in the West are also reflected in their languages. On the other hand, language in its turn exerts a significant counter-action on culture. The vagueness of the Chinese language and the exactness of the Western languages have exerted visible influences on their respective cultures.

Since the dimensions of culture are manifold and since there have already published large numbers of books and articles which have given relatively comprehensive description on the cultural similarities and differences between China and the West, it is neither advisable nor necessary for me to so repeat the work others have already done as to do point by point comparison between the Chinese and the Western cultural characteristics. Instead I'll take the liberty to add as many explanations as I can to the spirited concepts of Sino-Western cultural differences. In the course of my discussion what I concern mainly is the social value and spiritual aspects of both cultures and what are the reasons of the cultural differences. I'd like to single out some of the same characteristics for comparisons because I think they roughly stand for the different cultural personalities. The pairs of cultural traits are ① Conquest of nature by man vs unity of nature and man; ② Competitive sense of individuality vs collective consciousness for a balanced view between

extremes; ③ Seeking help from God vs self-cultivation through introspection; ④ The tendency towards being scientific vs the tendency towards being artistic. After a contrastive analysis of these pairs some comments are given on the advantages and disadvantages of both the Chinese and Western cultures as objectively as possible.

In the history of the development of the human race from primitive society to class society, there had appeared several countries with an ancient civilization. They are ancient Egypt, Babylon, India, Greece and China. The areas in which these countries are situated are reputed as the cradles of world civilization. But with the gradual progress of history some of these ancient civilizations either suspended their development or was engulfed by the culture of a different race. Only a few of them have lasted till now. The most influential mighty cultural current acknowledged by the world are the Eastern civilization with Hua Xia (Chinese) culture as its main trend and the Western civilization that takes the ancient Greek culture as its fountainhead. During thousands of years of development, the two great civilizations have taken different paths and have shaped their own cultural patterns.

In the discussion concerning the cultural type of China, some scholars, because of their prejudice or ignorance thought that China's is a lower level of civilization and the traditional Chinese mode of thinking is pre-logical and indiscriminate between the subject and the object. They refute the view "The unity of nature and

man". I think their view is not logical itself because of the fact that when we talk about the unity of nature and man we have already supposed that man and nature are two entities differentiated from each other. The view on nature and man as a unity is the negation of negation, so "unity" is of a higher level. In the prehistoric times when man had not awoken to the difference between him-self and the other beings in the world, it was impossible for him to have a deeper insight into the close relation between Nature and man and make such a remarkable observation as "the unity of Nature and man". It was after man had relived he was evolutionary higher than other animals and all the physical objects in the world and after he got to know them, remade them and made use of them that he could possibly differentiate himself from nature. With the further development of human society man came to realize that either differentiation from or oppositional nation should not be overdone, that man was after all a part of nature and that he could not break free from this mystical environment in which he had lived with his pursuit for many long years. He knew from experience that too much opposition to Nature would bring disaster or misfortune upon his own head. Because of this realization man began to shape the philosophical view of regarding nature and man as an organic unity. He therefore strove to restore harmony between nature and himself. So we see that the view of "nature and man as a unity" itself already implies the

awakening of man's self-consciousness and the realization that man is a different entity from nature.

Another important component of Chinese national philosophy is "Trying to keep a well-balanced view between extremes". According to this principle people should seek common ground on major issues while putting aside differences in minor ones when dealing with interpersonal relations as well as handling social contradictions. From this point of view, the Chinese people think more highly Confucian philosophy, with Harmony and Golden mean as its core. For generations, we consciously or unconsciously followed this national psyche and other Confucian principles to conduct ourselves in society and the percept we keep in mind is "Be content". "To stay middling."

Besides the conformity or harmony with Nature our Chinese nation also set a great store by collective consciousness. "People from collectivist cultures often find it hard to deal with the open conflict, competitiveness, and aggressiveness of Westerners, because they have a much stronger value of maintaining harmony and good relations in the group (Culture and communication 57). What has formed these characters? The answer is to be found in sociology. "People from more collectivist cultures are likely to reflect their cultures in an inter- dependent self-concept, in which their sense of self is tied up with their relations to their group (family, work group, class at school)".

On the other side of the world, the Westerners are apt to go to extremity. Liang Qi chao once said: “Xi Yang Ren Ji Bu Yi Tuo Xie, Wan Shi Jie Que Zhi Er Gan Qing Chang Zhou Ji Duan”(Zheng Chun-miao, 1994 182) That means the Westerners are not easy to go along with. Everything they do is absolute and their feelings are apt to go to extreme. In fact, what plays the main role in Western consciousness has been the individual character and competition. This can be explained in terms of their geographical conditions and economic structure. As earlier period natural conditions in Greece were poor, the land was infertile and not favorable for farming but poor conditions often steel man's will and stimulate his eagerness to make progress. Activities are more dangerous and required the individual courage and resourcefulness to run risks. As we know, the Western culture is typical of a sea-faring civilization. Because of limitation on the sea, individuals tend to depend on themselves rather than on others. This not only provides a greater chance for them to give play to the strength of their personalities but also makes their edges of competition keener.

In Zhao Yan ping's Book 《Culture and Communication》 it says “Individual rights are enshrined in law like the Bill of Rights in the U S Constitution”. “Individualism is expressed in values about the importance of doing your best, reward for individual achievement and the chance for success. (the well-known “level playing field”) That means “Gong Ping Jing

Zheng".(To be equal with competition) I think, this view is fair to everyone and the wisdom of the Western culture lies.

But too much individuality leads to many social problems such as drug, homosexuality, unmarried mother, etc. Individuality as a core makes Americans for loneliness.

Another major difference between two cultures is that when dealing with the improvement of human quality, the Chinese people believe that one can cultivate the virtue of "*Ren*" (Benevolence) through self- denial and introspection. We think that nature itself has value and man is in essence as great as nature. The human-based spirit encourages people to think highly of man's value and dignity and to discover and realize man's value in reality instead of being saved in the other world. This value concerns morality first of all. The overall belief in the Chinese culture is that man is the most intelligent of all beings because man has morality.

Different from the tendency towards self-confidence and self-reliance of Chinese culture, Western people are more likely to seek help from God that is from religion. In Western culture morality comes from religious inspirations and religious Gods are superman and sacred. When one's desires fail to be realized in the real world, he turns to God for salvation or spiritual support. So the Christianity is considered to be a spiritual comfort to those who feel frustrated in their pursuits. Though God does not exist in the real world they believe that He can

in a certain degree relieve themselves from the grim reality. In this sense, the Christian religion serves as a stabilizer of the society. But to adore it too much and to overestimate its role is not reasonable for the religious superstition and religious cult will be a hindrance to human progress in general and the development of science in particular.

So far we have compared and commented on the pairs of Sino-western cultural traits and what are caused the cultural differences. Sociologically speaking, no culture as a whole is superior or inferior to other culture, and each of them has its strong points and weakness. As far as our Chinese culture is concerned, traditionally it set a great store by the improvement of human quality and it seems that we have done better in this respect. But too much stress on harmony and stability that may prevent things from developing and can hardly arouse people's consciousness of competition and creation. So in our national reconstruction and modernization, we should give full play to its advantage and bypass its disadvantages in the inheritance of ancient golden mean.

There has appeared a strong tendency to form a global culture in today's world. The major cultural systems of the world are mixing together to form a cultural system shared by all human beings. It seems to me that with a global culture taking shape and different cultures mixing together to form our traditional culture for spiritual remedies. The East and the West will learn each other's strong points. What proves reasonable and

workable is for us to reconcile our traditional culture with the Western culture. In doing so, we should make a point to learn what is really advanced and resist what is evidently backward and decadent. This remains to be discussed in the further researches.

