

## On Multiculturalism: The Dialogue between Yue Daiyun and Roger T. Ames

Yue Daiyun and Roger T. Ames

Translated by Zheng Che

**Abstract:**

After discussing terrorist attacks in Europe such as the *Charlie's Weekly* Incident in France and the 2011 massacre in Norway that reflects the crisis of the concept of pluralism, Professor Yue Daiyun and Professor Roger T. Ames explored broadly the issues concerning multiculturalism. With the proposal of “harmony without uniformity”, Prof. Yue emphasizes the importance of the education of the youth in making them aware of ideological pluralism. Both scholars are optimistic and confident in the constructive dialogue between Chinese and Western philosophy. In his research Prof. Ames reflects on what Confucian China can bring to the table when we interpret the Confucian tradition on its own terms.

**Keywords:** multiculturalism, education of the youth, ideological pluralism, dialogue

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**Yue:** With the increasing number of problems that have come along with the rapid changes of the world, I have been hoping to have a discussion with you for a long time about questions regarding our common interests and focus.

### 1. The *Charlie's Weekly* Incident in Paris

**Yue:** The *Charlie's Weekly* Incident was a great shock that triggered me into worrying about what might happen in the future. With Samuel Huntington's warning concerning the clash of civilizations, the situation seems to be getting worse without any sign of improvement.

**Ames:** I met Huntington at Colorado College some years ago. I had a chance to have a discussion with him face-to-face together with Du Weiming and Li Zehou. In the conversation, his lack of cultural awareness made it obvious that his thesis is informed only by his politics, having nothing to do with cultural studies. He had no idea about what Confucianism is and what Islam is, so the popularity of his theories has resulted from his political influence rather than his academic insights. Many scholars in cultural studies do not agree with him. However, the problem he highlighted is a truly serious phenomenon.

**Yue:** Yes, I agree. His discussion of the problem is very important, but his conclusion that the final cultural clashes in the world would be between Confucianism and Islam is not only wrong but also unlikely.

**Ames:** A few years ago I wrote a book, *Confucian Role Ethics*. My purpose was to locate and interpret the Confucian tradition on its own terms. I have been engaged in the introduction of classical Chinese philosophical thought to the West. What has been done so far is the first phase: Using Western languages to translate Chinese thought. What I am doing now belongs to the second phase: Allowing Chinese ethics to speak on its own terms. My next discussion is focused on a dialogue between Confucian ethics and West ethical theory on the concept of “justice.” There are two problems with “justice” as a term in Western philosophy that are captured in the Chinese translation: *zhengyi*. The first problem is individualism. From the perspective of Confucianism, in fact, there is no real “individual.” *Yi* has to do with what is most appropriate for everyone. The “individual” does not exist and is only a fiction, for individuals are always connected with each other. Objectivism also is a fictional and problematic concept. In *Charlie’s Weekly* Incident, I think, first of all, people should not speak out without being sensitive to the feelings of others. It is a perverse freedom that disrespects the values and beliefs of a major segment of the human population. There should not be unlimited freedom of speech. To understand justice, I think we also need to mention another Confucian term, *hexie* that requires us to recognize that we are not homogeneous and to allow others to have their own views. I think Confucianism can make a significant contribution a revised understanding of the concept of “justice.” On the one hand, we need to establish some regulative ideals. On the other hand, we also need inclusiveness to reach “harmony without uniformity.”

**Yue:** So you think *Charlie’s Weekly* should be blamed for its insult towards a religious leader?

**Ames:** The terrorists should be condemned by all, but *Charlie’s Weekly* should be blamed for being unnecessarily insulting to the beliefs of Islam.

**Yue:** So both sides in the Incident should assume their own share of responsibility. In that case, how can we reconcile the two sides and bring them to cooperate with each other? As you mentioned just now the most important point is the recognition of diversity and harmony, that is, learning to recognize the fact that different persons have different ideas. But this is not likely to occur given the worsening situation. But the extremists in the Incident are few, aren’t they? The use of force is preferred by Islam, isn’t it? I have heard it said that Islam missionaries hold the Koran in one hand with a knife in the other.

