

PROF TU WEIMING:

Prof Cheng, guest speakers, ladies and gentlemen, I'm very honoured to be present today and to have heard the speeches by the former speakers. Actually, I think they have already spoken many of our ideas. My speech is by no means a conclusion of this afternoon's talk.

First, on the background. Since the start of human civilisation, since the 18th century the most influential ideology started in the West.

Why do we say that it is so influential? Because even socialism and capitalism are closely connected to that ideology.

Now we believe that science is important. There is also urbanisation, even modern-day universities are related to that.

So enlightenment. The movement of enlightenment is very important. It represents core values that have been adopted by many different cultures, that is freedom, rationalism, the rule of law, human dignity, so on and so forth. These are core values that have affected -- that have been most influential in different parts of the world.

However, there are two blind spots here. Number one, the spiritual world. Because it started from anti-Christianity ideas. So it's anti-humanitarianism and is also a kind of invasion.

Many Western core values have been added together and I don't think they are sufficient. We still need other core values in order to start this dialogue for comparison. What other values am I talking about? Justice. Compassion. Kindness. Tolerance. Responsibility. Social responsibility and integration. These are also world values that should be incorporated into Western core values.

Core values of Confucianism are benevolence, social propriety and loyalty, faithfulness, so on and so forth. Confucianism is very rich. It represents humanitarianism. It can serve the 21st century as well. It can serve as core morals and values for our leaders in this century.

For these core values, I'm talking about learning. The analects. The first word in the analects was learning. I agree with Prof Yu Dan entirely. Learn. Learning to be human. So we learn for ourselves, not for other people. Confucius had gone

through life long learning. So he had not given up learning throughout his life.

In the 17th century, there was a group of Confucian scholars and they were saying that if Confucius had not died at the year of 70, if he had lived until over 80 as (indistinct words) would, would he have stopped at 80, would he have stopped learning at that?

But I think the scholars concluded that Confucius would have continued learning, even if he had lived to over 80. So the scope of learning is very wide. It is all-embracing.

I think there are a few items or areas we should pay particular attention to. First, to learn for one's sake and to build up the autonomy and independence of the self. Mencius also talked about building up one's spiritual importance and I think his teachings has a very strong social value. Everyone should learn from the community and from other people. This is a very strong people-oriented thinking. We should also learn from history and from culture.

Confucius also talked about how people should learn from ancient civilisation. Confucius taught people to be awesome of heaven. He was also very forward-looking and far-sighted. This idea later developed into this harmony of heaven and earth and human beings.

Now, there are the following sayings: We should work for the good of heaven and earth and for the community. This is totally people-oriented. There is a historical concept and there is also a future perspective. A premium (Chinese name) in October 2004 gave a speech at Harvard University. He used the above sayings in his conclusion. He was saying that that the learning attitude promoted by Confucius has been very influential. Even as Korea, Vietnam, Japan and nearby countries have been affected. This is particularly true in the reformation in Japan during the Meijie reformation or restoration.

Japan acquired Buddhism and Confucianism and then after the opium war people started to learn from China. If China is to develop into a great nation, we should not just learn from the West, we should also learn from India.

Through Buddhism, we have got this understanding of India and we can also learn from Africa, Australia and even Europe. We should not believe that the US is the

best and that it will be our only reference point. We should not say that we should only learn socialism. North America and East Asia are also important and the Americas are also developing. We should learn from different civilisations. Learning from these civilisations is one of the most important forces in the 21st century. Many scholars have said that the 21st century depends on whether we are willing to learn.

Now, we have to concentrate on three words: learning, relearning and unlearning. On the one hand, we should learn new things. "Unlearning" means learning again. Just like Lao Zi said, "We should forget what we learnt in the past if the knowledge is already obsolete. And for knowledge that is not logical, we should unlearn it. We should delete it and learn again."

So how are we going to learn how to learn? This is the greatest challenge for this century, does Hong Kong have a learning civilisation? What are the characteristics of Hong Kong?

I think there is great potential for Hong Kong to learn Confucianism. We attach significance to liberal studies and liberal arts. Professor Edward Chen of the Lingnan University has always advocated this and the New Asia College of the Chinese University in Hong Kong is also promoting this. It's important that we learn the meaning of life. We should acquire new knowledge so that people's understanding can mature. This is very important.

A very outstanding Spanish thinker first put forward this idea 50 years ago. What resources do we need in Hong Kong in order to do this?

Professor Ho mentioned this. Now I'm a layman, I mean I'm an outsider here, so I can just share with you my outside observation. Hong Kong is a prolific society with resources from different walks of life. Of course, there is a poverty gap and there are various challenges in Hong Kong, but we do have this consensus in Hong Kong we should live together in peace and harmony and work for the future benefit of Hong Kong. There is a strong consensus here. And even for Indians in Hong Kong, they have a strong sense of identity here.

There are three languages in Hong Kong and there are other languages and religions. There are six major religions. There is liaison between the Catholic church, Christianity, and also Buddhism and other religions. So Hong Kong is an open and

international city. It is an Asian financial centre, it is a tourism note. So Hong Kong has many unique features.

Prof Cheng Pei-kai said that Hong Kong's culture is very rich because this is a very stable society and there is a strong sense of co-operation here.

Three years back, I came to Hong Kong, there was a great riot day and everybody was nervous because it was like the chaos, a riot. Actually, it was in the 1960s. When I got here, I saw a car was burning and a shop front was damaged. Nobody died, nobody was injured, but at the time it caused a huge shock wave to Hong Kong. So it doesn't matter how much conflict there is, you can see Hong Kong people value harmony a lot.

