

Selected Papers of Beijing Forum 2011

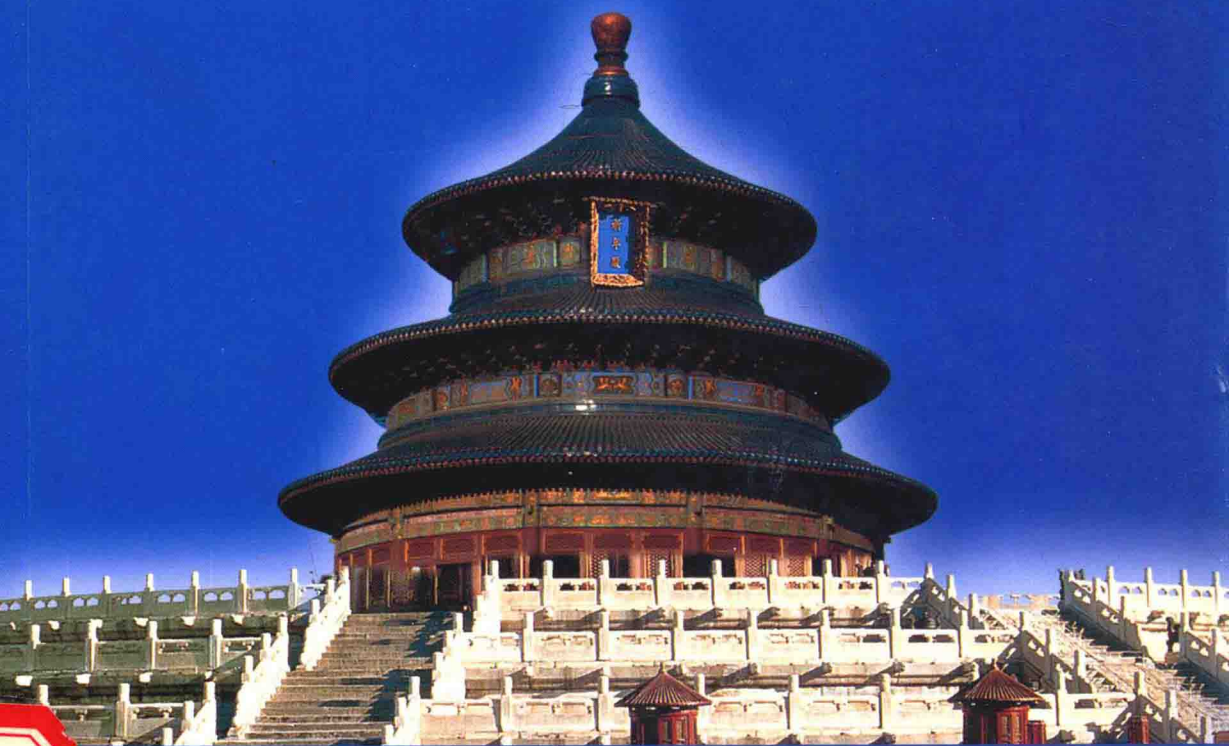
The Harmony of Civilizations and Prosperity for All

— Tradition and Modernity, Transition and Transformation

北京论坛 (2011) 论文选集

文明的和谐与共同繁荣

— 传统与现代、变革与转型



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北京大学北京论坛学术委员会 编

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Speech at the Opening Ceremony of Beijing Forum 2011

Hao Ping

Vice Minister of Education, P. R. China

Vice Chairman Zhou Tienong, Vice Chairman Luo Haocai,

Distinguished guests and scholars,

Ladies and Gentleman,

I'm honored to attend the Opening Ceremony of Beijing Forum 2011 on this beautiful autumn morning.

The Beijing Forum, with its establishment in 2004, is co-sponsored by Peking University, Beijing Municipal Commission of Education and Korea Foundation for Advanced Studies. The Forum, with high attention and great support from the Chinese government, is warmly welcomed and appreciated by people from all over the world.

After eight years of effort, the Beijing Forum has developed into a grand annual event for Chinese and foreign humanities and social science circles, as well as an important platform for global scholars to conduct cross-cultural exchange and dialogue between civilizations. During the past eight years, more than 3000 prominent scholars and experts from over 70 countries have attended the forum, over 70 panel sessions have been held accumulatively, and a large number of important people from politics, business, and academia have been invited to attend the meeting to deliver keynote speeches.