## 2. The Way Out is to Educate the Youth and to Be Open-minded to Pluralistic Thinking

**Ames:** Dewey says very clearly that there are two ways to change the world: The first is to educate young people with his emphasis on early childhood education; the second is the acceptance of pluralism. If people from the United States and China have the opportunity to communicate with each other, they will find that their own ways of being in the world are not the only choice and that there are other real alternatives. For example, we are now making a great effort in eradicating ISIS, but this actually leads ISIS to become more united and to become more and more determined to succeed. The solution lies in looking

for other models to resolve the problem, such as economic interventions and perhaps allowing the young people of the region to come to our countries to be educated. In addition, we must maintain an ongoing dialogue with Islam, and its adherents should not be isolated from contact with the outside world. But for more than a decade now, the response of the United States has been in the wrong direction. The more Americans fight, the more terrorists spring up against their common enemy. We need a better strategy.

**Yue:** I agree that education of young people and the acceptance of the coexistence of ideological pluralism are of great importance. What I don't understand is why many European young people who have grown up in an environment of a highly-developed culture joined in this terrorist organization, and have even rushed to the front?

**Ames:** It is perhaps still a problem of multiculturalism. People who immigrate to the immigrant nation of the United States can decide themselves to be a Chinese or an American. Nobody has the right to say American immigrants are not American. For example, I immigrated from Canada to America so I am an American. But Europe is not so open and welcoming. People like me, if I immigrated to Germany, will always be considered a "foreigner." The sense of national identity in these older nations tend to be conservative.

China is pluralistic in its own way. In fact, I think we should not call it "Zhongguo", "the middle country," but rather "Zhongzhou", "the middle continent." More comparable to an Africa or a Europe, China is vast and diverse: Southern Cantonese are like Italians, tall northerners are like Russians. From the south to the north there is so much diversity, and yet they all Chinese. This suggests that China and Chinese people have historically been inclusive.

**Yue:** So many Chinese students studying in the United States feel that it is not difficult for them to integrate into the American society. As long as you are open and easy-going, you can become accepted.

**Ames:** To integrate immigrants is a much more difficult thing in a more traditional country such as the United Kingdom. Even when Americans go to England, some English people would look down upon us on hearing a different accent. Fortunately, because the American economy is still number one in the world, the British would show some respect to Americans. But if we as Canadians go to England, the situation is even worse, for the way some British regard Canadians is as distant relatives from less developed areas. In many areas of the UK, immigrants live in their own communities and have some difficulty assimilating.

**Yue:** Let's move back to our discussion about youth. How to educate the youth successfully, which, I think, is an important issue in China as well as in the United States.

**Ames:** I think it is important to encourage young people to go to study in different countries and give young people more opportunities to receive an open, international education. It is not easy to change something from outside, but it is relatively easier to be changed from inside. When young people study abroad, they will bring new visions back and will bring about changes in their own homeland. International students also bring new ways of thinking and living to the United States. Although people in countries such as Iran do not like us, many Iranians still send their children to study in the United States. It is much wiser for America to encourage change through internal initiatives rather than to engage in nation building. Iraq is just such an example of the failure of foreign influence. The United States has been present in that country for more than a decade and there still exist many problems—it is getting worse, not better.

**Yue:** The situation there has been deteriorating more and more. President Bush's strategy is in fact a failure. For example, the Iraqi War or the so-called Color Revolution, though with a great sacrifice of money and people, has only served to bring those countries into a more chaotic state and the outcome has been precisely the opposite of the intentions. But why are some European white young people sympathetic to Islam?

