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China’s View of the World and Western Views of the World—Also Discussing the World View of New Forms of Human Civilization

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Abstract: As the highest political goal of Chinese civilization that has lasted for thousands of years, it is "people". In terms of the starting point structure, it is the ethical theory of the great unification of "all nations" formed in the axial civilization period. In terms of the process structure, It is the "Chinese" who use civilized people to transform the "four barbarians" into the world, and pursue the theory of peace based on the resultant structure. In contrast, although the Western international outlook has a historical background of Greece and Rome, its multiple great changes from city-states to empires to theocracy to feudal regimes to absolutist states and nation-states have determined that its international outlook was mainly formed after the formation of nation-states. During this period, the theory of nation was its starting point and the country believed in power politics in its foreign relations, so the resulting structure must be the theory of empire. The great changes unseen in a century cannot avoid the entanglement between the two views on civilization. There is no theory of substitution between civilizations, but the Chinese view of world should inject vitality into the new form of human civilization.

The "Three Major Initiatives" construct the outline of a new form of human civilization as a new world order: the "Global Development Initiative" advocates common development and common prosperity rather than winner-take-all; the "Global Security Initiative" advocates common security rather than "Security Paradox", the Global Civilization Initiative advocates mutual learning among civilizations rather than a conflict of civilizations. The new form of human civilization is completely different from the law of the jungle based on the "Thucydides Trap". The "Thucydides Trap" hypothesis obviously cannot be used to analyze China's foreign relations and Sino-US relations. The reason is that the "Thucydides Trap" is the behavioral logic of a nation-state, and China is a country shaped by a civilizational view of history, and its behavioral principles Very different from nation-states, there are huge differences between Chinese and Western concepts of world order. Different from the Western international order composed of nation-states as the main body, the community order conceived by Chinese civilization is oriented to "people" rather than based on "regions", that is, an ethical order in which self-cultivation, family governance, and country governance can ultimately bring peace to the world. This determines different world views. Qian Mu believes that the difference between China and the West is the "view of the world" and the "view of the world": "Westerners only know that there is an international world, but they do not know that there is a world." The so-called "world" deals with the overall order based on the unity of power; The so-called "international" deals with the inter-state order based on the plurality of powers. In a comparatively civilized sense, the ethical theory in China's "view of the world" corresponds to the national theory in the Western "international view", cultural identity corresponds to power politics, and the theory of peace corresponds to the theory of empire.

Starting point structure: the world of ethical theory and the international of ethnology

Although both the East and the West had an "Axis Civilization" period that roughly spanned the same period, the political order shaped by China's Axial Civilization has been continuously continued through the unification thought based on ethics. The "immutability" of Chinese civilization determines Ethics in foreign relations. Although the ancient Greek civilization was continued by the "Renaissance", the fragmented social historical attributes remain unchanged, but the historical subject has evolved from city-states, empires, theocracies, feudal regimes, absolutist countries (royal regimes) to nations. The unit of state is the nation-state. Therefore, the starting point of today’s Western international relations is the nation-state. In this way, China's starting point is a unified order based on ethics, while the West's starting point is a multi-unified order based on nation.

(1) Chinese ethical theory

Because the highest goal of Confucian political conception is to cultivate people, regulate their families, govern their country and bring peace to the world, the ethical identity between people is the fundamental and logical starting point. In the pre-Qin period, China used the most fundamental filial piety and benevolence to construct the identity of people and to construct the connection between themselves and "others", that is, the world. The world of the Zhou Dynasty was connected by the patriarchal system, and the ethical foundation of the patriarchal system was "filial piety." The family community has the concept of filial piety, and the extension of filial piety is the "benevolence" of the world community. Zheng Xuan talked about "benevolence" and said that it is "benevolence", that is, two people are benevolent. Benevolence is not opposition to others, but symbiosis with others. The symbiosis between man and family has turned to the symbiosis between man and the world through the concept of "benevolence". Therefore, an ideal world would be one in which "one does not only kiss one's own relatives, one does not only love one's own children." The great harmony of the world is the logical inevitability of the concept of benevolence and filial piety, and is also the fundamental connotation of an ethical world. In other words, Tianxia is actually the ethical community of mankind, so within this community, there can be no ethnic discrimination.

