

MR ZHONG A Cheng:

Now we don't have too much time, and so I'll be brief.

Starting in 1990, in our semantics, we always talk about culture as if culture is the mainstream. I wanted to talk -- the topic of my presentation was intended to be culture is not MSG. But I'll still stick to it.

In many different languages, for instance, Arabic, French, English, Spanish, what does culture mean in these languages? It's very ambiguous. However, in Chinese it's very specific. The definition of culture is very specific, so that I'll be able to talk about modernity.

Now, culture in Chinese refers to literary instead of Kung Fu or martial art. What is martial art? Martial art, if I'm a very strong person, I could take the food that you are having from you. I would be able to eat the food and you won't be able to eat the food.

Now why is it? I don't think it's triggered by hunger. Instead this is just animal instinct. So martial art and animal instinct was one thing and therefore in our Chinese culture, many, many years ago in the ancient time we wanted to promote literature, literary.

And to the rational, what does it mean? Being rational means that we only have limited resources and therefore we need everybody to be able to not have to go to bed with an empty stomach.

So with martial art, if we are using a very contemporary perspective, perhaps this is like the East and the West, localisation, globalisation. However, if we're using the perspective of Chinese culture, what we wanted to do is to overcome the various, to be rational is to value the literary relationship between people and in order to enhance this, we need to have music.

For instance, yesterday we went to see Mr Jia's movie. At the end of the movie, after we left the theatre, at least we were at a stage this was not an ordinary stage that we were at, because we saw an art, an art form, and that art form at that moment changed us.

This is like when we are listening to music. When we listen to music, we will be able to enter into a certain stage. From classical music, they give classical music will bring you into a literary stage. For contemporary music, it may be able to bring you into the martial art stage. So we need to be moderate.

Confucius said that we need to -- moderation is very important. Why? Because literary is totally the opposite of our nature, of our animal instinct, and therefore moderation is more important, we need to control.

Therefore, about 3,000 years ago, our ancestors, our Chinese ancestors were aware of and suggested that the relationship between people should be based on civility, civil relationship. In order to maintain this civil relationship, we need art to support it. So at that time Confucius kept saying, "I have not dreamed of the King of Jobe (?) for a long time. I'm feeling uneasy." Why? Because Confucius was around 500BC. At the end of the spring and autumn dynasty, the period of warring states in China, whichever state was stronger, had more muscle power than the other states, could devour the other states.

There were some scholars who said, "If Tsi had unified China, what would have happened?" According to historical records we have available now, the Kingdom of Tsi had a different philosophy. King of Tsi was big. He was heavily into fashion, and he was criticised by one of his advisors, "How can you wear such beautiful shoes? It's not right." And the king said, "Why shouldn't I if everybody else is doing that?"

So unification by Tsing, Emperor of Tsing, he united China, unified China with his martial prowess, not his civility. Whereas the King of Tsi would have done it differently.

Going back to the topic of Confucius. Why Confucius kept wanting to dream of the King of Jobe? Because he was thinking about his modernity and his approach was retrospective, saying that, "If we can establish the same code, we can maintain the code established, initiated by the King of Jobe, that code was based on civility. Why don't we have it now?" Confucius

said, "We need to have a society that is thriving like a forest. Then I would follow the rituals and system of the King of Jobe."

As Confucius was against martial governance in China, after each emperor or king died, he would be given a name posthumously.

All of them rejected being named as martial king, for example (Chinese spoken), the martial emperor of Han, he got that name posthumously. He would have been very unhappy if he had known that. And also the first Emperor of Tang, he said to his historian -- of course the historian didn't have a good reputation in history -- the emperor said to the historian, "After I die, please give me the posthumous name with the word 'Wun', 'civility'." Because after all, Emperor of Tang, the first Emperor of Tang, also unified China. People said that he actually had ruled China with martial prowess, not with civility. He was worried. He said, "If you give me a posthumous name with the word 'Wu', which means martial, in that posthumous name, all my feats would be obliterated." So he was very worried. He was hoping that he would be named as "civility".

So about 30 years ago, that is 1966, so 40 years ago, rather, 40 years ago, 1966, on 18th August of that year, in Tiananmen Square on the Tiananmen gate, there was a young girl, a teenager, and Chairman Mao was wearing armband. She put armband on Chairman Mao's arm and Chairman Mao asked her, "What's your name?" She said (Chinese spoken). (Chinese spoken) means "civility". And Chairman Mao said something and that was carried across the country. Chairman Mao said, "You need to change your name to 'martial'."

Now, this ruler of China, the most powerful person in the country, wanted the society to be martial. And that martial approach has continued until today.

So actually from before 18th August 1966, China had been martialised. There was a stream of uninterrupted struggles, ideological struggles. The whole thing was martial-based.

If we look around today, just now Mr Jia said -- I do agree with him -- I think Jia's generation grew up in a martial country, devoid of culture. Indeed, devoid of culture.

I think all of you can visit China now. The relationship between people, there is something very precarious about it. For example, if there's a little collision on the road, the drivers will jump off and let loose a stream of abuse against each other. Those cars are covered by insurance, but they still want to fight. So there's a lot of aggression in it. And if he is in a stronger position, he wants to bully those who don't have power in order to obtain resources. He can only obtain such resources by using muscle prowess. That's why today I want to emphasise the fact that China has a very specific distinct definition of culture.

Culture should govern the relationship between people. It's nothing to do with knowledge. This person may be illiterate, but he meets people, he deals with people. He follows a code, a code of civility, courtesy. They don't argue, they don't row, so this person is cultured. He may not have knowledge, he may be illiterate, but he's cultured. I think a knowledgeable person may not be a cultured person.

I'm only cracking a joke with this new friend I've made, because he may be dealing with other people in a martial manner. He may be cursing, he may be saying abusive things. He even may beat people up. So we need to separate between civility and knowledge.

In the remote areas of China, where resources are scanty, in those outlying areas people are more cultured. Their relationship is more cultured. Because they are facing scarcity of resources, they have to go by the rule. But if in cities like Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, where resources are abundant, people are not very cultured.

Of course I ask myself also Confucius, in his days, kept mentioning civility, culture. He kept wanting to dream of the King of Jobe. That was the ideology of modernity. Was that the mainstream so-called modern ideology of his times?

When we talk about culture or Asian culture, et cetera, what I was talking about covers the Confucian culture. If we look at the modernity in culture, in Asian culture, we can approach it from this angle and ask this question.

That ends my talk.