**Ames:** In fact, this is not a new phenomenon. If we read the work of Pliny the Elder and Pliny the Younger, we find that in ancient Rome older people complained bitterly about the problem of young people: bad music, bad manners, bad habits. And young people were invariably dissatisfied with their society. It is a kind of young person's idealism. At present some European young people have their own ideals that challenge consumerism and its nihilism, and are looking for new practices, one of which is to become a hero of Islam.

**Yue:** Do you remember the 2011 attacks in Norway? The first attack was a car bomb explosion within the executive government quarter in Oslo. Less than two hours later the same terrorist opened fire at the participants at a summer camp organized by the youth division of the ruling Norwegian Labor Party on Utoya Island. The attacks claimed a total of 77 lives and injured many. It is the deadliest attack in Norway since World War II. This attack was so shocking to me. From childhood on I have been reading Andersen's fairy tales and Norway has been in my understanding a peaceful and beautiful paradise! In the disaster a white man bombed and shot unarmed people neither out of terrorism nor out of some national issue but for no reason at all! Why is this happening?

**Ames:** This is also a serious problem in the United States. There are mentally ill people with their own idiosyncratic creed in every society. But it is the gun situation that makes the danger much worse. In the United States in Connecticut a few years ago a young man killed 20 children aged around 6 or 7 years old! There were no wounded; only dead. The smallest child was shot with 7 bullets. It is completely crazy. The only use of automatic rifles is to kill people. For the mentally ill people to have the opportunity to get this kind of gun it is madness. Shootings have been happening, and we have no way to effectively curb it.

**Yue:** Don't the Americans want gun control?

**Ames:** Guns should be controlled. But as a nation we do not have the political will. There is a strange and perhaps perverted equation in the minds of many Americans that freedom and a gun are the same thing. The Democratic Party has been advocating for gun control, but with the wealth and power of the gun lobby, we have no way to achieve it.

### 3. The Crisis of the Concept of Pluralism

**Yue:** It can be said that the concept of pluralism has now encountered a great crisis. Especially after the *Charlie's Weekly* Incident, some political leaders, including some relatively open-minded leaders such as Angela Merkel, admitted that Pluralism has actually failed. Merkel said if so many immigrants are allowed to enter the country without integrating into it, the battle will be ongoing. The leaders, in other European countries such as in Britain and in France, also acknowledged the failure of pluralism. Due to lack of labor and the problem of aging, these countries are in need of immigrants. How to treat the immigrants in a fair and reasonable way is a serious challenge for them. Their economy could not afford the immigrants the same benefits as their citizens. Many people hold the view that since you come to our country you should accept our culture, life, customs and habits and can't keep your original culture form your homeland at all.

When I was once in Paris, there was one thing that left me with a deep impression. There was a little girl who had to wear a turban as in her Islam home school. But the president in the school in Paris insisted that she should be in accordance with the provisions of the French school uniforms, not wearing a turban. This triggered at the time a great controversy and even open protest. Another incident is that according to Islamic custom, men and women cannot swim in the same swimming pool, so they asked the school to arrange a day every week when only girls can enter the swimming pool so that the girls can swim. But the president firmly opposed this and continued to maintain the original French habits rather than to make a change according to Islamic habits. Both sides seem to be justified and nobody knows how to ultimately solve this problem.

**Ames:** From the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries on, the European imperialist aggression resulted in the colonization of many of these countries, and now the tide of migration of these colonial countries into Europe constitutes a reversal and a kind of justice. I think one of the reasons for the many problems is the scale of migration. That is, all of a sudden, the migration is overwhelming with too many refugees coming too quickly. If the process were more gradual then the problem of immigration would not be so serious. On the other hand, I see this is as an opportunity for people of different origins to achieve real cultural diversity. For example, what kind of clothes to wear is a personal decision; it has nothing to do with others. Now, in Canada, the largest number of immigrants are Chinese, the second are Indians, so inevitable conflicts will arise. But I think these kinds of contradictions in values and lifestyles are a chance for the country to redefine itself and realize the necessity of modernization and diversification. When I was young, Canada was a relatively pure European country, and to call an Asian or Indian a Canadian seemed strange. Today Canada is cosmopolitan, and celebrates its diversity. It has come of age.