Then you must also note that the Hong Kong Government is clean, it abides by the Rule of Law and that's the British tradition. So in that sense it's similar to Singapore. And other Chinese areas should learn from this.

We can see there are a lot of resources available in Hong Kong, but then there is a major test, it's a critical test for Hong Kong: how do we transcend the concept of economic man? What is the economic man? It means it embodies a lot of these values of modern enlightenment. That is the person knows his own interests and under the protection of the law in a relatively free market, that person is able to make the most profit, so that's economic man. It's something dignified. If a university graduate says he wants to be an economic man, there's no reason to say no.

There is rule of law, personal liberty, human rights and personal dignity that are put in play.

Of course, there are criticisms. Economic man lacks a lot of things. He has no compassion, sympathy. He feels no sense of duty to the community. There's no civility and there's no sense of justice. There is no regard for the bigger community or bigger good. In Confucian leave it says that those who have access to profits, to information, they are the one who owe a sense of duty to the community. These people are leaders and elites of the community, including university students, should also help the community to develop its social capital not just economic capital.

Social capital is intangible but it's very important.

For example, like this forum, we have exchanges among scholars and there's

promotion of expansion of public space in newspapers. In magazines there's discussion of the forum so that's cultivating social capital. And studying classical texts will help people to understand more about traditional culture, also to learn more about Western culture. And we must also promote ethical intelligence. It's not just cognitive intelligence. And of course we have to foster spiritual resources.

So Hong Kong can play a very important role in all this. It can help the third development of Confucianism. Chinese culture has a long history as we know, but what about the modern memory of Chinese culture is short. It's not just short. In fact, we suffer from amnesia. We have a serious problem with distorting memory for political cause. We will actually reinvent events. For example, the opium war, from then to the establishment of the People's Republic of China and in that 110 years every ten years there's a major change. We first have the Heaven Kingdom and then we saw the decline of the Chinese nation. It was the most powerful nation but then it became just a name of a place, that's China. But then from 1949 we also see changes every five years, we have the Korean war, we have the Great Leap movement and so on.

So against this background, how do we restore traditional culture? How do we reshape our memory and develop traditional resources? This is an onerous task. If we have just economic man, there's no way we could develop those values, so we have to go further than economic man. Culture, art, history, philosophy, religion. We need to expand all these spheres.

Just now Prof Yu also said something similar. I think at least what we need to do is that we don't do things that will harm us and others, and we don't do things that harm others but not benefit ourselves and we don't do -- well, if we harm ourselves for the good of others, yes, some sort of sacrifice is good but why not do something that benefits others as well as ourselves? That's the best.

Confucian tradition has four aspects. We have to pay attention to all four aspects. Some scholars just emphasise the social aspect of Confucianism, but there are four aspects. One is the individual, the second is the social, the third is the natural and the fourth is the heaven's way.

At the personal level that means is about our self-cultivation. We need to cultivate our moral character.

At the social level, we talk about families and communities, countries, the world and even the universe.

At the natural level, how do men co-exist with nature?

And the fourth aspect is the heaven's way, as I said. One decade ago, there were prominent scholars, in their 80s, of Confucianism, from Beijing, from Taiwan, (Chinese spoken) whatever. They all said that the concept of heaven and man in one is an important traditional resource of China.

Now, with this concept, we apply it in the 21st century, then it actually advocates new concept of humanity. It's not in disagreement with religion. Rather, religion plays important role because we're talking about the spiritual aspect.

The enlightenment movement is about secular humanist, so in English we would say, "I'm a humanist, I'm not a spiritualist. I'm not a naturalist." In Confucianism, humanity is about the spiritual and natural aspects as well. And definitely it's pluralistic as Professor Ge Zhaoguang said, Confucianism is not absolute, it's not the authority. Even at a time when Confucian was dominant, there were still many other schools of thoughts and there was Taoism and many other schools of thought. Confucianism is just one of the many important resources. We need to develop all resources.

As we expand Chinese culture, of course we must also embrace Confucian traditions which are found in Japan, Korea and Vietnam. Probably there are more traditions in these places than in China that you can find. Confucianism's also dialogical civilisation. It emphasises particular dialogue. The basic requirement of dialogue is tolerance. And tolerance in itself is not enough. From tolerance, there's mutual recognition. That is you recognise the existence of the other party. And you also recognise that the other person's existence is as important as mine. Only then would you have respect for others and it's only when you have respect for others that you could learn from each other and then you could regard the other party as an important supporter of your own development.

Let's say I research in Confucianism but I also have benefitted a lot from Christianity and other beliefs and religious thoughts. I don't want an expert on Christianity to become a Confucian scholar, but it's because I have learned from Christianity, that's why I've been able to study better Confucianism. And we would like to have

dialogues with all these other different religions.

If we want to build the mainstream of Chinese culture, then we must open up the culture. We need to have diversity and pluralism.

We know with economic development there's greater political influence, but what about the cultural side? We're not the only ones who are concerned. The whole of Southeast Asia, Asia Pacific or even the world are concerned. Everybody say we must build our root or the root of our culture. We need to foster recognition of our culture. But this recognition must be pluralism, dialogic and open. It's only on this basis that we're able to tell the world what these spiritual values of our traditional culture is. Thank you.