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# Introduction

After 11 September 2001 many people are asking the question: what sort of desperation drove supposedly intelligent young men and woman to take such cruel, horrible, and ghastly action, and what terribly deep-seated hatred and hopelessness must they have to make them take a seemingly insensible suicidal option. And then the horrible bombing in the London underground on 7 July 2005, and many other bombings in crowded places all seem senseless. Whatever the motives, the mass killing of innocent people has no excuse. The whole ideology behind it must be understood then challenged, the network behind such plots must be checked and the inhumane acts themselves must be stopped.

On the other hand, it is also clear that the 9/11 and 7/7 (London bombing) events epitomized anti-Western sentiments such as the sabotage of American military and civilian targets in parts of the world, and recent opposition to the invasion of Iraq in many parts of the world. At first, it does not seem understandable why, despite what America has done to promote democracy and human rights, and to alleviate the plight of people in many under developed and developing countries around the world, that it is still bitterly hated by many. In Iraq, to take a recent example, America, together with its coalition partners, through the sacrifice of their soldiers, eliminated

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a dictator who was ruthless to a great majority of the Iraqi people. And yet in return, the American campaign in Iraq is not even appreciated by many Iraqis. The campaign is being understood and appreciated less and less as the months and years go by.

Somehow, as the titles of two books<sup>1</sup> have indicated, instead of planting democracy and providing hope for the people around the world, America is deterring democracy and killing hope. It is the right time to re-examine the worldwide human situation that produces terrorism and ways to deal with it, and also to rethink American foreign policy around the world in relation to the roots of Islamic fanatic terrorism in particular. And the examination has to be done in relation to the concept of American Empire<sup>2</sup> against the background of the powerlessness of people in many parts of the world. At the same time, developing countries themselves also need to find their own solutions. History requires us to rethink the ideas and institutions that the West has been exporting to developing countries in the 19th and 20th centuries and in more recent times. Dealing intellectually with such issues for the developing countries is, then, the primary concern of this book. In a division of labor, some have to strategize ways to deal with terrorism and suggest how American foreign policy can speak to those who are utterly hopeless, instead of flexing its muscles. Others have to provide intellectual alternative so that under developed countries could rise out of the ashes of identity annihilation due to cultural imperialism, and developing countries could emerge from the agony of birth pangs of modern capitalism, commercialism, and the reduction of the state to dealing with commodities without ideals. And it seems clear that for the under developed and the developing countries, this mission could only be accomplished through an awareness and a critical examination of some important concepts for contemporary modern societies and a country's own cultural identities.

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<sup>1</sup> See Noam Chomsky, *Deterring Democracy*; William Blum, *Killing Hope*. These two references to American foreign policies were first given by David Ray Griffin in an unpublished work: *Shaping Christian Faith in an Age of Global Empire*.

<sup>2</sup> See Andrew Bacevich, *American Empire*; Also Noam Chomsky, *Failed States*.

In the discussion of this book, I am using the word “culture” in a very confined sense. Culture, in a broad sense, has been used to denote the total traces of human activities in a society, including its language, mores, religion, the arts and crafts vis-à-vis the geography, climate or ethnicity, etc. of that society. In a slightly narrower sense, “culture” has been used to denote a specific group of activities in a society, such as its literature, music, and the plastic, three-dimensional and performing arts, vis-à-vis the society’s political, social, economic and legal systems and activities. In this book, however, when talking about culture in relation to cultural identity, I am using it as the undergirding strength of a society’s communal psyche, historical memories, legends, myths, and its symbols of dignity and well-being that have all been reflected in a set of deep-seated and most cherished values. However, I have occasionally used culture in a broader sense, when I talk about a people’s history and culture, or their cultural confrontation with other cultures, or in relations to other broadly based categories, like country, society, people, etc.

This book also deals with “modernization” of developing countries, but the term “modern” is ambiguous. For historians usually use that word to designate the industrial stage of development, and we are now in the information age. Although some developing countries are developing information technologies, these and the bulk of developing countries are still worrying about problems of industrialization. Thus in this book, I shall use “contemporary modern society” to indicate the stage of development that most developing countries wish to strive for today.

