近世中國之傳統與蛻變

劉廣京院士七十五歲祝壽論文集

下冊
英文論文集

郝延平
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Tradition and M   osis
in Modern Chi

Essays in Honor of Professor
Kwang-Ching Liu's Seventy-fifth Birthday

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Aspects of Tradition

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The Statecraft Thinkers of Late Imperial China
in World History

Alexander Woodside[*]

Historians all over the world have been struck by the fact that from the late 1500s on, there was a notable outpouring in China of relatively specialized works which took political and economic management as their subject and subsumed it under such formulas as "ordering the world" (*jing shi*) or "ordering and helping" (*jing ji*, from a more extended phrase like "ordering the country and helping the world (*jing guo ji shi*). English-language scholars have conventionally rendered all these terms succinctly as "statecraft." But the "statecraft" literature of late imperial China was not perfectly commensurable with the modern Western notion of political-economic management. It was far broader. It was, as one scholar has put it, a profound assertion of the Confucian belief in this-worldly engagement as part of the search for spiritual perfection, in the importance of striving for "outer Kingliness" as well as for "inner sagehood."[1]

The lack of complete congruence between the Western meaning of "statecraft" and the Chinese world-ordering version of it is not a trivial matter. It should warn us that state formation theory as it is presently understood by mainstream Western social science is still too provincial to be globalized without serious modifications. This is true even though (as will be shown) political theory-makers in both late imperial China and early modern Europe shared similar challenges, such as matching classical theories about politics to social spheres and geographical spaces that were

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[1] Lin Baochun 林保淳，*Jingshi sixiang yu wenxue jingshi* 經世思想與文學經世 (Statecraft thought and literary statecraft) (Taibei: Wenjin chubanshe, 1991), pp.25–26.

far larger than the original architects of those theories had anticipated. It is also true even though (as will also be argued) the relationship of Chinese statecraft thinkers to political power, and that of their counterparts in Europe in the 1600s and 1700s, were not as dissimilar as one might think.

Too smooth an equation of Chinese world-ordering thought and Western theories of "statecraft" will cripple comparative history in its infancy. For the equation hints at the ultimate convergence of all political systems in a single version of something called "modernity," excluding the equally interesting possibility that several modern civilizations could be developing. Modern state formation theory in the West implies, at least archetypally, the engineered construction of an agency that is self-consciously artificial (Hobbes's "Leviathan," or artificial man, intended to be stronger than "natural man"); that is not directly identifiable with its society at large; and that enjoys an autonomous rationalizing power that is superordinate to that society. The artificial design of this state, or civil government as Calvin called it, is considered to be separate from the search for spiritual perfection (or Calvin's Kingdom of Christ). On the other hand, Chinese world-ordering thought – which had analogues in Korea, Vietnam, and Japan as will be shown – did not regard political command systems as artificial. In part, this was because the command systems it knew had preceded and forestalled major religious warfare, rather than being engineered as antidotes to it after it had happened. For the same reasons, Chinese world-ordering thought did not prize vertical concentrations of aggressive rationalizing power that pretended to be independent of their societies. It favoured more "conservationist" models of political authority that converged and merged with their societies. Nor did world-ordering thought separate pure politics from a more general salvationism; in it, the instrumental and the salvationist could coexist.

In what follows, I will nonetheless borrow the term "statecraft" for its shorthand usefulness. But I hope at the same time to illustrate why the applications of the term must be carefully controlled.

I

Gu Yanwu (1613–1682) wrote the text the *Rizhi lu* (Chronicles of daily knowledge, 1670) which later East Asian statecraft thinkers, not just Chinese ones, admired or cited. He also exemplifies as well as anyone what I am suggesting is the statecraft thinkers' un-European tendency, in the early modern period, to combine the most instrumentally calculated empirical criticisms of existing institutions with a sort of utopian managerialism. Gu Yanwu told his friends that he was determined to save the age, or the world, rather than just be an ornamental writer.[2] Gu also claimed as will be shown, that he could solve China's poverty problem in a mere ten years. Part of this salvationism was inspired by the desperate life experiences of seventeenth-century Chinese statecraft thinkers. Chen Zilong (1608–1647), who organized almost 200 literati from all over China to compile an anthology of Ming-dynasty statecraft essays that was one of the great early landmarks of the statecraft literature genre, was not untypical: he was a victim of the police-state terror of the late-Ming eunuchs. But the salvationism of statecraft thinkers outlasted the specific political vicissitudes of the seventeenth century. Being part of what Ying-shih Yü has called a general transition in Chinese Neo-Confucianism from quietism to activism,[3] it even expanded its scope during the first two relatively peaceful centuries of Qing-dynasty rule.

In a signal contribution to the study of statecraft thought, K.C. Liu and Kai-wing Chow have examined and inventoried the definitive anthology of statecraft essays compiled by Wei Yuan (1794–1856) and by He Changling (1785–1848) in the early 1800s, the *Huangchao jingshi wenbian* (Collection of statecraft essays of the present

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[2] Gu Yanwu 顧炎武, *Gu Tinglin xiansheng yishu shi zhong* 顧亭林先生遺書十種 (Ten bequeathed works of Gu Yanwu) (Taibei: Jinxue shuju ed., 1969), vol. 2, p.939 (*Wenji* 文集, 4:23).