The order of one family under heaven is manifested in reality as a ritual system with ethical relationships as its core. Everyone in the world needs benevolence and filial piety, and benevolence and filial piety means obeying etiquette, and obeying etiquette means obeying the emperor. Therefore, the family and the world are isomorphic at the level of political order. With the realization of the great unification, there are no other countries in the world, and the national order has become the order of the world.

An ethical world will naturally pursue the "kingly way" with benevolence as its core at the political level. People who can promote the king's way are also called saints. Saints have extraordinary humanity, and the world is inspired by them, and they naturally unite around them. The world is rooted in human ethical emotions, and only under the inspiration of such emotions can people achieve true unity. At the same time, the influence of this kind of "virtue" is far-reaching. Wherever humans exist, as long as they are affected by this ethical emotion, they can be included in the world, so the boundaries of the world expand infinitely. This form of kingly rule is the "rule of virtue" advocated by later Confucians.

The long-term interaction between ethical relationships and royal ways formed a unique world identity. Later Chinese people often define China not by nation or country, but by culture or civilization. It is precisely because of the civilized connotation of the Chinese concept that China can eliminate geographical boundaries and gradually converge with the world. As far as the concept of Tianxia is concerned, both China and the barbarians are within the world. The so-called "the world has no outsiders", this "nothing outside" is mainly a kind of culture and civilization, not political power or governance. This kind of culture and value of Tianxia has long influenced China's national construction, and continues to affect the survival and lifestyle of Chinese people through a series of political systems and governance methods, shaping and strengthening people's overall understanding of Tianxia. And continue to constrain and limit the development of ethnic prejudice.

(2) Western ethnology

Multiple great changes in the political system caused Europeans' identity consciousness to evolve from the religious concept in the initial cultural sense, that is, believers, to the regional consciousness and national consciousness in the geographical sense through continuous wars, and finally to the nation-state consciousness in the political sense. . In the process of moving towards a modern country, in order to realize the unity of multiple powers within the country, a strong sense of community is needed, so the "nation" is born, which is connected with the "state" to become a nation-state. The emergence of the national concept relies on external wars or foreign colonization. In the process, an "other" is established, and in the process of slandering and abandoning the "other", the self-validation of the nation is achieved. This way of realizing national identity will inevitably lead to the stigmatization of “others”, that is, ethnic discrimination.

The logic of Western social history tells us that there are two reasons for the formation of nation-states. One is the pressure to integrate multiple powers within the country, and the other is the pressure of international competition. The construction of a nation-state is both a requirement for domestic political unity and the result of foreign power struggles. The development logic of sovereign states makes the creation of "others" and the creation of "enemies" synonymous. In order to balance the internal conflicts of multiple powers and cope with the global competition of capitalism, Western countries are always looking for "others" and "enemies". This is the fate of their social history.

Processual Structure: The Tianxia of Cultural Identity and the International of Power Politics

The difference in starting points determines the difference in relations between countries. The ethical view of the world pursues cultural identity, that is, the transformation of the world, while the national view of the world believes in power politics, that is, confrontational resource distribution.

(1) The world of identity theory

Tianxia, ​​which is the core ruling area of ​​the dynasty, and the infinitely extended ethical Tianxia co-exist. The core ruling area generally has a highly developed culture and prosperous economy, and continues to radiate its influence outwards. Neighboring countries or regions continue to internalize under its influence. As long as they recognize the minimum recognition of the world as "benevolence and filial piety", they can become a member of the world. The concept of Tianxia will always present a processual aspect, that is, the world is always in the process of being formed, with no boundaries and no end. It was not the conquest of the surrounding ethnic groups that created a multi-ethnic state, but the Chineseization of the surrounding ethnic groups that created the world state.