The cultural confusion of developing countries in Asia brought about by a confrontation with the West more than 2 centuries ago (earlier contacts might be dramatic, but not confusing) is today compounded by the onslaught of globalization in information technology, and in trade and finance with their economic, social, political, and cultural impacts. The flood of variegated information from the Internet and the dazzling foreign images delivered, especially, by movies and television media have become common phenomena in everyday life in developing countries. Likewise, global trading has brought foreign fashions, foreign vehicles, and multinational

fast food and retail chains to the immediate availability of people in developing countries. What is more important for our discussion are the effects of globalization defined basically by the “Washington Consensus” under the economic theory of neo-liberalism. Globalization, in this sense, really started in the latter part of the 20th century, bringing about extremely large amount of trade and capital movements. This could and should have been a positive force for the development. But unfortunately, the financial assistance to developing countries by international financial institutions such as the World Bank and IMF (International Monetary Fund) often dictate the running of the recipient countries, including such requirements as limiting state power, privatizing enterprises, deregulating controls, and liberalizing the market by opening it up to world trading.<sup>3</sup> As Held and McGrew, quoting Pieper and Taylor, summarizes, “Today 50 percent of the world’s population and two-thirds of its governments are bound by the disciplines of the IMF or the World Bank”.<sup>4</sup>

No developing country objects to assistance in economic analysis and financial funding from such international institutions. What is daunting, especially to small and weak nations, is the indiscernible erosion of cultural identity and sovereignty of national power by their embedded cultural values and demands, as their dictates overpower the autonomy of those nations. And the requirement of opening up the markets of the smaller and weaker nations to worldwide competition has made them victims of the “survival of the fittest”.

Putting aside the question, for the time being, of whether or not globalization has worsened poverty in the world, or whether it has increased the gap between rich and poor countries, it is definitely threatening the autonomy and sovereignty of the nation state; especially that of the smaller and weaker nations. According to Barbara Harris-White, globalization, by exposing the economies of all third-world countries to competition in production, price, wage,

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<sup>3</sup> See Chris Brown, “A World Gone Wrong?” in *Global Transformation Reader*, p. 570.

<sup>4</sup> Held and McGrew, “Introduction” in *Ibid*, p. 30.

and taxation on the open market, has created insecurity for both people and their property in those countries, in terms of unemployment and asset loss; instability of local markets; and vulnerability of people's positions in work and social security.<sup>5</sup> Yet, for a country to be able to play a responsible role in this increasingly internationalized economy, there is precisely the need for it to be a capable and sovereign state. Manuel Castells observes: "The global economy was not created by markets, but by the interaction between markets and governments and international financial institutions acting on behalf of markets—or of their notion of what markets ought to be".<sup>6</sup> And it needs a sovereign state to redress the unevenness and injustice in the globalization process. Thus, in order for these states to have the confidence to act responsibly, it is vitally and extremely important today for each country to have cultural identity and national sovereignty.

In dealing with this question, the issue of East versus West has been with us for a long time. If the developing countries rejected what the West has imposed, then in what direction should they go? Historically, there have been two extreme reactions: a total acceptance of the West, or a total rejection of it on the ground of the West's world hegemony. The latter view, for instance, thinks that America's foreign policies are all about having a presence in strategic places around the world to guard America militarily; having friendly powers around to safeguard American interests politically; and gaining footholds in places rich in natural resources so that Americans gain the advantage economically.

The trouble with this reaction to America's hegemony is that, while the analysis might be very true, it only gives a negative criticism without providing a direction for developing countries themselves. Historically, many attempts at regime change failed because the protagonists did not have a political platform or ideas about workable socioeconomic institutions based on generally accepted values. The failures of many peasant rebellions in China are good

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<sup>5</sup> See Barbara Harriss-White, *Globalization and Insecurity*, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> "Global Informational Capitalism" in *The Global Transformations Reader*, p. 326.

examples.<sup>7</sup> And the terrorists today could be another example, though there are quite a bit of discussions and debates regarding possible muslim sociopolitical structures since 9/11. After venting their hatred, what direction will they offer to build their societies?