内 容 概 要

《论东西方文化的民族个性特征》一文主要论述的是中国与西方在文化特征方面，尤其在社会价值及精神观念方面，用哲学、文化、地理、语言等几方面进行了对比描写。这几方面有：1、在人与自然的关系问题上，西有征服自然、战胜自然的观念；中持“天人合一”的态度。2、在人与社会、人与人的关系问题上，西重竞争意识，强调个性；中贵平庸，集体意识。3、在人与自身的关系问题上，西靠外律，中尚内省。文章的另一部分是对这些文化特征所产生的原因及其对比研究的简要论述。首先，是对中西不同的地理环境及其历史不同的社会结构，构成了中西民族性格的文化特征并对其产生的作用及其影响做了主要的评述。其次，由于语言是文化的一个重要组成部分，语言必然隐含着民族文化精神的深层底蕴。因此，在讨论中西文化特征的过程中，作者始终注意了对中西语言特征的讨论。一方面，文化制约着语言。中国重人与自然和谐的文化观念反映到语言中，使汉语处处留下了古代“天人合一”哲学观的痕迹。中国重集体轻个体与西方重个体轻集体的不同倾向在各自的语言中也有所反映。另一方面，语言对文化有反作用。汉语言的模糊与西方语言的精确都在不同程度上影响了各自的文化。

人类的历史从原始社会到阶级社会，历史上曾出现了几个文明古国。它们是古埃及、巴比伦、印度、希腊和中国，这些国家被称为人类社会出现以来文明的摇篮。但随着社会时代的发展变迁，其中有些国家落伍了，有些国家被别的民族吞噬了，至今只留下了几个文明地区。世界上最有影响的两个文明发源地就是以“华夏文化”为主流的东方文明和以古希腊文化作为龙头的西方文明。东西方文明发展的进程各不相同因而逐渐构成了各自不同的文化模式。

首先，我们讨论中国古代文化。由于我们的祖先早期的生存方式是以农业为主的。众所周知，农业是靠自然环境的好坏来发展的。因此，“天人合一”观就是中国古代的哲学家们在人与自然的关系问题上提出来的。这

种观点认为：人必须与大自然和睦相处，否则，就会受到大自然的惩罚。我认为“天人合一”的观点是符合社会自然发展规律的。

但是，在讨论这种观点时，一些学者，由于他们的偏见和偏执，认为这种思维模式是主观世界对客观世界的模糊反应，是逻辑上的偏差，是中国传统文化的低级表现形式。我认为他们的这些观点才是完全没有逻辑的，因为他们根本不知道这样一个事实，那就是当我们谈到人与自然的统一之前，我们就是已经考虑到人和自然是两个彼此有区别的实体，人与自然作为一个整体的观点是“否定之否定”的观点，因此，“统一”只是高一级的统一。在人类早期的文明中，人与自己与外界的区别是一无所知的，因此无法进一步深入到人与自然之间的关系，也无法做出对“人与自然的统一”的观察；只有当人进化到高级时，他们才清醒地认识到他们完全超过世上任何的动物和生物，这时他们开始逐步了解自己，改造自己，把自己尽可能地与自然区别开来。随着社会的发展，人们慢慢地逐渐地认识到自己与大自然既没有不同也没有过多的对立，人必竟是大自然的一部分，人与大自然其实就是一个不可分割的整体。人们开始从自己的体验中得知，过分地敌对和仇视大自然，就会给自己带来灾难与不幸（从古至今，有许多人破坏大自然给人带来灾难的例子，例如：由于植被破坏，洪水、沙尘暴泛滥成灾，我们应从中吸取血的教训）。正是因为有这种认识，人们才开始接受这样的哲学观点：“人与自然是一种有机的统一体”。所以，人必须努力使自己回到与大自然的和睦相处。从这里，我们看到“天人合一”的哲学观点本身就意味着唤醒人的意识和人与自然界是一个不同的实体。

在世界的另一端，西方文明的情况则大不相同，“西方人常走极端”。中国学者梁启超曾说过：“西洋人极不易妥协，万事皆确执，而感情常走极端”。（郑春苗，1994，182）事实上，西方人的主要意识就是突出个性，强调竞争。“个人权力被庄严地载入了美国宪法的权利法案中（《文化与交际》赵艳萍，P57）产生这种观点的原因是由于西方的地理环境与经济结构决定的。远古时期的古希腊，由于它们地处地中海沿岸的山峰，自然条件非常恶劣，土地是不毛之地，无法耕种；但是险恶的环境常常激发人的

意志，并要求个人的勇气去从事冒险活动。众所周知，西方的文明生活是一种典型的靠海打鱼为生，由于受海的限制，个人只能依赖自己而不是靠他人谋生，这不仅为个人提供了发挥自己个性的机会，而且也使个人有了竞争的机遇。所谓“公平竞争”正是西方文明的智慧所在。

但是，过分强调个性化就会导致许多社会问题。例如：吸毒、同性恋、未婚妈妈等。以个性为中心的观点使大多数美国人产生了孤独感。

到此为止，我们已对中西文化的一些特点及其所产生的原因做了相应的对比和评论。从社会学的角度来看，总而言之没有哪种文化高于或低于另一种文化，也就是说中西文化各有优劣。就中国文化来说，历史上她在人类的智慧宝库中，为人类做出了一定的贡献。但过分强调和谐与稳定难免会阻碍事物的发展，而且，难以激起人们的竞争意识与创新精神。因此，在当今中国的改革与现代化的进程中，我们应继承中国古代思想的精华而摒弃它的糟粕。

当今的世界，人们越来越趋于全球化的共识。全球化----它标志着人类认识模式的转变，它隐含着从“西方中心主义”的单一思想方法向多元思想方法的转变。所以，“全球化”应包含着“文化多元”的新思维，换句话说，“全球化”意味着将不同文化共同体激活，使之共同参与人类文明建设这样一个过程。“全球化”对我国传统的文化似乎也是一次精神上的冲击。中西文化各有长处，就我国来说，把传统的中国文化与现代的西方文化合理的有效的结合起来，使之成为一个全球的统一文化。在全球性文化形成的过程中，在中国建设现代化的过程中，中国文化应该如何借鉴异域文化，如何才能吸收西方的先进文化，摒弃其落后的颓废的种种精神危机，这是留给我们今后进一步研究和讨论的课题。

I. Introduction

Culture and communication although two different concepts are directly linked. They are so inextricably bound that some anthropologists believe the terms are virtually synonymous. As Smith noted, "Whenever people interact they communicate. To live in societies and to maintain their culture they have to communicate." Culture is learned, acted out, transmitted and preserved through communication. Howard defines it as the customary manner in which humane groups learn to organize their behavior and thought in relationship to their environment. As was the case with communication, many definitions have been suggested for culture. Bates and Plog propose a descriptive definition: "Culture is a system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that the members of a society use to cope with their world and with one another, and that are transmitted from generation to generation through learning. Anthropologists define culture as any human behavior that is learned rather than genetically transmitted. They believe that culture is not necessarily high or low; it exists in any type or stage of civilization. In addition, the cultural patterns that are typical of a certain group communicate the essence of that group. Culture distinguishes one group of people from another. For example, some people in Korea and China put dogs in their ovens, but people in the United States put them on their couches and beds. Why? Some people speak Tagalog; others speak English. Why? Some people paint and decorate their entire bodies, others spend millions of dollars painting and decorating only their faces. Why? Some people talk to