[3] Ying-shih Yü, "Toward an Interpretation of the Intellectual Transition in Seventeenth-century China," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 100:2 (April-June 1980), pp.115–125.

dynasty). What this inventory shows is that the great advance of this work over Chen Zilong's seventeenth-century anthology is that it converts statecraft thought into a self-sustaining field of learned inquiry of its own.[4] In part, this could be explained by the drive to create comprehensive summaries of Chinese scholastic culture that was so strong an impulse in the Qing dynasty. But it could also be said that Chinese historical circumstances of the early 1800s almost compelled the Wei Yuan-He Changling anthology to become a breakthrough work of this kind. For by this time, the problem of "ordering the world" through a single political system, whatever dynasty was in power, had become unprecedentedly complex.

This problem was global, not merely Chinese. So we may look at it in comparative terms, matching the Chinese experience with the European one. Both Chinese and European societies were making transitions, over several millennia, from smaller, more face-to-face political systems with largely rural characteristics, to larger, less personalized, more bureaucratic states with growing involvement in large-scale commerce. At both ends of Eurasia, the formal political theories or "public philosophies" which had to underwrite these transitions did not change as quickly. They increasingly faced the prospect of terminal obsolescence unless they could be expanded or otherwise recast.

In Europe, the global problem of political theory lag appeared at least as early as the Roman empire but then became postponed. As a gigantic improvised extension of the Roman republic, the Roman empire was built upon an inadequate and outdated theoretical base. It was not as enduring an achievement as the Chinese empire of the same period, and, unlike the latter, came to an early end, after unsuccessfully subdividing itself into two emperorships in order to cope with its expanding size. The subsequent fragmentation of European politics disguised the need for radical changes

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[4] Liu Guangjing (Liu Kwang-Ching) 劉廣京 and Zhou Qirong (Chow Kai-wing) 周啟榮, "Huangchao jingshi wenbian guanyu 'jingshi zhi xue' de lilun" 皇朝經世文編關於經世之學的理論 (The statecraft essays of the present court as they relate to "statecraft learning" theory), Zhongyang yanjiu yuan Jindaishi yanjiu suo jikan 中央研究院近代史研究所集刊 (Bulletin of the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica), 15:I (June 1986), p.83.

in the classical small-scale political theory Europeans had received from the Greeks and Romans. It did so by controlling the spatial dimensions of European political life through their feudal subdivision. In the early 1500s, when Europeans were still governed by something like 500 political units, a major theorist like Machiavelli could still hail small hereditary principalities as the most stable of all political systems. As late as the 1700s, Rousseau could idealize small city-states like Geneva, which he saw as descending in spirit from ancient Greek city-states like Sparta, as the best of all polities, and warn that nature set limits to the size of states as it did to the size of well-formed people. Only as European states dwindled in numbers and expanded in size − from about 500 polities in 1500 to 25 in 1900, according to Charles Tilly[5] − did the awareness become overwhelming that the ancient Greek ideal of the *polis* could no longer be sustained in Europe without major alterations, particularly the acceptance of the principle of representative government in which citizens delegated their authority to often unseen professional legislators.

The greater long-term success of the Chinese empire in governing a large political space differentiated the Chinese experience from Europe's. It meant that the problem of the particular tension between the expanding scale of the administrative state and the more geographically limited scope of the classical political theory it had inherited became part of the Chinese historical agenda earlier, and in a more successfully bureaucratic context. The Chinese imperial state was too large to be ruled through literal copies of the institutions of the pre-bureaucratic princely states which had disappeared in 221 B.C. It was necessary to discover some new modes of either sharing central power or reproducing it polycentrically over a gradually enlarging state territory, while harmonizing such modes with orthodox classical philosophy. But the size question in Chinese political theory was not dealt with in terms of feudal or post-feudal formulas of political representation, as in the West. Rather, it

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[5] As cited in Istvan Hont, "The Permanent Crisis of a Divided Mankind: Contemporary Crisis of the Nation-State in Historical Perspective," *Political Studies*, Oxford, vol. XLII, Special Issue (1994), pp.166–231.

was conceived in terms of the concentration or diffusion of different kinds of political assets: military, economic, educational. As Hao Chang has shown in an important essay, Chinese theorists debated the contrasting advantages of "heavy centres" and "light centres" in the mobilization and organization of political power.[6] The belief grew that it was in local politics that forms of willpower based on classical values could be most successfully cultivated, as shown in Fan Zhongyan's attempt in the eleventh century to imagine the empire's county magistrates as latterday versions of pre-imperial feudal lords. Chinese thinkers' growing preference for a polity based upon a "light centre," after the twelfth century, was, in a sense, the Chinese bureaucratic parallel to the early modern Western interest – less bureaucratic and more feudal in origin – in the diffusion of power by means of representation.