The trouble with the former reaction of total acceptance is that the values, ideas, and institutions promoted by the West could clash with deep-seated indigenous cultural values, and become irrelevant to the local conditions and people. Going back a hundred years or so, we see similar problems of confrontation that China faced in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. After the humiliating impact of Western powers, China went through the biggest peasant movement in its history, the Taiping Rebellion, which attempted to integrate some of the Western, especially Christian ideas, into traditional thinking. It was followed by the 100-Day Reform of Kang Yuwei, and the cultural reforms of Liang Qichao and Yan Fu,<sup>8</sup> to eradicate feudal institutions like foot-binding of women and to start modern education for women and Li Hongzhang (1823–1901) with his industrial and military modernization programs. While all these reforms were taking place, the feudal habit of thinking was still binding, especially when China lost a sea battle against another Asian country, Japan, in 1898. That experience gave China a huge blow, because it indicated that China still had a long way to go for modernization.

In 1911, the revolution by Sun Yat-sen overthrew the feudal imperial system in China. But it did not eradicate the plight of warlordism throughout the country. Then, intellectuals like Chen Duxiu and Hu Shi, concluding what China lacked was a modern culture, started to criticize the Confucian tradition and wanted to introduce modern science and Western democracy among intellectual circles. This “new thought movement”, which began with the publication of the journal *La Jeunesse* in 1917,<sup>9</sup> inspired an intellectual movement

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<sup>7</sup> See J.A.G. Roberts, *A History of China* Vol I, pp. 177–180 (The success of one of the peasant rebels, Zu Yuan-zhang who eventually became the emperor of the Ming dynasty, was made possible because he allied with the local gentry and military leaders for political ideas and administrative wisdom).

<sup>8</sup> See Ye Nanrong, (叶南容), *Modernization of China* (中国的现代化), pp. 45–59.

<sup>9</sup> See *Ibid*, p. 62ff.

which led the students to stage a mass demonstration on 4 May 1919 against the government's earlier weakness in agreeing to the Twenty-One Demands by Japan in 1915 and the current weakness against the Western dictates in the Treaties of Versailles in 1919. Both incidents were humiliating to China as a sovereign nation. The movement was later immortalized as the May Fourth Spirit. At that time, while many students and intellectuals embraced the fresh ideas of modern science and Western democracy, China as a whole did not do so, because the new concepts clashed with the basic spirit of China's traditional ideas and institutions, and more importantly, they did not alleviate the plight of the vast majority of the Chinese people at the time: the rural peasant population. At a later date, however, a Chinese version of Marxism as propounded by Mao Zedong<sup>10</sup> spoke to the peasants' problems. Also, the ideal of ultimate equality among all peoples in Marxism caught the imagination of many intellectuals, as it resonated with the Chinese concept of "The Grand Harmony"<sup>11</sup> which was the basis of Kang Yuwei's book, *Da Tong Shu* (大同书). Part of that ideal came from a document probably written between 551 and 479 BC called Li Yun from the *Book of Poetry*. It said that in the days when there was grand harmony in the world:

"...The great Dao was in practice. The world was common to all; those who were righteous and capable were selected to manage the affairs of the society; trust and peace were emphasized, so that people did not merely love their own parents and their own children. The aged were provided for; adults could each contribute according to his ability; children had healthy development; the widowers, widows, orphans, and those who were lonely and disabled all had their security. Men had employment and women had safety. They hated to see that natural resources be left untapped or used only by themselves, and that labor did not come from oneself or was only for one's profit. In this way, intrigues and dark plotting naturally did not have a chance to develop. Thieves and robbers had no

<sup>10</sup> *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung* Vol. II, pp. 541–542; 634–636.

<sup>11</sup> Levenson, Joseph, "Marxism and the Middle Kingdom" in *Modern China*, pp. 229–236.

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opportunity to be active. Consequently, at night one could sleep without shutting the door. It is called “Grand Harmony”. [translation adapted by author]<sup>12</sup>

So the Communist movement in China spread rapidly in the rural areas with their land-redistributing program taking care of the poor and destitute peasants. The students and intellectuals in general, sympathizing with Marxism for its affinity with the ideals of grand harmony and universal equality, became the driving force in the cities. In this way, the army of the Communist Party was able to enlarge its influence, and later during the civil war (1947–1949) between the Communist and the Kuomintang (KMT), the Communist army could move from victory to victory because the general masses were behind it. The motivating force came from a reform welcomed by the general populace and an ideology that found roots in the deep-seated and most cherished values in the Chinese culture.