God, but others have God talk to them. And still others say there is no God. Why? The general answer to these questions is the same. People learn to think, feel, believe, and act as they do because of the messages that have been communicated to them, and those messages all bear the stamp of culture. Since the dimensions of culture are manifold and there have already published large numbers of books and articles which have given relatively comprehensive description on the cultural similarities and differences between China and the West, it is neither advisable nor necessary for me to repeat the works others have already done to do point by point comparison between the Chinese and the Western cultural characteristics. Instead I'll take the liberty to discuss the cultural personalities between China and the West and their impact on world culture. I think what the experts are interested and concerned are cultural differences and their personalities on world culture. In my paper, first I'd like to talk about the contrastive analysis of two different cultures and then I'll say something about the effects of two different cultures in cross-cultural communication. At the end of the paper, I'll talk something more about what occurs in my mind after I have made all these analyses and studies. Since most of my explanation is tentative and some of them may be illogical or even wrong, I hope experts will not grudge their criticisms and correction. This paper is mainly concerned the contrastive description of Sino-western cultural traits which are: (1) in the relationship between man and nature, western people tend to think that man can conquer nature while in China we take man and nature as a unity; (2) in handling the

relationship between man and society, Westerners emphasize the sense of competition and the strength of individual personality while we think highly of collective consciousness with well-balanced view between extremes; (3) in the relationship between man and himself in his moral improvement, they would rely on the discipline by religion while we advocate introspection for self-cultivation. The other aspect of the essay is what are the causes of the cultural differences between China and the West and their effects on world culture. First, an analysis is made concerning the effects which different geographical condition and different social structures have borne on the shaping of two different styles of national characteristics and cultural personality. Furthermore, language and culture are closely related and a language necessarily contains the underlying spirit of a national culture. So in the course of the discussion on these Sino-Western cultural traits, the distinguishing features of both languages are also characterized throughout the paper. Besides, the interaction of culture with its language is emphasized in the paper. On the one hand, culture restricts language. A rough analysis of some Chinese character is enough to show that the philosophical view of “unity of nature and man” has left its clear marks on the Chinese language, and the different tendencies toward laying emphasis on the collective in China and on the individual in the West are also reflected in their languages. On the other hand, language in its turn exerts a significant counter-action on culture. The vagueness of the Chinese language and the exactness of the Western languages have exerted visible influences on their respective cultures.

II What are the Causes of the Cultural Traits between China and the West

With a deeper and more frequent cultural contact with the West, the pace of modernization and reform in our country has been quickened at a speed unknown in history. While enjoying the fruit of cross-cultural exchanges, we have to deal with various difficulties caused by cultural differences. In order to find out the very parameter which can help clear up this mess of differences, scholars in this field have made many fruited studies. Such as: *Intercultural Communication—What it Means to Chinese Learners of English* edited by Hu Wenzhong is a collection of articles dealing with cultural mistakes made by Chinese users of English, customs of Western countries culturally-loaded words, proverbs, compliment, nonverbal communication, culture acquisition and related foreign language teaching methodology. *An Introduction to Body Language* (Beijing Language Institute Press, 1988) by Gong Erling is the first book written by a Chinese scholar on body language and its significance. He Ziran's *A Survey of Pragmatics* (Hunan Education Press, 1988) has sections analyzing socio-pragmatic and pragma-linguistic failures of Chinese students. *Language and Culture* by Deng Yanchang and Liu Runqing (Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1989) deals mostly with the use of Chinese and English in different cultural contexts, but it also has chapters on differences between the Chinese and native English speakers in writing style, varieties of English and body language. What the experts are concerned are cultural differences and cultural communications. As a student

interested in cultural discussion, I feel obliged to express my tentative views.

In the history of the development of the human race from primitive society to class society, there had appeared several countries with an ancient civilization. They are ancient Egypt, Babylon, India, Greece and China. The areas in which these countries are situated are reputed as the cradles of world civilization. But with the gradual progress of history some of these ancient civilizations either suspended their development or were engulfed by the culture of a different race. Only a few of them have lasted till now. The most influential mighty cultural current acknowledged by the world are the Eastern civilization with *Hua Xia (Chinese)* culture as its main trend and the Western civilization that takes the ancient Greek culture as its fountainhead. During thousands of years of development, the two great civilizations have taken different paths and have shaped their own cultural patterns. Of many cultural differences between China and the West, I have chosen the most striking four pairs for detailed discussion.

2.1 Two philosophical views compared between "Conquest of nature by man" and "unity of nature and man"

Though living on the same and one earth, the ancient Chinese nation *Hua Xia* (Chinese nation) and the ancient Greek nation had developed quite differently. It was because their geographical differences had exerted a determinate effect on every aspect of their living conditions. Geographically, as we know, Greece rose as a nation in the Mediterranean Sea. Its territory contains roughly the Greek peninsula, the isles in the Aegean Sea and the western part of the Asia Minor peninsula. The natural conditions there were poor with most of its areas being mountains or cliffs. The land was infertile and unfavorable for developing agriculture. But its transportation on the sea was quite convenient. Under such circumstances, people's life was naturally composed mainly of activities on the sea. In the early days, the Greek people earned a living mainly on fishing.

On the other side of the globe the Chinese nation had developed her culture in the East Asia with most of its areas in the temperate zone of middle latitude. The climate there was mild and the temperature and moisture were favorable for developing agriculture. As we know, our Chinese nation had cut across the stage of fishing at an early age and settled down on land for a social life with agriculture as an important means of survival.

In an oceanic environment in which fishing was the main means of earning a living, the water area turned out to be a wild element of severity for primitive men to deal with. Of course, it did a favor for them but the favor came hand in hand with threats.

When they went out for fishing, they sometimes had to struggle with great wind or waves and often at the risk of losing their lives. If not careful enough, they would be drowned in the sea. In order to survive, they had to tame the surging sea from which they starved for food. Biologically speaking, when one falls into water, he must get saved during a certain period of time or he would lose life. In this sense, sea is more threatening than the land and there are greater dangers in the sea than on land even on a fine day. For survival, one must get the upper hand of the subject, that is, the consciousness of conquering nature, defeating nature and competing with nature. Besides, one has to be accurate in his action in dealing with this kind of environment. The consciousness of striving to be accurate laid a foundation for the Westerners to regard nature as the object to conquer. This is also the root caused why they tend to be competitive.

Things with us are different. Our predecessors got used to the mode of agricultural production quite early. Comparatively speaking, agriculture depends more heavily on nature. The middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River were the birthplace of Chinese civilization and being in the temperate zone, they were favorable for developing agriculture. There is a clear-cut regular pattern of seasonal changes and with the rhythmic changing of the seasons our predecessors learned how to adapt to nature. It seemed to them that man could get more favors than threats, and the more important thing for their survival was to live in harmony with nature or rather form a unity with Nature.

As a philosophical truth the concept of “unity of nature and

man” have handed down from generation to generation through language and also let its mark on language .Considered it in terms of etymology, the original meaning of the Chinese character “*Tian*” (heaven) refers to the top of man's head. And the inscription of “*Da*” (huge) on bones of the *Shang* Dynasty was something like “*Huo* (fire) It was said to represent a standing giant under heaven. And the great man himself was regarded as the most intelligent of all beings on earth (“*Ren Wei Wan Wu Zhi Ling*”). Since above man's head is as like manner an expanse of blueness the heaven was represented in “*Ye*” (Li Le-yi, 1996,1223). So this typical Chinese way of word for marine helps us see that etymologically “*Tian*” (heaven) and “*Ren*” (human beings) are in unity. The explanation of “*Tian*” (heaven) in the Chinese way dictionary (《*Chi Hai*》comparable to man , 1979,1223) does imply the meaning of a personified “*Tian*” (Heaven) that is to compare nature to a human being is characteristic of Chinese way of thinking and the close relationship between “*Tian*” (Heaven) and “*Ren*” (human being) was inevitably reflected in its language as well as in its philosophical teachings. Our forefather thought that since nature (*Tian*) and man (*Ren*) were united as one it should have human qualities or feelings such as virtue. Hence appeared many words and phrases in Chinese language that draw a parallel between nature and man. For example , the emperor on earth is called “*Tian Zi*” and man's talent is called“*Tian Fu*”as if to say that man's talent is endowed by Nature. The English word "genius", when translated into Chinese, is “*Tian Cai*”. In fact many words in Chinese with the morpheme “*Tian*” when translated into English

will lose their original Chinese implications. In Chinese man's nature is called "*Tian Xing*" and children's innocence are referred to as "*Tian Zhen*"; man's conscience is called "*Tian Liang*"; man's fate is called "*Tian Ming*" and there are sayings like "*Ting Tian You Ming*"、"*Le Tian Zhi Ming*"; good marriage is referred to as "*Tian Zuo Zhi He*" and so on. All these words and expressions containing the morpheme "*Tian*" have mixed many of the properties of "*Tian*" and "*Ren*", which can be used to earmark the ancient philosophical concept of "unity of nature and man."