**Yue:** No conflicts?

**Ames:** Conflicts still. Many conflicts. But the country has moved slowly from the mere “variety” of having different peoples living separately to an achieved “diversity” in which the difference among the people is a resource for cultural growth and refinement. As the different people and cultures come to appreciate each other, the country appreciates in value. If there are no conflicts there will be mere “sameness” and uniformity instead of “harmony among difference,” where real harmony always entails evolving tensions.

**Yue:** When we speak of “multiculturalism”, it involves a theoretical question: When two cultures come into contact, what will happen? The integration with each other and the appearance of something new? Take the production of an alloy for example: When two different metals are melted together to produce a new alloy, this alloy has some new characteristics, without the characteristics of the original metals. If such a fusion takes place in the interaction between Chinese culture and American culture, what will that be like? Is it neither Chinese culture nor the American one, but something new? I think pluralistic ideology should accommodate three aspects: The first aspect is to absorb the foreign culture, but it primarily still retains the subjectivity; the second one is the unification of the old culture and the new culture as a whole; the third one is the original natural culture without any changes. These three aspects form a relationship of mutual support and mutual evolution for the development of a new culture in the future.

#### 4. “Individuality” and “Objectivity”

**Ames:** Richard Rorty once attended one of our East-West Philosophers’ Conference meetings

with philosophers coming from more than 30 countries and regions. Rorty suggested that after 50 years there will be only two languages left in the world: one is English, the other, Chinese. He also said that culture will be like fast food where you can take a little of this, and then take a bit of that, with culture ultimately losing its ethnic characteristics. His presentation aroused a heated discussion and many scholars argued against him. After the meeting he told me he was very sorry that he disrupted the meeting. I assured him that it was very good for the conference, for it was only the heated response to his speech that would provoke scholars to think through this important issue. I personally think that any culture without change and development is a dead and obsolete one. I always say that Confucianism is not some dogma immutable and frozen in the Chinese tradition. *Ru* translated as “Confucian” refers to a social class. We scholars are the “Confucians” of this era. We need to inherit the cultural tradition, understand it thoroughly, expand upon it with our own insights, apply its wisdom to solve the problems of our times, and then pass the tradition on to the next generation, and recommend to them that they continue this intergenerational transmission. In the West we have our own “Confucianism.” The Western tradition is one cultural river while the Chinese tradition is another, and the ecotone (the ecological transition zone) between the two rivers is the most fecund with the most opportunities for further growth and enrichment. So when we look at the evolution of the river of Chinese culture, Buddhism is the first time for the “West” to bring changes to the traditional ideas of China. The health of Confucianism lies in its open and inclusive posture. It is not exclusive and does not claim some objective truth. The reason for the conflicts between Abrahamic religions and other cultures lies in their insistence on some eternal and unchanging objectivity and value that in fact does not exist. So I think our biggest problem in the Western tradition is “objectivism” and “individualism” which are two misleading concepts. In my understanding, “individuality” is inclusive instead of exclusive. The reason why I am an “individual” is because I have a unique and very close and friendly relationship with others. I achieve distinctiveness not exclusive of my relationships, but by virtue of the quality of them. And “objectivity” is actually mutual and inclusive too as it moves toward “consensus.”

**Yue:** What you said is very important. If “individuality” and “objectivity” can be understood in this way, the situation would be much better. Furthermore, this understanding is also a basis for diversification. Without such an understanding, diversification will not be possible to achieve. So, my question is that whether the ecotone—the intermediate zone between two rivers—will become a chaotic situation in the confluence of the two rivers?