This Chinese experience showed that, first of all, a society in its development has to build upon ideals that are rooted in deep-seated and most cherished values of its culture. Secondly, merely solving the problems of the social or economic elite in a society without alleviating the plight of the general masses does not answer the crucial questions of development, because it does not have the general populace behind it to make it a country-wide movement.

Of course in actuality, the process of modernization in China was more complex. Many combinations of programs and ideas had been tried and failed. For example, the attempt of combining traditional philosophy as the essence of beliefs with Western science and technology in matters of practicality propounded by Zhang Zhidong (张之洞) did not work, because China soon found that Western science and technology also carried with them beliefs and philosophical ideas, and that they were in conflict with Chinese traditional

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<sup>12</sup> See Kang Youwei's 大同书, in *Ta T'ung Shu: The One World Philosophy of K'ang Yu Weis*, translated by Thompson and Laurence pp. 28–29 for Kang's reference to alleged Confucius' writing, “Li Yun” (礼运); Also see Chinese original in Feng, Yu-lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, p. 174.

views. All in all, the whole problem of modernization has plagued Chinese intellectuals for more than the last hundred years. Even after the Communist Party succeeded in the revolution and established a new China in 1949, the different experiments of modernization still went on. Except for the first 7 years of solid development after 1949, none of the experiments, which included the tumultuous cultural revolution, seemed to have resulted in sustained improvement until Deng Xiaoping initiated the open-door policy in 1978/1979. That first movement pushed forward drastic economic reforms and then more recently, political reforms and social reforms while interacting with the world community. So, not until then did we see that China has latched onto something that might lead to a satisfactory and sustainable, albeit arduous, path toward a healthy development of a contemporary modern state. It has been a very long and tortuous journey. The purpose of this book, then, is my attempt to see if there is any way the modernization of other developing countries could be a shorter and less painful one.

My basic premise in this book is that concepts like respect for the individual person, human rights, freedom, equality, democracy, and the universal respect for law should be the minimum guides to a contemporary modern society. Therefore, they are important as a nominal framework for our discussion. Yin Baoyun's book on *Universal Crisis of Modernization* touches on those concepts, though that book's emphasis is on the developmental model of socio-economic and political structures, and is not directly related to the cultural values studied in this book. On the other hand, the socio-political ideas selected by him to characterize modernity in his book *What is Modernization* coincide with the list of concepts I have selected above, though presented in a slightly different way.<sup>13</sup> However, I shall show that, while taking those concepts as important, we need to dissect and examine them critically to understand the nuances of their meanings, and also need to understand them in each cultural context, and then use them in the unique historical context of each developing country. The tendency of people dealing with

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<sup>13</sup> Yin Baoyun, *What is Modernization* (什么是现代化), p. 8.

modernization of developing countries, aside from total acceptance or total rejection of Western values, is often trying to find Western values in traditional heritage, or trying to read Western-values into traditional concepts. But we have already seen that in the development of some Asian countries, like China, neither holding on to traditional ways nor complete Westernization nor any superficial mixture of them have played out well in history. Take Western-style democracy for example. Although it worked out well in Japan under American tutelage after WWII, South Korea under democracy had its ups and downs, and made its highest economic growth when the country was under a centralized form of representative government. The Chaebols, though private, were under the government discipline. And the economic system was a tightly controlled one till the early 1990s.<sup>14</sup> India has had Western style democracy for almost 60 years, and yet until recently, it has not done much in eliminating abject poverty. The Philippines have yet to solve much of their poverty problems also after close to 60 years of democratic rule.

That is why I think, for example, to deal with modernization of China by merely studying Confucianism, analyzing and evaluating the solutions of the “traditionalist” (or the neo-traditionalist) and the “modernists” or even the “New Age” view, as Tamney and Chiang have done, is still caught in the dichotomy of East and West,<sup>15</sup> and will invariably end in a cul-de-sac. As early as 1940 Mao Zedong essentially said that whatever was useful, China would adopt, even though it might be from the West. And whatever was harmful, China should discard, even though it might be traditional Chinese.<sup>16</sup> Actually, Tamney and Chiang, in discussing modernization and Confucianism, also say that, “What is needed from intellectuals is

<sup>14</sup> See Chang Zheng (畅征), and Liu Qingjiang (刘青建), *General Discussion on Developing Countries' Politics and Economy* (发展中国家政治经济 概论), pp. 147–148; See also “Interpreting the Korean Crisis: Financial Liberalization, Industrial Policy and Corporate Governance” in *Financial Liberalization and the Asian Crisis*. Chang *et al.* (ed.), pp. 140–153.