2.2 "A competitive sense of individuality" versus "collective consciousness for a sophisticated and well-balanced view between extremes "

The Westerners are apt to go to extremes. *Liang Qi-chao* once said, “*Xi Yang Ren Ji Bu Yi Tuo Xie, Wan Shi Jie Que Zhi, Er Gan Qing Chang Zou Ji Duan*” (*Zheng Chun-miao*, 1994: 182) That means the Westerns are not easy to go along with . Everything they do is absolute and their emotions are apt to go to extremes and they also tend to be competitive. In fact, what plays the main role in Western consciousness has been the individual character and competition. This can be explained in terms of their geographical conditions and economic structures. As mentioned earlier, natural conditions in Greece were poor, the land was infertile and not favorable for farming but poor conditions often steeled men's will and stimulated his eagerness to make progress. Activities are more dangerous on the sea than on land and require the individual courage and resourcefulness to run risks. Because of limitations on the sea, individuals tend to depend on themselves rather than on others. This not only provides a greater chance for them to give play to the competition keener .As we know the Western culture is typical of a seafaring civilization. For centuries, the western businessmen moved frequently from one place to another but also makes their edges of the strength of their personalities for a bigger market. All this has greatly reinforced their competitive sense of individuality.

On the other side of the world, the Chinese people think more highly of Confucian philosophy with Harmony and Golden mean

at its core. For generations, we consciously or unconsciously followed this national psyche and other Confucian principles to conduct ourselves in society and the precept we keep in mind is “Be content. To stay middling.”

I think, it was a settled-down life typical of the agricultural civilization that had made people seek for pace and security. About 6000 years ago our Chinese nation was born in a semi-closed environment and our predecessors had much sooner cut across the stage of primitive hunting and fishing. That is to say, they had much earlier entered an agricultural society characterized by farming. A striking feature of agricultural economy is its dependence on natural conditions. In ancient times the productive level was very low, and our forefathers had to depend mainly on natural conditions for a good harvest. This kind of agricultural production could hardly develop other national personalities than conforming to Nature and being reconciled with one's fate. Thus generation after generation peasants labored on their small patches of land. If there were no unusual calamities, their harvests and the production scale remained approximately the same year after year. There is a Chinese saying, “*Ri Chu Er Zuo, Ri Luo Er Xi*”, (That is to say, “When the sun is rising people go out to farm and when the sun is setting people go home to have rest”) which goes as a vivid description of this static way of life. Under such conditions people tend to feel satisfied and happy with what they had already had. And so long as they could keep themselves from starvation, they thought little of change or progress.

Besides the conformity or harmony with Nature our Chinese

nation also set a great store by collective consciousness. We don't think that individuals and the social groups to which they belong are conflicting with each other. Instead, they conform to each other like concentric circles. What has made these differences? The answer is to be found in sociology. Generally speaking, there are three kinds of social ties or relations. The first kind of tie is knitted according to consanguinity, and the second and the third kinds of ties are established according to geographical and occupational relatedness. Of the three kinds of social ties, the blood relationship is the oldest, and plays an obscure but important role in the stability of society. But the importance of consanguinity in ancient Greece and China was different from each other. We all have the impression that the family ties of the Westerners are not so close as ours. The explanation is not far to seek. Anthropologically, the basic social unit in the western world has been "community" which took the form of city states in ancient Greece and plantations in the Middle Ages respectively. So their social ties were not valued on the common interests of the family but rather on those of communities.

The above quotation makes clear that what people should deal with was the interpersonal relationship in the community rather than the ethical relationship inside the family. Such being the case, people in the West are entitled to struggling for their personal rights, and attach greater importance to the cultivation of competitive sense of individuality.

Things in China are different. For centuries the family was the basic unit of social organization. In a family the most important

thing is the blood linkage because it innately determines a person's position in the family in which one cannot change the fact of being father, mother, the elder or the younger. Therefore for a long time China was basically a patriarchal society and of course this has its historical reasons. In a patriarchal society the relationship among people was ethical rather than social. The closeness of a person to others was determined by the closeness of his blood ties with others. People thought highly of the following five pairs of interpersonal relationships, that is, the relationships between sovereign and subject, father and son, husband and wife, the elder and the younger and between friends. Of the five pairs of relationships, those of father/son, husband/wife and the elder/the younger belong to blood relations while sovereign/subject are comparable to father/son and friends are comparable to brothers. Thus, these five pairs of relationships can well be said to be a different wording or the manifestation of blood relations. In a Chinese family, the forms of address are rather complicated and their distinctions are really unique. We are all familiar with the fact that for the English word "uncle" or the French word "oncle", we can have several Chinese counterparts: they are "*Shu Shu*", "*Bo Bo*" and "*Jiu Jiu*" not to mention "*Yi Fu*" and "*Gu Fu*". Under a patriarchal system the individual was only a member of the big family who must obey the collective will and gradually acquire a strong collective consciousness.

The different tendencies whether to attach more importance to individuals or to the collective are inevitably reflected in both the Western and Chinese languages. Take some adjective noun suffixes

for examples. In English, "-er", "-or", "-ian" and "ist" stand for individuals. The English word "butcher" when translated into Chinese becomes *Tu Hu*. We all know the Chinese character "*Hu*" which is a collective noun and usually means "family" or "household". This definitely reflects the consciousness of the collective rather than the individual. The English word "historian" means "a person who studies history and /or writes about it". When translated into Chinese, it becomes "*Li Shi Xue Jia* ." Don't forget the Chinese character "*Jia*" is originally a collective noun. In Chinese in order to distinguish a person from ordinary job holder, we often entitle him with "*Jia*" and thus make him a well-established authoritative person. So we can see that the word "*Jia*" not only suggests an authoritative social status but also has an implication of collectivity. A language necessarily contains the underlying spirit of a national culture. The French word "directeur" compared with its Chinese counterpart is another example which also reflects the difference in social connotations. In this word "directeur" what is prominent is "-eur" is the individual, whereas in its Chinese translation we have "*Chang Zang*". The character "*Zang*" in "*Yi Chang Zhi Zang*" and "*Yi Jia Zhi Zang*" (a factory 's director or a father in a family) is similar in usage. In both cases, it suggests an "authority" in a "collective".

Of course whether people attach more importance to the collective or to individuals is a relative matter. Nothing is absolute. Our discussion here only shows some tendency or a way of thinking which I hope may provoke more valuable discussions in the future.

2.3 Seeking help from God or religion versus relying on one's own effort in his self-cultivation through introspection.

The mainstream of Chinese culture has been Confucianism, a rationalistic theory which shows great concern for the worldly matter and has a profound humanist tradition. For a long period of time the Confucian teachings played such a dominating role in Chinese culture that the Western religious ideas got no chance to develop in China until the last century, while in the West Christianity has long become people's beliefs. This makes the major difference between these two cultures. In our culture, when dealing with the improvement of human quality, we believe that one can cultivate the virtue of "Ren" (Benevolence) through self-denial and introspection. We think that nature itself has value and man is in essence as great as nature. The human based spirit encourages people to think highly of man's value and dignity and to discover and realize man's value in reality instead of being saved in the other world. This value concerns morality first of all. The characteristic in the value system of Chinese culture is the emphasis on the integrity of the true, the good and the beautiful with the good being its nucleus. The overall belief in the Chinese culture is that man is the most intelligent of all beings because man has morality. As another Chinese philosopher put it:

"Shui Huo You Qi Er Wu Sheng, Cao Mu You Sheng Er Wu Zhi, Qin Shou You Zhi Er Wu Yi; Ren You Qi, You Sheng, You Zhi Qie You Yi, Gu Zui Wei Tian Xia Gui Ye." (《Xun Zi • Wang Zhi》)
In Chinese meaning: Water and fire have air without life, grasses and woods have life without knowing, animals have know

something without justice, but human beings have feelings, life, knowledge and justice , so they are the most valuable creature in the world.