The cultural (ethical) identity of Tianxia is a process. The world is first of all an ethical world, not a racial, territorial, or political world. Therefore, as long as you accept the concept of human nature of benevolence, you can become a member of the ethical world. This structure of the world-state makes it easy for marginalized areas and ethnic groups to form cultural and ethical identities. The process of identity is reflected in the national concept. In ancient China, ethnic groups were rarely distinguished by blood, but more by culture. Therefore, there was little racial discrimination in China, and different ethnic groups could be converted and integrated. This gave China a natural national recognition of a multi-ethnic unity. . This open national concept has greatly promoted the national integration of later generations, and is also constantly reshaping the "Han nation" as the core of the world. It is in the process of this national reconstruction that the scope of the world continues to expand, and new "Han nationality" "The world" is also increasingly taking shape. The rulers of various traditional Chinese dynasties generally adopted a policy of cultural assimilation when dealing with neighboring ethnic groups or states. Under the systematic cultural governance policy, heterogeneous neighboring states were continuously included in the world and became part of it. Its conscious concept of tianxia is the core content of China's national identity. Precisely because Tianxia is a concept with blurred boundaries, it can continuously expand outward to accommodate new ethnic groups and territories. People's identification with Tianxia is more of a cultural identity than a narrow national identity.

(2) International power politics

The internal competitiveness and external competitiveness of nation-states are consistent to a certain extent, that is, they are both the result of autonomous multiple powers pursuing the interests of the subject. Therefore, the principle of power politics has been pursued since ancient times. The Western competitive international order can be said to be an extension of domestic order. The best outcome of this international order is balance of power, just as the best outcome of domestic order is decentralization and checks and balances. However, due to the uncertainty of power among nation-states, it is difficult to achieve a stable equilibrium, and the power-based international order often leads to hegemony and empire.

The emergence of sovereign states has presented a pair of fundamental contradictions in Europe: “On the one hand, there is a domestic political sphere characterized by institutional density, hierarchical relationships, shared interests and strong collective identity; on the other hand, there is a lack of strong The scope of international politics is characterized by systems and rules, conflicts of interest, and inconsistent identities. "In fact, it is the high degree of unity of domestic politics that leads to the jungle state of international politics: the unity of domestic politics means the consistency of interests and national strength. With the advancement of the times, nation-states with similar interests have sought to expand their individual interests outwards, and have created a jungle state of international politics with their powerful force.

With the development of the capitalist world market, competition among sovereign states is closely linked to economic competition. The tension between the internationalization and nationalization of capital corresponds to the contradictory state of the nation-state. Due to the international division of labor, nation-states are more dependent on other countries than ever before, and at the same time, they have to pursue the expansion of their own economic interests. The contradictions of capital require force to resolve, and behind force is the nation-state. Therefore, we often see that countries that promote free markets often use force to develop "free markets." Freedom means the prominence of individuality. Competition and conflict between individuality and others will inevitably occur, and the final resolution of the conflict relies on violence. Therefore, for Western countries, the core of domestic politics is the state's monopoly on legal violence, and the core of international politics is the imperial competition for the monopoly of coercive violence.

Purposive Structure: The Tianxia Theory of Peace and the International of Empire Theory

Starting from ethics and forming cultural identity, the result will inevitably be a world view of "national governance" and "peace". The result of pursuing power politics starting from the nation-state will inevitably be an imperial world view.

(1) The world of peace theory

The concept of Tianxia became a common consensus in ancient China during the pre-Qin period, making people naturally equate the political community with Tianxia. Emperor Zhou once established a weak world order. With the decline of Emperor Zhou's authority, many states were established. Although many vassal states are very powerful and even dominate one party and become "Fang Bo", "no well-known thinker or politician believes that the multinational system is legitimate and worth pursuing." This ideal of eliminating the regimes of many countries is called "king the world." After realizing the unified "king of the world", we must uphold the ethical order of humanity and make the world an ideal world, that is, from "ruling the world" to "pacifying the world." "Wang Tianxia" and "Ping Tianxia" mean that the concept of Tianxia itself contains two levels of political logic: first, maintaining the unity of the world; second, humane governance of the world. Maintaining the unity of the world is the realistic basis for the world to be the world; humane governance of the world is the value pursuit of the world for the world.