<sup>15</sup> *Modernization, Globalization and Confucianism in Chinese Society* See especially, pp. 187–207.

<sup>16</sup> *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung* Vol. II, p. 707.

not lists of negatives, or even lists of positives and negatives, but judgments as to whether the benefits of modernization do or do not outweigh the cost".<sup>17</sup> The trouble is that we can know "what is useful and harmful", or "what is beneficial and costly" only after a passage of time, with historical hindsight. We need to have criteria to make decisions and to evaluate the historical outcome and not to decide arbitrarily. For instance, it should not be, as some people would say, that as long as a country has adopted Western-style democracy, irrespective of its ability or inability to solve its people's poverty or other socioeconomic and cultural problems, it should nevertheless be applauded, as if democracy is an end in itself.

We have seen that Western-style democracy has not been successful in building some Asian countries after decades of practice. Thus, in dealing with the cultural concerns of developing countries in this book, I am trying to throw off the yoke of the East/West dichotomy. And in its stead I suggest that we should first analyze those prevalently considered important sociopolitical concepts indicated above, and then have an honest look at the total cultural heritage of one's own country, identifying its deep-seated and most cherished values (cultural identity), and use them as resources to evaluate and understand those concepts. At the same time, the cultural identity, together with basic human subsistence requirements, will be used as the criteria for evaluating the historical outcome of decisions taken for development.

In using a country's cultural identity as resources to understand those concepts relating to development, if one finds that an important concept was never there in one's heritage, then one should adopt it gracefully. One might find cases whereby one's own cultural insight gives a variation on the usual understanding of a concept could make it more relevant to one's society, then one should treasure it. Or one might find discarded or buried values in one's culture could be significant to the much commercialized and spiritually hollow contemporary world, then one should revive and promote them. Or one might discover the values that have demonstrated the

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<sup>17</sup> *Modernization, Globalization and Confucianism in Chinese Societies*, pp. 57–58.

resilience of one's history are also basic to the flourishing of the human spirit generally, and then one should recommend them.

Coming back to the stated prevalent concepts, I will first use them as a nominal framework for discussion. That is, those concepts will not be taken at face value, but be critically examined. They are selected, because they seem to represent the minimum characteristics of modernity, and due to that importance, they tend to be the concepts that make those who are concerned with the development lose sleep over them, pondering to subscribe or not to subscribe, to adopt and how to adopt. Therefore, it is important that we have a critical understanding of those concepts.

It should not be surprising that those concepts need critical examination. For instance, "democracy" has meant many things to many people. It could mean a political process, and could also mean a proclamation to emphasize such values as equality, justice, and majority rule. How would it be to have an Asian democracy with Asian values embedded, or within an Asian context in a particular historical juncture in Asia? Also, does respecting an individual person necessarily lead to Western individualism? Individual rights are part of human rights. Is it, as some have made it to be, the most important one of all the human rights? Freedom has different aspects. To be emancipated from a poverty of things crucial to human well-being is certainly more important than the freedom of choice. And is the freedom of political choice more important than the freedom of social choice? People are born with different circumstances and different functional abilities. Are inequalities cases of natural facts or personal attitudes of the more fortunate and the more privileged against those less fortunate and less privileged? This book is not in a position to deal with and try to answer all those questions, but it will try to show how important it is for people who are concerned with development to be aware of the delicate distinctions in the meanings of these important concepts. For instance, many see respecting an individual person as one of the important characteristics of modernity, with which I agree. But, as I shall discuss in Chapter 1, respect for the individual person in the traditional Chinese sense is quite different from the sense of Western individualism. So, I disagree with