Here "*Gui*" means "being valuable" because what distinguishes man from other beings is that man has righteousness and the virtue of benevolence. Belief in man's good nature has resulted in a fact that is, Chinese ethics even the whole Chinese culture is established on the emphasis of and the respect for man's dignity. Traditionally, man is believed to have innate moral factors or buds to develop his own virtue through self-cultivation strictly in accordance with the Confucian ethics. The subject's introverted moral spirit so formed was centralized in a morality-training theory that featured self-discipline and character cultivation. The theory emphasized on self-discipline and self-transcending to uphold interpersonal relationships and the overall order of the society. Its basic spirit is seeking help from oneself. In Chinese ethic history, there has developed a whole set of national character training methods such as "introspection" (*Nei Xing*), "self-accusing" (*Zi Song*) and "Be watchful over oneself when he is alone" (*Shen Du*). There are many teachings in "The Confucian Analyst" concerning man's self-cultivation. Such as "When we see a man of virtue, we should think of equaling him; when we see a villain, we should turn inwards and examine ourselves." and I have not yet seen one who could perceive his faults, and inwardly accuse himself. This inward self-examination is carried home by *Zhang Zai*, one of the Confucian followers saying:

"Wu Ri San Xing Wu Shen: Wei Ren Mou Er Bu Zhong Hu ?

Yu Peng You Jiao Er Bu Yan Hu ? Chuan Bu Xi Hu ? ”

Different from the tendency towards self-confidence and self-reliance of Chinese culture, Western people are more likely to seek help from God, that is, from religion. There is a strict, well-established religious system in the West and man's utmost belief and spiritual sustenance come from God's inspirations. Take Judaism for example, it considers Ten Commandments as eternal moral standards as well as basic social norms. It claims that these rules are what God issued to Moses and they are, therefore, contracts God signed with the Jews. Similarly, in Christianity Jesus is looked upon as the son and incarnation of God and as the model of worldly morality in the spreading of Gospels and giving his people inspirations. In a word in Western culture morality comes from religious inspirations and religious gods are supreme and sacred. The Ten Commandments have laid down rules for man not to call Jehovah's name, not to kill, not to be adulterous and not to steal etc. All these are taught by God and man's behaviors are put under religious supervisions.

2.4 The tendency towards being scientific versus the tendency towards being artistic

Another distinction between Chinese culture and the culture of the West is that the former tends to be scientific while the latter artistic. A science-centered culture tends to be accurate, analytical, positive, and is good at abstract and logical reasoning. So people from such a culture are fond of establishing complicated theoretical systems. And an artistic culture tends to be vague, synthetic, intuitive in understanding things. So people from an artistic culture are used to thinking in images and are skilled in elaborating. In what follows, we are going to discuss these features in some detail.

2.4.1 Being accurate versus being vague

It is known to all that science is strict and accurate. Here I'd like to explore the geographical and linguistic reasons leading to the difference between the Chinese and the Western cultures. As mentioned earlier, in an oceanic environment people have to be more accurate and strict than those from an agricultural civilization on land. It is because farming is a highly seasonal activity and this makes it possible for the farmers to learn from past experience, to draw lessons and to try to do better next year. A poor harvest at its most only makes their life even harder or threatens them with starvation. Generally speaking, farmers lack a sense of punctuality to keep exact time. But things are much harder with those living on the sea. Since the natural conditions there don't allow them to start again, they must succeed at one time. It requires people to be absolutely accurate to get about in the sea and no mistakes are

allowed. So we can see that different environments have helped to form different cultural tendencies.

Let's turn to the discussion of cultural differences in terms of language. Though language cannot determine thinking, it can, nevertheless, influence thinking. Difference in language can result in difference in thinking and further difference in culture.

As we know, language in man's conceptualizing his experiences usually stresses some aspects and neglects others. Where language lays its stresses, we get a clear view and where language shows neglects we have a blind zone. The languages of most Indo-European nations have gender, number, case, tense, aspect and voice and choice for these categories are obligatory. These factors had rendered most Indo-European languages developing into a greater formal accuracy which inevitably reduces their flexibility or elasticity in use. Take English for example. It has the category of number so "a book" can only mean singular, "books" plural, while "book" almost means nothing. In case of "number" ambiguity, people have to use "some books". On the other hand, the Chinese language doesn't have the above listed grammatical categories in a strict sense. Take the Chinese character "*Shu*"(*books*) for example. It can mean either singular or plural. It's enough for us to say "*Zhe Shi Shu*"(*This is a book or These are books*) and it doesn't matter whether there is only one book or there are many books. This is the blind zone in Chinese way of thinking. Not that we don't have the concept of number but that we are not confronted with an obligatory choice between grammatical numbers. We often say "*Qu Kan Shu*"、(Go to read a

book) “*Qu Mai Shu*”, (Go to buy a book) “*Qu Jie Shu*” (Go to borrow a book) while in English they have to say "to go to read books", "to go to buy books", "to go to borrow books" or "to go to read a book", "to go to buy a book", "to go to borrow a book". This is no wonder, for all the native speakers have learned from their early childhood to choose one from between the singular and plural forms and the language they speak has obliged them to consider more about number in their everyday social communication. Number has a lot to do with quantity and exactness. And this in its turn has greatly influenced the unique development of their culture. In fact, the Westerners have devoted greater energies to the study of numbers. At a very early time they already made brilliant expositions on numbers and worked out an excellent set of mathematical theories. When the Greek mathematician Euclid explained his famous "Elements of Geometry" (《*Ji He Yuan Ben*》), we only did some concrete calculations with numbers. No matter how we feel proud of our ancient innovations, we have to admit that our awareness in numbers is not comparable to that of the Westerners.

Most Indo-European languages have the category of tense, which has to do with time. As we know, the West has brought forth many scientists such as Newton, Kant, Einstein and others none of whom had ever ceased to ponder over time. Punctuality in the eyes of the Westerners is a measure to tell whether or not one has the required social norm of behavior. But in China as we mentioned earlier, punctuality was for a long time not a habit with people.

2.4.2 Analytical perception and logical reasoning versus synthetic perception and intuitive comprehension.

Science is characterized by its being objective and accurate and these characteristics necessarily requires of man an analytical way of seeing things and analysis mainly bases itself on logical reasoning. Western philosophers tend to view the world as composed of parts. So their process of knowing a thing is an analysis of its parts so as to understand the entirety through logical reasoning. On the other hand, the Chinese philosophers understand parts through the synthetic view of the entirety, for the entirety and its parts and the parts themselves are not opposite but unitary. They study the opposites under the premise of unity. Instead of an analytical and logical reasoning, they adopt a synthetically intuitive comprehension of the world as a whole. Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism in China all hold the view that man grasps the universe and human life by intuition. The ethical imitation of Confucianism, the artistic intuition of Taoism and the religious intuition of Buddhism all have the greatest esteem for the experience thus gained by the experience directly from his intuitive approach to the object. According to our Chinese philosophy, man cannot have a sure grasp of the universe merely through language, concept, logical reasoning or analytical approach but rather through intuition and a sudden realization of the truth.

Taoism holds the view that the spiritual state of emptiness is apt to initiate intuitive thinking. *Zhuang Zi* advocated "*Xin Zhai*" and "*Zuo Wang*". "*Xin Zhai*" means to keep simplicity in one's

mind in order to correspond directly to Tao. *"Zuo Wang"* means that state of mind is supposed to be empty to the extent that nature and society and even the man himself are all temporarily forgotten.