Chinese statecraft thinkers of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries had to confront the Chinese version of the political theory lag crisis in the most extreme form it ever took. For one thing, the Qing emperors virtually doubled the empire's territorial size in the 1600s and 1700s. They added such territories as Tibet and Xinjiang to it and consolidated the Beijing court's claims to rule huge ethnic minority areas in Yunnan, Guizhou, Guangxi, and west Sichuan. Whether the modes of authority which had governed earlier empires could be reproduced successfully within these much more extensive territorial boundaries was an open question. So, too, was the matter of whether such modes of authority could adapt to equally unprecedented expansions in Chinese commercial life. Money itself had become a post-classical obsession as difficult to incorporate into classical political or educational theory as the non-Chinese peoples of Xinjiang or Guizhou. (The imperially-commissioned multivolume history of money which Liang Shizheng and other officials compiled in 1750, in response to such pressures, has been called the first government-sponsored study of money, as a special subject, in Chinese history).[7]

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[6] Hao Chang, "Neo-Confucian Moral Thought and Its Modern Legacy," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 39:2 (February 1980), pp.259–272.

[7] Peng Xinwei 彭信威, *Zhongguo huobi shi* 中國貨幣史 (A history of Chinese money)

In this crisis, it was thought to be folly to pretend that the procedures of the small princely polities of the pre-imperial age could be used on an imperial scale to "coerce" the bigger empire into obedience, as Lu Shiyi (1611–1672) complained the medieval reformer Wang Anshi had tried to do.[8] In a masterpiece of state-craft literature which rivals the writings of Gu Yanwu in the same century, Lu Shiyi pointed out cogently that the *Zhou li* (Rituals of Zhou), the most detailed Chinese classical blueprint of state governance, and the one after which the compendia of dynastic statutes of later emperors were still modelled, had applied literally only to the royal domains and tiny aristocratic principalities of the pre-imperial age. Try-ing to apply the "concentratedness" of its small-scale vision to a later empire which required a "diffusion" of political activity could only end in disaster, Lu argued. It should be obvious that this search for a "diffusionist" model of government reflected concerns similar to European ones in the same period, but presupposed a different outcome from the one implied in the European interest in a state centre increasingly autonomous from its society, and connected to it only by elected representatives.

This is not to say that statecraft thinkers like Lu Shiyi did not wish to reinvent central state institutions too. But they wished to do so with the object of clarifying and simplifying a monistic political order in such a way as to permit it to merge bet-ter with its society, in contrast to European efforts to concentrate the centre's power above the various local communities under it so that its rule over them might inten-sify. Statecraft thinkers of the Lu Shiyi type were searching for what might be called a more effective dispersed monism; something hard to imagine in early modern West-ern political theory, which is more concerned with centrally managed pluralism. One might speculate that it is the longer continuous existence of the centralized Chinese state which accounts for the different agendas, at least as much as the more heralded

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(Shanghai: Renmin chubanshe, 1958; 1988 reprint ed.), pp.927–928.

[8] Lu Shiyi 陸世儀, *Sibianlu jiyao* 思辨錄輯要 (A summary version of the chronicles of careful thought and clear distinctions), 12:4–4b, in *Lu Futing xiansheng yishu* 陸桴亭先生遺書 (Bequeathed works of Lu Shiyi), comp. Tang Shouqi (Beijing: 1900).

differences in East-West cultural values.

Lu Shiyi also pointed out that the Chinese empire had failed to develop an adequate conception of post-feudal administrative management, at the centre, in which it could embody classical ethics. The result was a steadily worsening shapelessness in the government structure. The central government now harboured a confused medley of active-duty officials, supplementary officials, prestige-title officials without active duties, merit officials without functions, single officials who combined several titles, and even several officials who shared the same function. Lu's implication was that as the imperial project had expanded, the increasingly improvised nature of its central institutions had weakened their capacity to influence the development of popular moral attitudes. The drastic alterations in the central government structure that Lu then proposed would certainly have simplified it. They would also have clarified the authority of the famous Six Ministries or Six Boards, at the expense of agencies that were more obviously part of the emperor's household and that Lu Shiyi wanted the Six Ministries to absorb.[9]

II

Attacks on political theory for its failure to come to terms with the size of its tasks are hardly an exclusive feature of the pre-modern age. The issues with which statecraft thinkers like Lu Shiyi wrestled in the chaos of seventeenth-century China – such as the ways in which inherited political theories and models must be adapted to the steadily increasing scale of human political communities – remain unresolved three centuries later. Contemporary theorists of political modernity have certainly not resolved them satisfactorily. Partly for that reason, there is a renewed interest – in both China and the West – in the possibility that the potential of past theories of politics and social action has not been exhausted by the historical context in which the theories first arose, and that there are perennial problems in political and social

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[9] Ibid., 12:4–4b, 13:1–1b, 13:6b, 13:7b–8.