some who say individual freedom has to presuppose Western individualism. Again, many see democracy as being very important to a modern society, with which I also agree. But we need to see that the democratic process itself is only a skeleton to which many values have to be added, as indeed, Western democracy comes with many values embedded, some of which are applicable to Asian countries and some not. Likewise, market economy seems to be able to release people's energy in creating wealth. But should a society let loose that raw market force without constraints? Therefore, what values are added into those systems would make a big difference to a non-Western country as to whether a system will be successful or not in that country. In the end, most important of all is that a society needs to carry with it a set of values accepted by the people of a particular country as significant enough to produce a cohesiveness and an esprit de corps to give momentum in development. In other words, when emerging societies move ahead in their development, aside from grappling with many complicated practical problems and issues, they have to deal with the meanings of concepts that guide their development. There are systems and institutions like the market economy, the democratic process. What is important for leaders of a developing country is to have an understanding of the different subtle implications involved in those systems and institutions, and of the need to have values with cultural identity undergirding those systems and institutions they want to adopt. Without the understanding and awareness of the subtleties, the development would result in not having the clarity of direction nor the energy of the general population behind it. This unfortunate phenomenon has been borne out amply well by the earlier modern history of China.

In a nutshell, the methodology being suggested here is a two-prong approach with concept analysis and cultural identity working together as follows:

- Critical analysis of different aspects and meanings of concepts important to a contemporary modern society.
- Identify deep-seated and most cherished values in one's heritage. This is the sense of "cultural identity" used in this book.

- Use cultural identity as resources to evaluate and understand the important concepts, and also as criteria to evaluate historical outcomes of decisions made.
- Set priority and appropriate timing of implementing the programmes derived from those concepts;

The important point of the methodology is that, while a developing country needs an effective and efficient way to modernize, it should not lose sight of the awareness of one's heritage, a true perspective of one's own history and a unique cultural identity in this world much influenced by globalization. This identity is of utmost importance to a people's national psyche. For, it provides continuity and direction as well as a sense of dignity to the country, thereby giving confidence to it as a responsible member of the world community. And concept analysis is important because it prevents the development from going into useless or even harmful directions.

To emphasize cultural identity is not to say that the West has a definition of contemporary modernity and Asia has its own definition of contemporary modernity, but rather that we have taken concepts that have been prevalently considered by people in both the East and the West as nominally important for modernization. My suggestion is only that the exact understanding of the concepts, in order to be relevant to a particular culture, has to be evaluated by that country's cultural values. Since the fundamental criteria to judge and decide what is relevant and what is significant for a particular country depends on whether it will or will not awake the people's drive and creativity, cultural identity becomes central to this process.

While emphasizing the importance of cultural traditions of different countries, I should also clarify another significant point. With due deference to Samuel Huntington's most important book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, I have seen different cultures co-existing without clashes; neither will my emphasis on cultural identity necessarily lead to clashes of cultures. Although that book somehow made prognostications of the 9/11 event in 2001, and the subsequent events in Afghanistan of 2002 and Iraq of 2003, the clash of civilizations is not a historical necessity in

all instances and at all places. If we define civilization as an extension of culture as Huntington does, we see that there are places where people with many very different ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds living together peacefully. For example in Malaysia, Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, and Confucians live together side-by-side generally without clashes, despite the affirmative action program that benefits the Malays, at least under the 22 years of governance by Mahathir Mohamad. There are 56 ethnic groups in China: the Han majority and 55 minority nationalities. As a whole, they live together peacefully, with their own languages, religions, and cultural traditions. This is not to say that there are no minor pockets of people inside and outside of China wanting to stir up racial antagonism. Of course, the peaceful co-existence of these ethnic, cultural, and religious groups is only possible with a certain philosophical outlook and carefully devised policies and laws.<sup>18</sup> Realizing the severe consequences of ethnic, cultural or religious frictions, the Chinese laws concerning nationalities are very strict on the behavior of the Han majority group. Often a civil offence in an ordinary situation, such as a man seducing a young woman, could turn out to be a criminal offence if she was from a minority nationality, unless he marries the woman. Further to laws, there are policies in China to preserve the cultures of various nationalities. Universities and institutions have been established specifically to study those minority cultures, including studying and initiating performances of songs and dances of various minority nationalities to strengthen their cultural identity as well as enriching the fabric of the Chinese culture as a whole. Another example is that the Tibetan Institute has recorded over 5000 tapes of the Tibetan epic poem *Ge-Sa-Er* (格萨尔), which is twice as long as Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* plus the Babylonia and Indian epic poems all put together, to preserve the oral tradition of the Tibetan culture.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> A *Collection of Chinese Laws and Regulations to Guarantee Urban Ethnic Minorities' Right and Interests*, pp. 165–209

<sup>19</sup> 降边嘉措 ‘中国的伟大史诗 (*The Great Epic Poem of China*) 在北大听讲座 (*Lectures at Beijing University*) Vol. 9, pp. 283–295.