**Ames:** Yes, this situation is the positive and productive “*hundun*” or “chaos” of Zhuangzi. Tomorrow will not hold anything novel if there were no “*hundun*.” In order to repay the central Emperor Hundun for his hospitality, the Emperor of the South China Sea and the Emperor of the North Sea decided to drill the seven apertures in Hundun that provide human beings with our physical sensorium. As a result, not only did Hundun die; the Emperors of the North and South effectively committed suicide. If order is not honeycombed with chaos, everything is predictable; life is a done deal. Today and yesterday are continuous yet different as well, and tomorrow will also bring new opportunities. The confluence of Chinese and Western cultures in our historical moment is an exciting opportunity for mutual growth and enrichment.

**Yue:** What you said is very reasonable and full of philosophical insights.

**Ames:** Dewey once said that a good idea today will become a bad idea tomorrow if it doesn't change. This observation is very important. So “change” is our friend and we should not reject it. In this regard, the biggest problem posed by the Western philosophical tradition is that up until the 20<sup>th</sup>



century we have been inclined to pursue eternal truth and thus denigrate “time” and “change”. “God” is many guises—irrecusable moral principles, logic, reason, immutable law, and so on— as so conceived is absolute, perfect, static and has no relationship with “time.” Since the beginning of the 20th century, the one common feature of the various schools that constitute the internal critique of the tradition such as phenomenology, hermeneutics, pragmatism, poststructuralism, and so on, is to try to think “process.”

**Yue:** In Whitehead’s process theories, this shift of focus seems to be central?

## 5. David Hall’s Interest in Chinese Culture

**Ames:** Whitehead attempted to think process, but he actually failed. Why did I have such a good relationship with David Hall? What drew him to Chinese philosophy was the process cosmology that is the ground of canonical texts such as the *Zhouyi* and *Daodejing*. He studied the theories of Alfred North Whitehead in his dissertation that became his first book, *Civilization of Experience*, and was disappointed. Whitehead, on the one hand, proposes “process,” but on the other hand he still holds on to notions such as eternal objects and the primordial nature of God. Whitehead is ultimately incoherent. It was for this reason that I met Hall at the gates of China.

**Yue:** You said just now that Hall came to China in order to try to go beyond Whitehead’s understanding of process. I think a very important feature of Chinese culture is its emphasis on uncertainty and indeterminacy. Daoism especially holds that everything is in the process of formation, from nothingness to birth and returning to nothing. What has Hall learned about such indeterminacy and what kind of role will Chinese culture play in the contemporary world?

**Ames:** Hall believed that in this century Western philosophy is developing in the right direction. But when we talk about the West, we must allow that the West before Darwin is in fact in conflict with the one after him. In the 20th century the Western tradition embarked on a process of internal critique. Hermeneutics, pragmatism, existentialism and other philosophical schools are postmodern, rejecting the basic assumptions of the metaphysical realism that had become our common sense. Hall believed that it is productive process thinking rather than truth and certainty that underlies the human experience, and that Chinese philosophy has been trying to understand this from earliest times.

**Yue:** Are these the ideas of Whitehead?

**Ames:** At very beginning Hall was very interested in the ideas of Whitehead, but it was his later judgment that Whitehead failed. He realized that Whitehead talks of “process” on the one hand, and of the absolute and eternal God on the other hand. It is for this reason that in recent years Whitehead has been hijacked by theologians. Hall came to China to try to understand the notion of process as it is developed in the process cosmology of the *Zhouyi* (*Book of Changes*). It was because we shared the same intuitions in our research that we were able to establish a fruitful collaboration. His training in Western philosophy at Chicago and Yale was very solid, and I learned a great deal from him. I have been his student as well as his academic partner. On the other hand, David did not know the Chinese language, and he relied upon me to access the Chinese texts. We brought very different skills to our joint efforts, and spent much enjoyable time in China together.