"Mo Er Zhi Zhi" by Confucians. *"Bu Xue Er Neng"* by Mencius and *"Da Qi Xin Ze Neng Ti Tian Xia Zhi Wu "* by Zhang Zai are all methods in which perception and thinking are sublated the universe is sensed directly by one's body and mind thus approaching the state of being correspondent to the moral noumenon.

According to the sudden awareness of the Chan sect, language writing and tools for logical thinking are excluded and the practitioner directly images himself to bear a part in and becomes integrated with the object. The process and result of this kind of thinking activity can only be sensed but not to be explained in words. They depend on one's own sensibility. His masters can only inspire and guide him but by no means undertake the very activity in his stead.

The different attitudes between being objectively analytical and synthetically intuitive are quite clear in both the Chinese and Western medicine. Chinese medicine, as one of the three quintessence of the Chinese culture, its theoretical nucleus is the concept of wholeness and synthesis. The concept of wholeness concerns two respects: first, man's physiological functions are highly in accord with natural conditions and when the former is out of accord with the latter, people will fall ill. Second, traditional Chinese medicine holds the view that man's body in itself is an integrated whole, that the functions of various organs of human body are interrelated and that local troubles may affect the whole

body and vice versa. While the Western medicine was born during the Industrial Revolution during which manual labor was replaced by machinery. So in medicine, too, man was treated as machines. The medical research there mainly employs means of modern science and technology and therefore its domain of research is restricted to some concrete yet isolated and microcosmic aspects of medicine which naturally stresses the method to treat the head when the head aches and treat the foot when the foot hurts and neglects their inner relations.

Of course, either Chinese or the Western medicine has its advantages and disadvantages.

In Chinese medicine, the concept of taking the human body, or any organism as an integrated whole with all its parts closely interrelated has virtually decode the guiding principle according to which our doctors treat their patients synthetically and dialectically. They believe that the same illness can be treated with different measures and different illnesses can be treated with the same measure instead of the partial practice of treating the head when the head aches and treating the foot when the foot hurts. Nothing is perfect in its development. The Chinese medicine also has its drawbacks. Some of its weaknesses are that it hasn't paid enough attention to anatomy and experimental science. Instead it relies too heavily on the theory of Yin-Yang and the five elements, which is to a large extent presumptive. As a result, our doctors in treating some illnesses have to draw on their own intuitive experiences. As we know, treatments if lacking a qualitative or quantitative evidence, can seldom be sufficiently reliable.

The strong point of western medicine lies not only in its emphasis on dissection and microscopic analysis but also in its study of man's physiological functions as well as the details of illnesses from different structural levels. Besides, the western medical diagnoses of illness with its quantitative analyses are comparatively detailed and accurate.

In a word, what the Western culture shows is a spirit of science. It attaches greater importance to the positive facts, logical reasoning and objective judgement. What Chinese culture shows is a spirit of art. It believes in an intuitive knowledge and synthetics wariness of the true, the good and the beautiful in everything of the world concerning this cultural difference between China and the West.

So far we have discussed two different tendencies with the one towards science and the other towards art. In this section we'll discuss one more pair of cultural differences between China and the West.

2.4.3 The tendency to establish grand theoretical systems versus the tendency to be practical and elaborate

As mentioned earlier, the oceanic culture of the West requires people to be absolutely accurate and no error is allowed, so people have to make careful plans before taking actions and have to consider all possible emergencies in advance. This practice for centuries has cast upon people a habit of logical thinking and prompt actions not only in their daily activities but also in their theoretical explorations. As a result, many massive theoretical systems have been worked out such as *Archimede's* physics,

Newton's dynamics and Einstein's theory of relativity. We Chinese don't like to establish Grand science systems but like to do elaborate work in large buildings. Reasons for the difference are manifold and here we only talk about two. The first has to do with the difference between the Chinese and the Western writings. Chinese characters as we know are photographic and they entail in themselves deep rich cultural information of our nation. Because of this common cultural deposit in our consciousness; it is not necessary for us to make everything clear in so many words. Take Chinese philosophical works for example. Most of them are quite concise with much of the information implied between lines. Western writings, on the other hand, are mostly more abstract and are "symbols for symbols". Generally speaking, Western writings contain in themselves less historical information and with so little shared knowledge deposited in people's subconscious mind that it is highly necessary for the Westerners to establish Grand theoretical systems to specify something through a hairsplitter analysis and detailed logical reasoning.

The second has to do with Chinese people's lack of enthusiasm for theoretical explorations. Chinese people are more interested in practical gains than wishful thinking. It is this kind of national character that has rendered Chinese people more practical. We don't think highly of purely theoretical abstractions and there have been few intellectuals in China like Plato and Aristotle who had devoted themselves to the exploration of the physical world. In consequence we have fewer theoretical systems handed down from our ancestors.

Things with the Westerners are different Just have a look at the following list of scientists and their theoretical systems which once led to revolutions in science. ① Euclid's "the Element of Geometry", ② Apollonius' "Conic section", ③ Descartes analytical geometry, ④ Newton and Leibniz's infinitesimal calculus Lobachevsky's non-Euclid geometry. All these scientists and their theories are highly influential even today. Things with us are completely a different story. Our ancestors regarded mathematics mainly as a tool for practical use. Take "The Nine Arithmetic Operations" for example. It compiled early in the Eastern Han Dynasty, it is a collection of 246 practical questions and the methods of their solutions. In fact, few of our ancestors thought systematically about theoretical problems. (for details, see Chen Baoya, 1993:86-88)

In mythology, compared with ancient Greek myths and legends, ours are generally short with simpler plots and loose connections among themselves. Without complete systems, our Chinese myths can only be found randomly in some classical books. On the other hand, the ancient Greeks created gigantic families of gods and there are many legends of heroes who also form a gigantic system.

As to the comparison between the ancient Chinese music and the musical classics of the West, their differences are also striking. Traditionally, our people like better the soft and sweet musical tunes such as the tenderness of 《*Liang San Bo and Zhu Ying Tai*》, the sorrowfulness of 《*Chang Men Yuan*》, the liveliness of 《*Mei Hua San Nong*》 and the loftiness of 《*Gao San Liu Shui*》. Compared with the Western musical works, such as the "Erica"

and the Fate Symphony, ours are not so complicated in structure and not so vigorous and soul stirring in artistic appeal.

So far, we have discussed some pairs of cultural traits which arguably constitute the major cultural differences between China and the West. In the following chapter I'll make some tentative comment on these cultural traits.

III What Are These Cultural Traits Influenced the World

3.1 Views on national personalities of two different cultures

Let begin our talk on Hofstede's value dimensions. Hofstede has identified four value dimensions that have a significant impact on behavior in all cultures. These dimensions are individualism-collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, and masculinity and femininity. Here we only talk about the characteristics of individualism-collectivism in the world. According to Hofstede's findings, the United States, Australia, Great Britain, Canada, the Netherlands, and New Zealand, those Western countries tend toward individualism. In cultures that tend toward individualism, an "I" consciousness prevail; competition rather than cooperation is encouraged; personal goals take precedence over group goals, etc. For members of extreme individualist cultures like European Americans in the USA, individual rights and obligations come first. There is a strong emphasis on individual merit and competition, which is communicated in proverbs ("the early bird gets the worm") and words of wisdom (for example, Emerson's call to "trust thyself" in his "Essay on self reliance", (Ziff, 1982). Individual rights are enshrined in law like the Bill of Rights in the US Constitution protected by the adversarial system in the courts, which is shared with other Anglo-Saxon countries, and incorporated into elaborate procedures to ensure fairness in examinations at school, hiring for jobs, and the like (the well-known "level playing field"). Individualism is expressed in values about the importance of doing

your best reward for individual achievement and the chance for success: as an American friend used to say, “If you love your mother and work hard, there’s always room at the top”, and the importance of solving problems yourself, not waiting for others to do it for you.