The main symbol of this humane world is the aversion to violence and war. In order to cope with the external challenges of the world, traditional China formed the political strategy of "defending the four barbarians". The so-called guarding the four barbarians means deploying defensive forces on the borders of the four barbarians and bringing the four barbarians into the governance of the world. During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, this strategy of guarding the barbarians was transformed into a tribute system with etiquette as its core. The primary goal of the tributary system is still defensive, which is to ensure China's internal security rather than external colonial plunder. As far as historical facts are concerned, the specific governance methods at home and in tributary countries are definitely different, but the unique governance spirit or concept of "Tianxia" is consistent throughout.

(2) The International of Imperial Theory

Based on the competitive order of nation-states, the theoretical equality between countries actually led to the birth of the greatest inequality - empire. The development logic of social history forms the foundation of Western “nationality”. As sovereign individuals, nation-states struggle for survival in the jungle-like international system, and eventually develop into expansionary imperialism. With the development of socialized mass production, or the capitalist world market, pre-modern regional empires gradually developed into global empires. Modern empires pursue the unlimited expansion of their power and interests under the guise of universal civilized discourse and the backing of powerful military power. With the formation of the capitalist world market, the absolute possession of the surplus products of the world market formed the basis of the modern capitalist empire. As representatives of nation-state economic interests, industrial giants became the main promoters of imperialist policies.

Modern empires maintain their imperial rule by creating universal ideologies. This universal concept began with religion, and later became more academic ideologies such as racial evolution, civilization evolution, and capitalism. Its end point is the capitalist world market. The ideology of Western universalism contains imperialist expansion attempts. The author concludes: "Both capitalism and 'white supremacy' are typical histories and theories that pave the way for expansion, with economic and Cultural Double Inequality.”

Comparison between the world view and the international view

Due to differences in historical attributes, there are major differences in the forms of Chinese and Western countries, and the views on world order derived from them are also obviously different. China's view of world order is mainly reflected in the "view of the world" with a unified country as the main body, while the Western view of world order is mainly reflected in the "international view" with nation-states as the main body. Looking back at history, we will find that the "view of the world" is not absolutely warm and affectionate, but has the backing of force; the "view of the world" does not always advocate war methods, but has contractual balance. But the difference is that the force of the "World View" is mostly used for defense and governance, and the balance of the "International View" will always be broken by the empire. Today's China not only has the traditional endowment of "view of the world", but also is in the competitive order of "view of the world". Only by recognizing the difference between the two can we better cope with the current world.

(1) The foundation of world politics: ethics or nation

The ethical world believes that people are fundamentally in ethical relationships, and people are qualified to become members of the world because of their ethical attributes. The nationalized international believes that human beings fundamentally belong to a certain nation-state. People must first be a member of a nation-state, and only then can they find their belonging in the international society. Nationalized self-identity means that there are fundamental differences between people in international society. National differences are integrated into the interest entity of a sovereign state, providing strong ideological support for the confrontational international order.

An ethical world is characterized by strong inclusiveness. The ethical concept of Tianxia allows "China" to absorb "the four barbarians" without hindrance, and constantly integrates the perceived boundaries of human beings into a comprehensive and harmonious order. It can be said that the ethical view of the world has always influenced China and laid the foundation for modern China's multi-ethnic unified country. The nationalized order naturally has the impulse to create hostile “others”. The “other” always changes with the changing interests of nation-states and becomes the best ideology to evoke international war. Therefore, it is almost impossible to form a constructive human identity in a nationalized international society.

The ethical concept of the world makes China extremely tolerant as a civilized country and can survive for a long time without being destroyed overnight. It also allows China to build non-aggressive symbiotic relationships with other countries. The proposal of a community with a shared future for mankind. It is the modern manifestation of this logic. In comparison, the Western nationalized international outlook, on the one hand, dismembers the multi-ethnic national unity domestically and forms a divisive force in domestic society; on the other hand, it creates disorderly competition internationally and forms a new world empire. In the name of universalism, they interfere in the internal affairs of other countries and seize global interests.