The Beijing Forum has very distinctive features. At the very beginning of its establishment, the Beijing Forum, first proposed the important statement of "The Harmony of Civilizations and Prosperity for All". This leads to an in-depth discussion of the different scopes of human survival and the prospects of our development. It also puts forward solutions for problems facing human society from various perspectives, and by doing so fulfilled its responsibility to make contributions to the development of human society. For eight years, the Forum, always holding high the banner of "The

Harmony of Civilizations”, has constantly explored the path of “Common Prosperity for All”, has committed itself to promoting the global study of humanities and social sciences as well as given impetus to academic development and social progress across the world. It fully shows the concept of human concern and a global sense of responsibility held by the organizers and scholars. The forward-looking philosophy and permanent theme of the Forum, has received high attention from the United Nations and relevant international organizations. Two United Nations Secretary-Generals, Mr. Annan and Mr. Ban Ki-moon have sent congratulatory letters or videos to congratulate for the Forum. The Beijing Forum has significant outcomes. Over the past eight years, more than 2,000 high-quality academic papers have been collected from numerous well-known experts and scholars both foreign and Chinese, involving multiple humanities and social sciences. This has accumulated a rich and valuable academic wealth, which directly promotes Sino-foreign exchanges, cooperation in higher education, boosting China’s development and prosperity of the humanities and social sciences.

The theme of this year, “The Harmony of Civilizations and Prosperity for All—Tradition and Modernity, Transition and Transformation”, covers extensive topics and various disciplines and has a realistic and far-reaching significance. Nowadays, with the progress of globalization, it is very important for mutual respect to exist, as well as exchanges and communication between different countries and regions, different civilizations and cultures. It is of great academic value and far-reaching historical significance to advance dialogue between different countries and civilizations and to explore how human society works together for progress and prosperity. Chinese civilization, with its long history and fresh vigor, focuses on communication and co-prosperity with other civilizations. The Chinese government attaches great importance to the inheritance and innovation of ancient civilization, and pays great attention to learning from modern civilizations worldwide. Not long ago, the Chinese government made the decision and therefore created a policy to promote cultural development and prosperity.

Education is not only an important carrier of cultural heritage and innovation, but also a major way to exchange and integrate. Furthermore, it is also the foundation of the harmony of civilizations and common prosperity. The Chinese government attaches great importance to the basic, pilot and

overall role of education in the construction of material and spiritual civilization. In 2010, the Outline of the State Medium- and Long-term Program on Education Reform and Development was issued to make comprehensive plans for educational reform and development in the next 10 years. It attached great importance to expanding the opening up of education, with multilevel and wide-ranging exchanges and cooperation to improve the internationalization of education in China. Advanced ideas and experiences of education should be drawn from to promote the reform and development of China's education and to enhance the international status, influence and competitiveness of China's education. More effort will be made to boost international understanding, promote cross-cultural exchanges and enhance students' awareness and understanding of different countries and cultures.

Since the implementation of the Outline, the Chinese government, according to its policies with regarding to prioritizing development, people-oriented, reform and innovation, promoting equity and improving quality, has started 10 development projects and 10 pilot projects to education reform and development in a comprehensive way. We will increase investment in education with a number of policies and measures to increase financial investment in education, the total amount and proportion of public finance input has increased more than ever before, which effectively improves the conditions of schools at all levels. We will further promote educational equity with a number of educational support projects specialized in rural areas, minority areas, and remote and poverty-stricken areas. The education support policies and systems have been established from preschool to higher education. Following the concept of inclusive education, we are paying more attention to the education aid towards special groups and safeguarding citizens' right to education. We will make further reform on the people skills development system, prioritizing moral education and implementing quality education. More emphasis will be put on the education of morality, civil awareness, the environment and international understanding of students at all levels. The quality of education at various levels will be constantly improved. We will further expand the opening-up of education, strengthen exchanges by supporting Sino-foreign cooperative education, encourage the development of the Confucius Institute, and continuously improve the internationalization of Chinese education.

In China, student enrollment, school conditions, the different abilities of Chinese education at all levels and of various kinds has never been better than it is today, which provides a strong ability guarantee and intelligence support for China's economic and social reform and development, as well as the inheritance and innovation of Chinese civilization.

Ladies and Gentleman, the Chinese Ministry of Education, as always, will continue to actively support the international academic conference represented by Beijing Forum, and hopes to further expand international exchanges and cooperation in multiple forms, as well as work together with friends from all over the world for the goal of harmony of civilizations and common prosperity for all.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Chinese Ministry of Education, I wish to extend a warm welcome to the distinguished guests and scholars attending the Beijing Forum. I wish the Forum complete success! Thank you!

