

Reflections on the Relationship Between Traditional Culture and Modernisation

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Abstract

What exactly is the correlation between Chinese cultural tradition and modernity? This is a question that our cultural theorists have been studying in recent years; some scholars have completely rejected the most traditional Chinese culture in China, while others have inherited it completely, but exactly what role traditional Chinese culture plays in the process of building a Chinese modernity needs to be studied objectively and discursively.

Keywords

Traditional culture; Modernisation; Abandonment and inheritance

1. Introduction

The question of the relationship between tradition and modernity has been a topic of endless debate in Chinese academia in recent years. It has become a hot topic of debate mainly because of the economic and social wonders that have occurred in East Asian countries in recent decades, which have attracted worldwide attention. In their traditional cultural sociological studies of modern capitalist relations of production and their development in China, German Marx and Weber developed a completely new theory of the relationship between Chinese cultural traditions and modern economic rationalism, and pointed out that the Confucian tradition of social development in East Asian countries was also a major obstacle to the development of modernity in East Asia. However, the rapid economic development of Japan, the Four Little Dragons and mainland China in recent times, and the re-emergence of East Asia as a whole, has also led to a reassessment of the significance of the influence of traditional civilisations in East Asia.

Modernity refers to a period of economic globalisation and a historical process, which refers to a process of social development in which human society emerges from the beginning of the era of the industrial revolution against the background of industrial modernity and the global transition from the agricultural suitability of the past to modern industrial development, with corresponding changes in all aspects of its economic, technological and scientific level of development. In terms of the process of modernisation, in China it is still relatively low, both in terms of starting point and level of development, although they have been desperately following the wave of Chinese modernisation. In this historical process of following each other, human society has also produced different views and schools of thought on the history of the development of the Chinese nation, ranging from complete rejection or total westernisation of the Chinese nation to complete retention of a single-minded xenophobia, but such different views and actions have produced corresponding and different results. Here, we will take Japan and China as examples.

It is true that the giants of the modernising ideological enlightenment of the Japanese state, such as Fukuzawa Yukichi, wished to embark on a path of modernity away from Asia and into Europe by completely turning their backs on the ancient cultural traditions, which were predominantly retro, and going all West. After the establishment of the Meiji Restoration regime, the Japanese

government began to rapidly shift to a new system of socialist civilization and enlightenment, changing many of its customs and practices, adopting a Western-style cultural and educational system, encouraging foreign studies, sending foreign students abroad, encouraging the development of science and technology, and lifting the strict restrictions on Chinese Christian traditions, the whole country at once worshipped foreigners, imagined building a maritime majesty, and rewarded A new system of mere modernisation, but later on these superficial, raw and raw as a chapter way of life were strongly resented by the old feudal forces in China. cultural system, and so reverted to some of the old moral concepts, basically including Confucian ethics and the idea of imperial power, to stabilise society at a time when refined socialist ideas were just becoming widespread, and more powerfully to promote top-down industrialisation. The country has developed just above the mature industrial countries of the West and, despite the vices of industrial society, it has avoided some of the modern problems of the Western industrial era, including an economic drive that has not declined, a high level of formalisation of life and less crime, less unemployment in the industrial world, and a more balanced economic and social human resource base. According to the Japanese writer Taichi Sakaiya, the key difference between Japanese industrial socialism and Western European industrial society, which is basically rooted in Japan, lies in the fact that it focuses more on the development of cultural heritage, the concept of unity between the government and the people, the philosophy of hard work, the entrepreneurial spirit of good management, etc. than on a certain proportion of material things. The process of industrial emergence in China has not simply followed the development of Western Europe, but there has also been an Eastern innovation, abandoning old Chinese traditions and practices and absorbing the best of Western civilisation, integrating and promoting each other.

While the entry of foreign Western European capitalism into China and the entry of American capitalism slowed down China's economic development, both of which were external causes, the internal one was the dullness and corruption of Chinese feudal officials who were dealing with the issue of our traditional ideas and Western civilisation. Our feudal China was a feudal royal society with a high degree of centralised political power, and this authoritarian centralisation lasted for over 2,000 years without interruption. It was for this reason that China's later development of Chinese as the body of Western learning turned to its use. The enlightenment of modern Chinese political thinking began with the development of the idea of the use of the world during the Jiaqing and Daoguang periods, and China has since gone through many stages of development, such as learning from the barbarians, reforming the law, and using the Chinese body for the West, all within the framework of China's ancient political Confucianism. In the case of China's political Confucianism during the Qing dynasty, when one of the policies of feudal cultural dictatorship was in force, it was simply impossible to subvert the traditional discourse system of Chinese political Confucianism if the start of China's political modernisation was only carried out in the context of maintaining the tradition of feudal imperial thinking and developing political Confucianism. The Chinese nation fought as an East Asian power against the onslaught of the Atlantic Ocean for almost three long eras, but it was not until the early nineteenth century that the Westerners opened the floodgates of seclusion and were swept up in the great wave of reform in the modern world by their powerful ships and cannons. Thus the Chinese nation began to adopt the policy measures of the Chinese body and the West, several incorporating change into the policy of the shrine, which was essentially the consolidation of the feudal system. It was a top-down, non-structural phase of feudal history of change. Up to the fall of the Qing dynasty, the reforms to our country were only in a hasty and minor way, but in the almost one hundred years of reform so far, our ancient civilisation has continued to try to form a harmonious or adaptive link with the development of reality.

The world's advanced practice proves that no country can embark on a course of total westernisation that completely abandons the historical traditions of mankind, and that without

a break with tradition one cannot keep pace with modernity or innovate. Traditional culture is an organism that grows with time, and for the sake of major changes in modernity it is necessary to renew and develop traditions, therefore accepting traditional culture is not a return to the past, but a break with it.

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