One feature of individualism which can make intercultural interaction easier, if it is understood and used well, is a softness and *permeability* in the boundaries of group membership (Gallois et al., 1995; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The individual is so important, it is relatively easy to forget the group from which the person came. Thus, it is common for European American to say sincerely, “I treat everyone the same—it doesn’t matter who it is, good work is rewarded and bad work is punished.” This ideal is not always met, but the fact that it exists can make members of individualist cultures more tolerant of outsiders. For example, an American colleague, visiting China for his company, was shocked and hurt when some Chinese people refused to speak to him (in fact, acted as if he were not in the room at all), because they had not been properly introduced. He said this would not happen at home, where individuals are always recognized.

In collective societies such as those in Pakistan, Colombia, Venezuela, Taiwan, China and Peru, people are born into extended families or clans that support and protect them in exchange for their loyalty. A “we” consciousness prevails; identity is based on the social system; the individual is emotionally dependent on organization and institution; the culture emphasizes belonging to organizations; organizations invade private life and clans to which

individuals belong; and individuals trust group decisions. Look at the message of collectivism in these words from Confucius: "If one wants to establish himself, he should help others to establish themselves at first".

As is the case with all cultural patterns, collectivism influences a number of communication variables. Kim, Sharkey, and Singelis, after studying the Korean culture, believe that traits such as indirect communication, saving face, concern for others, and group cooperation are linked to the collective orientation found in the Korean culture.

Triandis estimated in 1990 that "about 70% of the population of the world lives in collective cultures" (Triandis, 1990, 48). This fact alone should be sufficient motivation for members of other cultures to understand the perceptions and communication behaviors of these collective cultures.

In addition, most cultures are neither extremely individualist nor extremely collectivist, but fall somewhere in the middle. Finally, many countries are culturally very complex, and cannot be characterized simply as either collectivist or individualist. For example, European Americans in the USA are the main very individualistic, while African Americans are less so, and the cultures of Latin Americans are on the collectivist side of this dimension.

What these studies may all be telling us, however, is that people within cultures are different and, depending on who you ask, one culture may look more individualistic or more collectivistic (Gudykunst et al, 1996; Singelis & Broun, 1995). In dealing with

people from other cultures, then, we need to be ready for some surprises and not assume that every Chinese we come across will have a *collectivist orientation and an independent self-concept*, while every English person will be a strong individualist. What we can predict about these people, however, is that they will know the values and norms of their culture about this dimension. Knowing these and other differences in communication styles could facilitate successful intercultural communication.

3.2 Man viewed in Chinese culture as the highly conscious perceiver of the world

Before our comment on the unity of nature and man, let's first refute a fallacy. In the discussion concerning the cultural type of China, some scholars, because of their ignorance or prejudice, thought that China's is a lower level of civilization and the traditional Chinese mode of thinking is pre-logical and indiscriminate between the subject and the object. This view of theirs is not logical itself because of the fact that when we talk about the unity of nature and man, we have already supposed that man and Nature are two entities differentiated from each other. The view on nature and man as a unity is the negation of negation, so "unity" is of a higher level.

"The unity of nature and man" as an idea or a theory must presuppose certain degree of differentiation between nature and man or the question of "Unity" would not have possibly been raised. In the prehistoric times when man had not awoken to the difference between himself and the other beings in the world it was impossible for him to have a deeper insight into the close relation between Nature and man and make such a remarkable observation as "the unity of Nature and man." The first step in the development of human history and culture is to differentiate between nature and man himself. It was after he had realized he was evolutionary higher than other animals and all the physical objects in the world and after he got to know them, remade them and made use of them that he could possibly differentiate himself from nature. With the further development of human society, man came to realize that

either differentiation from or opposition nature should not be overdone, that man was after all a part of nature and that he could not break free from this mystical environment in which he had lived with his pursuit for many long years. He knew from experience that too much opposition to Nature would bring disaster or misfortune upon his own head. Because of this realization man began to shape the philosophical view on regarding nature and man as an organic unity. He therefore, strived to restore harmony between nature and himself. So we see that the view of "nature and man as a unity" itself already implies the awakening of man's self-consciousness and the realization that man is a different entity from nature. The ideal of "nature and man as a unity " in traditional Chinese culture is quite meaningful in depth and ambiguous in their explanations but it is by no means a primitive thinking of in discrimination between nature and man.

3.3 Advantages and disadvantages of the Chinese-styled Golden mean

Most experts agree that religion has endeavored to explain those notions about life that otherwise could not be understood or resolved. Religion, as Nanda observes, “deals with the nature of life and death, the creation of the universe, the origin of society and groups within the society, the relationship of individuals and groups to one another, and the relation of humankind to nature.”{S. Nanda, *Cultural Anthropology* 5th ed 1994, 349}. As a species, our need to confront these issues is so universal that Haviland pointed out that “we know of no group of people anywhere on the face of the earth who, at any time over the past 10,000 years, have been without religion.”(W.A. Haviland, *Cultural Anthropology* 1993, 346.)

“Trying to keep a well-balanced view between extremes” is an important component of Chinese national philosophy. In China we set a great store by the creation and maintenance of harmonious relations among all the beings in the universe. According to this principle, people should seek common ground on major issues while putting aside differences in minor ones when dealing with interpersonal relations as well as handling social contradictions. For example a Chinese is likely to work and socialize with the same people, members of one department in a company, not only work together, they are also likely to go on trips together in the summer. For Chinese people, the group is more important than the individuals that compose it. Group members try to do the same thing and want to be treated alike. They work hard to maintain the

harmony within the group. It is owing to this national spirit that we could always achieve our unity and unification. As to the negative effect of the Golden Mean philosophy, I'm afraid it lays too much stress on harmony and stability that it may prevent things from developing, and can hardly arouse people's consciousness of competition and creation. So in our national reconstruction and modernization, we should give full play to its advantages and bypass its disadvantages in the inheritance of the Golden Mean.

3.4 Advantages and disadvantages of two beliefs

Belief systems are significant to the study intercultural communication because they are at the core of our thoughts and actions. As the Spanish poet Antonio Machado reminds us: "Under all that we think, lives all we believe, like the ultimate veil of our spirits." Beliefs are such an influential factor in intercultural communication because they affect our conscious and unconscious minds, as well as the manner in which we communicate. Our beliefs originate as we grow up in our culture. People who grow up in cultures where Christianity is the predominant religion usually believe that salvation is attainable only through Christ. People who are Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist, Shinto, or Hindu do not subscribe to that belief. They hold their own beliefs about salvation or what happens to the human spirit when the body dies. What is enthralling about beliefs is that they are so much a part of culture that in most instances we do not demand proof or question them. We simply accept them because we "know they are true." The French novelist Saint-Exupery wrote, "To know is not to prove, nor to explain."

Everybody has his own desires and pursuits the realization of which is invariably restricted by objective conditions. In the West, when one's desires fail to be realized in the real world, he turns to God for salvation or spiritual support. So the Christianity is considered to be a spiritual comfort to those who feel frustrated in their pursuits. Though God does not exist in the real world they believe that He can in a certain degree relieve themselves from the grim reality. In this sense, the Christian religion serves as a

stabilizer of the society. But to adore it too much and to overestimate its role is not reasonable, for the religious superstition and religious cult will be a hindrance to human progress in general and the development of science in particular, as it did in the Middle Ages.