It should be pointed out-here that only God could forgive a third party who, for political purpose and economic reasons, tries to subvert a country by stirring up religious or racial hatred. History has records of too many of such activities which invariably end up gruesomely bloody and tragic.

So, this book presupposes that it is possible for different countries, with their own cultural interpretations of sociopolitical concepts and cultural identity, to live together peacefully. After all, harmony does not necessarily imply homogeneity, and unity does not have to imply uniformity.

In working out a solution, I have said that we not only need to dissect the prevalent concepts, but also need to have an honest look at one's own culture. Using this principle to examine Chinese heritage, for example, this book's assertions are as follows:

- A. The universal respect for law (law above everyone, including the law-maker) is a positive contribution of Western civilization which was never there in the Chinese tradition, but is crucial for a contemporary modern society.
- B. The respect for the individual person was always there in the Chinese tradition, but not in the same sense as Western individualism.
- C. The demand for freedom is a universal human demand, and not an invention of any one culture.
- D. The concept of equality was always there in the Chinese tradition, as shown by the examination system through which anybody could change his socioeconomic and political status.
- E. Human rights includes values, some of which China always had, but the idea about "rights" presuppose a guarantee by a universal respect of law that the China heritage did not have.
- F. Democracy as a political process being practiced in the Western world today was never there in the Chinese tradition, but many values akin to those embraced by democracy were in the Chinese heritage.

Since the fundamental criteria for judging what is relevant and what is significant for a particular culture depend on the deep-seated and most cherished values of that culture, we shall find that those values are most likely embraced by an understanding of Man in that culture. Therefore, I shall start this study with the concept of personhood, for everything else will be impacted by that understanding and flow from its implications.

Having said the above, I should point out that it is not the purpose of this book to propose any model of development for Asian countries. First, I do not have the knowledge of various cultures and their possible interpretations of the concepts to suggest a model of development for all countries. Second, even if I had, I do not believe a single model would be applicable to all developing countries. Therefore, this being a book mainly on methodology, it will only cite specific cases of cultural identity as examples. The real work of identifying deep-seated and most cherished values of a culture is a prolonged process involving the dedication and debates of a great many people concerned in each particular country. Leaders in those countries, however, might use the method as a guide to rethink those important concepts and try to understand them in relation to their own cultural identity and development, and come up with their own solutions without either embracing wholeheartedly or rejecting totally those concepts at face value.

Lastly, I would like to state that this book is primarily for those readers who think that such concepts as individualism, capitalism, freedom, and democracy are the characteristics of contemporary modernity. We should adopt them wholeheartedly and that all traditional values are irrelevant to this age. It is also for those readers who, after seeing the tragedies of two world wars initiated by a Western power in the last century, the decadence that exist in Western societies and the arrogance and unilateralism of a Western power today that has trampled international laws, national sovereignty, and human dignity, want to reject everything Western and to revive their own traditions in totality, like Hinduism in India or Confucianism in China. It is furthermore for those readers who, after

seeing the collapse of Communist countries in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and China's adoption of the market economy earlier, think those phenomena represent a de facto vindication of capitalism and Western democracy, and hence think that there is no longer any use for Marxism today. To all those readers, I would like to suggest that it is not enough to have, for instance, dialogues between western and traditional cultures, between Marxism and the market economy or between centralized democracy and western democracy. I urge them to see that the issues before us are much more complex, and also to urge them to remember that all mighty rivers are the confluence of many minor streams which are fed by trickles of water from the melting ice of high mountains. So are important ideas for development in a new age. Our world today is too dynamic to be understood and managed merely from the wisdom of any one or two cultural heritages.