What Changes Very Fast and What Doesn't Change: Explosive Modernity and Abiding Truth

Robert Bellah

Winner of the United States National Humanities Medal

Professor Emeritus, University of California at Berkeley

Humans of some sort have been using technology for over a million years. Acheulean axes were produced well over a million years ago and then were reproduced in essentially the same way for hundreds of thousands of years. How long does your cell phone last before you need a better model? How many of you have or plan to get an iPad? Rapid technological change and its social accompaniments began with the industrial revolution at the end of the 18th century in Britain and have increased exponentially ever since. America has changed greatly in the last 200 years, from a small agricultural outlier of European civilization to a great global power today engaged in two wars in the Middle East about as far from America as you could get in this world. If we think of what China has been through in the last 200 years it is even more staggering, great suffering and great achievements.

I want to underline how recent this rate of change has been. Before the industrial revolution technology changed, faster than the Acheulean axe to be sure, but compared to today, very slowly. Changes were made in fits and starts and then there were long periods of little or no change. Great inventions were made in many places, in China the invention of paper, printing, the compass, and gunpowder. These all had great consequences and were spread over the civilized world and, though they underwent some improvements, yet for centuries they were basically the same. In periods of war and internal rebellion, leading sometimes to famine and epidemic disease, some advances in technology were lost and only recovered slowly. We think that technology must have some internal tendency to advance, but when it depends on random inventions arising from trial and error and unconnected with a coherent body of knowledge such as science then there is

little inherent tendency to advance.

What happened that made the industrial revolution and continuous rapid technological change possible? A great many things about whose relative importance historians are not in agreement. Without knowing exactly how they acted as causes or how they interacted with other causes we can list at least the following: the scientific revolution of the 17th century (which clearly did not cause the industrial revolution or it would have happened 200 years earlier, but was still an indispensable precondition), the emergence of a capitalist economy with relatively free markets, and the rise of some degree of democracy and the rule of law. As it happened, though these various causes were to be found in several European nations in the 18th century, they found their fullest development in Britain, and it was there that the industrial revolution first occurred in the late 1700s, though in the 19th century it spread to several other European societies and to Japan. It is now global, and China, which some scholars think was equal to or more advanced than Western society right up to the industrial revolution, after experiencing a harrowing history of external invasion and internal collapse, has emerged as the most rapidly developing society in the world today.

If the word modernity means anything it has to apply to the 200 years since the industrial revolution began, that period when the rate of technological, economic, social and political change went to levels never before even approached in the whole of human history, explaining the causes of this explosive modernity is beyond the compass of a short talk, but one major factor is the enormous increase in energy that became available with the invention of the steam engine and has multiplied continuously since. From the earliest times humans had to rely on their own muscles, domesticated animals and wind and water-those were the only sources of energy. But from about 1800 the use of fossil fuels increased energy exponentially and it is only recently we learned that that increase has its own very high cost. Population growth gives some idea of what happened. In 1800 the population of the world is estimated to have been one billion-it had taken 300 years to double from the half billion it had been in 1500. It took 127 years for it to double again so that in 1927, which happens to be the year of my birth, it reached two billion. Today it is seven billion; it has grown three and a half times in my lifetime. It is a tribute to the enormous growth of our social infra-structure that seven billion people could even survive

today; before 1800 that would have been impossible. Many people would have starved to death and the later billions would never have been born. That we can support our present population, even though something like a third of it lives in the most extreme poverty, is a tribute to our social advances. And the more affluent two-thirds of our world population are healthier, live longer and have potentially richer lives than most people ever did before modernity. Yet can we think of it as all an enormous success story.

If we look at world history since 1800, and particularly at most of the Twentieth Century, it is hard to see that any moral advance equal to the social and technological advance has taken place. Rather some of the worst events in human history such as the Holocaust and the atom bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki took place in that century. And even though the magnitude of the disasters is less in the early 21st century than in the mid-20th century and there are many countries that have made good use of the modern economy and the technology on which it is based, there are still too many parts of the world where terrible poverty continues unabated and violence and oppression goes largely unchallenged.

James Joyce spoke of the nightmare of history and we can hardly be surprised that our present world is full of major problems: nuclear proliferation, mass unemployment in much of the advanced world due to an unsolved recession beginning in 2008, threats of global warming that we would rather deny or ignore until the consequences engulf us. I don't want to ignore the incredible achievements of modernity, the improvement of the life chances for billions of people for whom almost all opportunity was closed in pre-modern societies, any more than I want to deny the dark side of modernity, its violence and suffering and enormous unsolved problems. I want to turn now to a deeper question.