In the Chinese history there wasn't a "Dark Age" like that of the Europe in which the Christian theology dominated every respect of the social life. Chinese culture believes in man's own power. Even folk beliefs are greatly practical with definite worldly purposes to satisfy man's will. To the Chinese, Buddha is something like a superman who can help his believers accomplish their wishes such as a good harvest, a safe voyage, or a happy family with the desired number of children all depending on one's need. Although folk beliefs show in a certain degree the unique wisdom of Chinese culture, it lacks a religious system in a strict sense. In fact, the Chinese people have for a long time turned to a personality cult rather than the worship of any god. This has created conditions for monarchism to thrive in China. Of course, such a cultural or psychological tendency is not good for our today's development of economic reform and political democracy.

3.5 Chinese cultural wisdom with Confucianism and Taoism complementary to each other.

In a modern society, people experience greater psychological conflict or inner stress due to external personal frustrations or from social contradictions. The suicide rate in the Western world is much higher than that in China. This psychological capacity to with stand outside social pressures on the part of the Chinese people has a great deal to do with the philosophy of life in the Chinese culture with their cultural wisdom balanced between Confucianism and Taoism.

In Chinese culture the Confucian and Tao philosophies of life are opposite and complementary to each other. The Confucian attitude toward life is active. On the other hand, the Tao attitude toward life is recluse, the ideal in life for Taoists is to become sages who keep aloof from worldly affairs. What they long for is to escape from the noisy world because they are tired of the intense competition for material gains. This is apparently a passive attitude toward life resulted from their indifference to the seesaw games in society. Taoism is, however, not passive in essence. What Lao Zi meant by "Non- interference"(Laissez-faire) is that "Everything can itself develop according to the great law of Nature.

The two kinds of philosophy of life provide people with alternative patterns of choice. We can either face reality and actively involve ourselves in worldly affairs or keep aloof from them and endure temporary loneliness to prepare for the future but should not lose heart. These two kinds of philosophy of life, as it were, are two tactics which are complementary to each other. In

Chinese history there were many instances of Confucianists and Taoists, literati and hermits who exchanged places with each other. Whether in power or out of office they could always manage a balanced psyche to deal with affairs and get on with their pursuit by either of the two tactics. This is where the wisdom of the Chinese culture lies.

3.6 Advantages and disadvantages of the spirit of science

What man has achieved by science deserves our heartfelt admiration. The wonders of modern medicine, the visit to the moon, the exploration of the Mars, all these would have been unattainable without science. Science has greatly improved the living conditions of man. However, science is a double edged weapon and has its negative effects. After the Industrial Revolution, with the rapid development of science and technology and the growth of productive forces by leaps and bounds, man's pride and complacency began to increase without bounds, blindly believing that "science is omnipotent". From then on science, originally a link for man to associate himself with nature, turned a weapon to conquer nature. For centuries man didn't realize that his frenzied exploitation of Nature brought with it potential crises until the crises came to threaten man's existence. Today we have to face so many environmental pollution. Such as sour rains, suffocating gases, traffic noises and the harmful electromagnetic radiation. The ecological system is out of balance. Man has to eat the bitter fruit caused by his abuse of science and technology.

Spiritually, modern people's beliefs have been more or less replaced by their adoration or superstition of the omnipotent science and technology. For material gains, they tend to believe in pragmatism and hedonism consequently, they have lost confidence in the human race and in the future. There arise many problems such as the widespread perplexity and skepticism, the vacuum of moral and value sense, the feeling of emptiness and helplessness, drug addiction and violence, a sense of loss and the tiredness of

life. All this phenomenon of decadence, it seems to me, should be attributed rather to society than the individual him-self. The famous sociologist Durkheim, when studying suicide rates found that they have a lot to do with the nature of societies. He observed; "Wholly different are the results we obtained when we forgot the individual and sought the causes of the suicidal aptitude of each society in the nature of the societies themselves". Evidently all these problems can not be solved by science and technology. Society must gear itself to a balanced development since after all science and technology are controlled by man, their negative effects can be eventually removed by endowing them with proper human values. Only by a balanced development of both material and spiritual civilizations can we have an equally balanced cultural ecology.

3.7 What Chinese cultural elements can contribute to the culture of the world.

There has appeared a strong tendency to form a global culture in today's world. The major cultural systems of the world are mixing together to form a cultural system shared by all human beings. So far in this new system the Western culture, it seems, constitutes the mainstream. The other three major cultural systems of China, India and Islam have not yet offered their major cultural shares in the new system. The Western culture however is not a perfect culture because it alone cannot solve the problems of everybody's ultimate concern. Today science and technology are so highly developed that they can almost enslave man. This has made the Western value system betray more and more of its weaknesses. Meanwhile, the worldwide hostile competition among religions has become more and more fierce in the second half of that century. A famous American scholar (*see Li Xiang-hai, 1996, 154*) predicts that conflict in the future will be that between different cultural types, especially between different value systems. In this background Confucianism, with its Golden Mean philosophy, can play a meditative role in the building of a united world culture. Reasons are twofold. In the first place, as Confucianism advocates a well-balanced view between extremes, it can help different value systems get in contact and communicate with each other and get rid of each other's limitations. Since no value system can exclusively monopoly human beliefs the future world culture in this respect will become pluralistic. Different religions become more and more aware of the importance to coexist harmoniously.

Philosophically speaking, Confucianism is not a religion and has no God to worship, what it connects is human value itself. This special status qualifies it to play a meditative role in forming a united front for all the world value systems.

The other reason is what we refer to as Confucian magnanimity. Owing to this unprejudiced tolerance, Confucianism has successfully blended with Taoism and Buddhism in the history of its development. It has drawn critically on the strong points of other philosophical or religious beliefs and has made itself a more sophisticated and well-balanced world outlook in the sense of perfecting human value systems. According to Confucianism man is the master of himself instead of the servant of God. But it is not overweening nor is it oligarchic in dealing with nature. As we have discussed earlier, Confucianism holds that man is a part of nature and the two are in great harmony. Comparatively speaking, this Chinese Golden-mean way of thinking is good enough to provide constant nourishment for other cultures to rebuild their value systems. Furthermore Confucianism is undoubtedly a humanist ultimate concern. Its aim is to link up nature and man through a humanist spirit. It emphasizes that a magnanimous man, a true man, will link up the whole universe with his own life and will strive to let live all lives in the universe. This is where human value lies. Right in this sense, the Chinese culture with Confucian tradition as its center can surely contribute a great deal in the development of the world culture.

IV Concluding Remarks

So far we have compared and commented on each of the pairs of Sino-Western cultural traits and the causes of the differences between them. Before I wind up this paper, I'd like to say something more, sociologically speaking, no culture as a whole is superior or inferior to other cultures, and each of them has its strong points and weaknesses. As far as our Chinese culture is concerned, traditionally it set a great store by the improvement of human quality and it seems to me that we've done better in this respect. But too much attention to human self-cultivation and the harmony of man with nature have led to the negligence of science and technology by which we could have interacted with Nature more effectively to our advantage. Consequently our national economy gradually lagged west uncountable bitter lessons in recent Chinese history are examples. Today to prevent history from repeating itself, it is highly imperative for us to draw earnestly on the advanced science and technology from the West. Meanwhile we should be warned that science is not omnipotent. Today when the Westerners are enjoying great comforts in material life, they are, to their dismay, suffering from various spiritual problems. As a result, more and more Westerners turn to our traditional culture for spiritual remedies. It seems to me that with a global culture taking shape and different cultures mixing together the East and the West will learn each other's strong points. For us Chinese today the most important question is how to learn critically from other cultures. Two erroneous tendencies should be guarded against: one is the blind westernization which has already been proved unworkable,

the other is the simple restoration of Confucianism which sounds a far cry from the building of our modernization. What proves reasonable and workable is for us to reconcile our traditional culture with the Western culture. In doing so, we should make a point to learn what is really advanced and resist what is evidently backward and decadent. For example, how can we avoid recommitting the same Western error of "Pollution first and environment protection later"? How can we avoid getting caught in what is referred to as Western Hedonism with a helpless sense of loss and the emptiness of spirit? This is a big subject which remains to be discussed in my future researches.

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