(2) Behavior of world politics: governance or confrontation

The peaceful world emphasizes the governability of the world, while the antagonistic international is based on exploitation and war. For the world under the theory of peace, the boundaries of governance are defensive, that is, "guarding the four barbarians", mainly to prevent wars in peripheral areas. The theory of peace is not to deny the existence of other countries, but to insist on an internally self-sufficient point of view, that is, a non-aggressive point of view. All parts of the world are interrelated and maintain internal stability. They obtain their necessary survival conditions within a comprehensive ethical framework without having to invade externally. For the West, nation-states themselves are constructed in an order of confrontation and competition, and their particularity is confirmed in foreign wars. The independence and heterogeneity between nation-states, stimulated by the capitalist world market, have developed into more intense national wars. The best way out against this competitive international order is the balance of power among major powers, but this balance is often easily broken and leads to the emergence of world empires.

The world view of the theory of peace requires China to extend outward through the governance logic of "good governance" and ultimately achieve a harmonious order of "peace in the world"; the competitive international view makes Western countries pursue survival and expansion in a competitive world, and Eventually grow into an empire through wars and invasions.

(3) The future of world politics: Tianxia or empire

As a process concept, Tianxia itself means the continuous generation of the world. This continuous creation of Tianxia manifested itself in ancient times as the continuous expansion of the scope of regional "China" and the process of continuously incorporating new peripheral regions in the horizon into Tianxia. In modern times, it is manifested in the continuous expansion and deepening of world connections, that is, the continuous formation of a community with a shared future for mankind. The world is not a result, but a process that we can continuously promote its formation. Empire is a consequential concept, the end point of the development of the international order of nation-states. In other words, the "end of history" of the Western international order is the decline of old empires and the rise of new empires, that is, the "tragedy of great power politics."

The basis for the continuous generation of the world is ethical identity, which in ancient China was enlightenment. The enlightenment of the world is an ethical governance logic. This governance model maintains the openness of the world and can continuously absorb "foreign races" from marginal areas. As a result of the development of international relations between nation-states, empires must distinguish between "me" and "others", and between the center and the periphery. The other and the periphery identify the objects of conquest and plunder; the self and the center are the core of imperial interests. Ancient empires were generally regional. Within a certain area, the central country showed an overwhelming power advantage over other countries and nations, and tried to maintain its imperial status through external aggression. In modern times, the competition for the world market has made competition among nation-states more intense and led to several large-scale wars in Western countries. With the formation of the capitalist world market, wars between Western nation-states spread to other regions of the world, forming world wars.

Tianxia and empire present two completely different historical aspects. China completed the unification of the world as early as the Qin Dynasty, and continued to realize the reorganization and expansion of the world in subsequent history. Compared with the unification of Qin, although the Roman Empire ruled many ethnic groups, it had no common cultural foundation and was entirely based on military conquest. China has long since achieved cultural unification. The ethical concept of the world has allowed the world to continue to form and at the same time shaped a harmonious world order. The competitive concept of the empire requires it to continue to wage wars and ensure its superior position in plunder and aggression. . Tianxia, ​​as a process, pursues the harmonious order of the world; Empire, as a result, pursues the permanent maintenance of imperial dominance.

Conclusion

We must realize that the modern world is still dominated by Western historical perspectives, and the main body of the world order is still the nation-state. However, human beings need a new world order, and the world calls for a new form of civilization, and the world view is a world view that adapts to the time and place. Historically, Tianxia is not a community that relies solely on ethics and moral connections. It not only emphasizes the ethical connotation of Tianxia, ​​but also pays attention to military power. First of all, although the real unification of the world requires iron-blooded force, as an ethical concept, it has been deeply rooted in the hearts of the people under the long-term influence of Confucian education. This is a more universal basis for human identity than religion and democracy; secondly, As a governance method, Tianxia is often backed by military strength, but its system is still a ritual system with the rule of virtue as its core, and its strategic goal is to "defend the barbarians" defensively. The ideal and reality of the world view lead to a harmonious view of the world. This means that while maintaining balance and stability among nation-states, we must promote the close connection and universal recognition of the international community. The basis of this recognition is the relative equality of various chains in socialized mass production, and the process of recognition is the destiny of mankind. The construction of community.

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