In the years before World War II when I was growing up, but in the optimistic years right after World War II as well when I got my graduate education and began to teach, many scholars, and a large part of public opinion in the developed countries, believed that technological advance and economic growth, in a word, modernization, would before very long solve all our problems. The promise of modernity would be realized if we could just provide technological and economic growth to the whole world.

In the 1960s in America and Europe a great disillusionment set in. It had to do with the meaninglessness and cruelty of the Vietnam War, but that was only the

immediate cause. A suspicion arose that has to this day not been dispelled that modernity was a great fraud, that it could fill the stomach but not the soul, that technology and money are not the answers to the meaning of life. I am aware that today for many young people in China and America these do seem to provide the meaning of life, yet I find an element of desperation, an inner cynicism, that what you have to do to survive in this super-competitive world will not really satisfy you, that something important is still missing.

At any rate it is clear now that not all culture advances at a geometric rate. Advances in science, technology, and industry have not led to dramatic advances in ethics or provided us with deeply meaningful ways of living. If we look at our moral resources in the world today we will find that they still draw on traditions that go back more than 2000 years in history to the Axial Age in ancient Greece, Israel, India and China. Let me take an American example; Thomas Jefferson in writing the Declaration of Independence in 1776 said "All men are created equal" which, in the language of his day, meant "All human beings are created equal." And, of course, readers of those words knew that although all human beings are created equal they were not all treated equally and that included not only women, but black slaves, Native Americans, and even poor whites since most colonies had property qualifications for voting. The soaring rhetoric of "All men are created equal" came from deep in the history of the West, from the Biblical teaching that human beings are created in the image of God and thus must be treated with inherent respect, and that every human being is potentially a sage, something that ancient Greek thinkers (and also ancient Chinese thinkers) deeply believed. But in 1776 this statement was a promissory note, as Björn Wittrock has put it, which was not immediately redeemable. Much of American history, the ending of slavery in the mid-19th century, the giving of suffrage to Women in 1920, the Civil Rights Acts of the 1960s and the remarkable change in public opinion on many issues of equality since the 1960s can be seen as at least partial payments on Jefferson's promissory note. These late partial payments are signs of moral progress, not in principle, for we have known the principle for thousands of years, but in practice, and we must be grateful for that.

We cannot be entirely happy with this practical moral advance when we see that it was accompanied by a moral blindness to the serious poverty in American society and the marked growth of income inequality in the last 30

years. And when we note that we are one of the few advanced nations that retains the death penalty and have a percentage of our population in prison that astounds the citizens of Western Europe, we know we still have far to go and that many promissory notes remain altogether unpaid. My point here is not to try to add up moral advances and subtract moral failures since we know humans have never been perfect and never will be. Rather I want to point out that the moral standards that we are meeting or not meeting are not themselves the product of modernity, they long precede it, and we still depend on an ancient heritage that we neglect to our great danger.

I will contend that knowing the great traditions that lie behind our present cultures will not only deepen our understanding of who we are, for even if we are ignorant of our deep past, much that we take for granted in our language and culture ultimately derives from it, but that knowledge will also help us in understanding where we want to go, will help us imagine a richer form of life than technology and money alone can provide.

I have written a book that ends with four long chapters on the Axial Age, the first millennium BCE, in Israel, Greece, China and India, and there is no way I can summarize them in a few minutes. I will take my examples from two traditions, the Biblical tradition in the West and the Confucian tradition in East Asia, and since both of these are enormous and complex I will focus on how they respond to two of the deepest human dispositions, dispositions that go back hundreds of millions of years in our ancestral mammalian line and that continue to face us in our daily life today: the disposition to nurture and the disposition to dominate.

The image of God in the Bible is complex; God is shown as love but also as power. The Hebrew prophet Hosea was particularly vivid in his images of a loving God reaching out to a people that often did not adequately respond. For example he describes God as a parent, caring for his people, who says:

Yet it was I who taught [the children of Israel] to walk,
I took them up in my arms;
but they did not know that I healed them.
I led them with cords of compassion,
with the bands of love,
and I became to them as one
who eases the yoke on their jaws,

and I bent down to them and fed them. (Hosea 11:1–4)

And Hosea condemns his fellow Israelites for not responding adequately to the great love God has shown them.

God as power is shown in many ways in the Bible, as a warrior, “Lord God of Hosts,” as a protector, but above all as a God of righteousness, who gives the moral rules through which his people will find fulfillment if they follow them. Thus the picture of the human king drawn in perhaps the most central book in the Hebrew Scriptures, Deuteronomy, emphasizes that he “must not acquire many horses, many wives, or much silver and gold,” nor must he “exalt himself above other members of the community.” Rather he will spend his days in the study of the Law, and it is through his exemplary piety and morality that he will rule. (Deuteronomy 17)

In the New Testament God as love is perhaps even more emphasized. God as parent sends his only begotten son to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and through the sufferings of Jesus participate in the sufferings of all human beings. Here too God is a God of righteousness, but his most central commandment is to “love one another” (John 13:34). When Christians have used the image of God as a warrior to justify crusades and colonialism they have violated the heart of their tradition.

The world of ancient Confucianism may seem to be a million miles away from the world of the Bible, yet similar themes can be discerned. Heaven for Confucius and Mencius is not absent but is more remote and vague than the Biblical God, and above all Heaven does not speak (Analects 17:19). Yet both Confucius and Mencius see in Heaven both a concern for human beings and a moral pattern that can be followed. When Mencius describes the five relationships in a teaching that would have far-reaching results, Theodore de Bary translates the first as “Affection between parent and child,” and the second as “Righteousness between ruler and subject.” (Mencius 3A: 4) While much of the tradition interpreted these formulations in hierarchical terms referring only to the obedience of inferiors to superiors, de Bary sees in these terse phrases the proclamation of mutual obligations of love between parents and children and righteousness between rulers and subjects. And we know that the Confucians urged the exercise of power through *li*, the pattern of right relationships, and not through punishments that will only encourage the people to be devious, not ethical.

None of the great traditions, surely not the Biblical and the Confucian, can be affirmed without critical reappropriation—they have so often been distorted throughout history. Yet they provide what modernity doesn't, the outline of ways of living that are intrinsically good and not merely means to wealth and power. Nor are they the only traditions from which we need to draw in a world that is now global. But if China and the United States can work toward the reappropriation of their deepest traditions in what they can say to us about the grave problems of modernity I believe they will find them much more in harmony than in opposition. Understanding their own and the other's traditions as modern scholarship has made possible more fully than ever before can help these two great nations, and it is the task of intellectuals to work toward recovering these traditions and explaining what they still have to teach us. Without the cooperative leadership of China and the United States the future of the world is bleak indeed. Finding ethical grounds for working together for the common good would give hope to a world that often seems hopeless. I would like to close with a passage from the Analects of Confucius:

Sima Niu was grieving: "All men have brothers; I alone have none." Zixia said: "I have heard this; life and death are decreed by fate, riches and honors are allotted by Heaven. Since a gentleman [*junzi*] behaves with reverence and diligence, treating people with deference and courtesy [*li*], all within the Four Seas are his brothers. How could a gentleman ever complain that he has no brothers?" (12:5, tr. Leys)

Reconciling Tradition and Modernity: the Role of Universities

Colin Lucas

Former Vice-Chancellor, the University of Oxford

Former Chairman of the British Library

The theme underlying much of the discussion at this year's Forum has been the tension between "modernisation" and "tradition" in the development of the modern world over the last two hundred years. This tension is still present in our contemporary world. It is a firm fact of modern history as many elements of the changes during those centuries may be thought to express this conflict of opposites. Furthermore, these terms are a discursive tool which has been and still is used to give value (positive or negative) to the opposing phenomena. The prospectus for this meeting of the Forum has urged us to rebalance our understanding of modernity and tradition with a view to preparing "The Harmony of Civilizations".

It is not my purpose here to summarize the arguments and debates of theorists and academics since, at least, the time of Max Weber and his discussion of the significance of an opposition between traditional authority and modern rational-legal authority. The panels at this Forum will have provided examples and analysis. My objective is to argue for the paramount importance of universities around the world in the task of reducing the tensions between "modernisation" and "tradition". Before I get to a closer examination of the role of universities in this, however, I need to provide some contextual observations.

First, it would be absurd to imagine that one could extinguish the tension between the historic and socio-economic forces that these two terms are taken to represent. The prospectus for this Forum does not suggest such an outcome. Indeed, sociologists remind us that every social organisation is simultaneously a field of competition and co-operation. This idea is scalable to the relationships within global human society. Indeed, a great deal of the