**Yue:** Is the Whitehead’s combination of certainty and process also there in Chinese philosophy?

**Ames:** No. Hall believed that Whitehead's philosophy is not successful due to his inability to escape from the quest for "certainty." After the first steps taken by Whitehead, Hall hoped to be able to resource Chinese thought to develop process thinking further. I think he succeeded in doing so.

**Yue:** Did he succeed?

## 6. Kant and *Zhouyi*

**Ames:** I think so. If Kant has served the philosophical world as its standard of rigorous philosophical thinking up until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps the *Zhouyi* will set the standard for process thinking as we move further in this direction.

**Yue:** Is it Hall's judgment that the weakness of Whitehead lies in his insistence on permanence?

**Ames:** Yes. The term "eternal object" traces back to Aristotle's concept of the "unmoved mover," namely the Aristotelian teleological concept of God: all possibilities lie in front of us, so we just need to move in that direction. It is also Whitehead's "eternal objects" that occupy the mind of God. The concept of "*hundun*" stands in opposition, holding that "possibility" itself is a process. We cannot use the understanding of our present moment to judge the next because of the existence of "*hundun*," "uncertainty" and "indeterminacy." "Something" and "nothing" are inseparable. We have to rely on indeterminacy as our resource to create new possibilities. "Something" and "nothing" are not ontological categories but aspectual, explanatory categories that merely report on experience from different perspectives. The concept of "aspect" is very important. "Something" and "nothing" are the same phenomenon viewed from different perspectives. Zhuangzi's "this and that" is an illustration of this idea. In fact, there are many other aspectual concepts in Chinese philosophy such as the concepts of "form" and "function" (*tiyong*), "world" and "human" (*tianren*). They are not two separate things, but primarily a relationship. From the beginning all things are irreducibly relational and manifest differently from different perspectives. They are not analytically discrete but constituted by their relationships. For example, "*li*" and "*qi*" are not two things that can be separated, but the formal and vital aspects of any particular experience.

(Zhang Jin asked Prof. Ames a question: You just mentioned the internal critique in the 20th century Western philosophical narrative is exemplified by the philosophy of Nietzsche and his opposition to transcendentalism—that is, equating reality with the abstract. I would like to ask, have you and Professor Hall benefited from this contemporary Western ideological and cultural turn when you embrace the philosophy of "process," including Chinese philosophy?)

**Ames:** Absolutely. I personally think that as far as the two traditions are concerned, we do not want to say the Chinese one is right and the Western one is wrong. What we are proposing is to combine these two traditions. From the Western side, the concepts of law, regulative ideals, objectivity are also of great importance as aspirational goals. On the other hand, as liberating as it might seem, a Chinese cosmology grounded in "intimate relationships" can also lead to corruption when relationships are abused. The concept of "relationship" centered on the family is certainly a value to be affirmed. For example, "filial piety" in Confucianism is very important, but it can be exclusive, favoring those persons closest to one. The world includes different kinds of people. We need an inclusive attitude and regulative ideals to guide us as a world community. Islam contains more conservative elements while our American secular values are relatively freer, but we need to find common ground on which we can reach consensus—regulative ideals—to create our shared future. Both Western thought and Chinese thought have their own



strengths. The strength of the Confucianism tradition itself has been its porousness, absorbing foreign ideas and as a kind of comparative philosophy, with both a persistent identity as well as flexibility and an openness to change and development.

**Yue:** Yes. Difficulties lead to change and change leads to development. Do you have confidence in the prospect and future of diversification?

## 7. What are our Prospects?

**Ames:** I'm optimistic and confident about the future. I always tell young people in my lectures that we live in the best times as well as the worst times. After the accelerating development of more than a century, the human achievements in science and technology are quite magnificent. We can land rockets on comets. We have the science so that no child need go to bed hungry or sick. We could do this. What we are lacking is social intelligence and the political will to accomplish it.

**Yue:** How to get along with people is a big problem.

**Ames:** Today we are at the same time facing many problems such as global warming, water and air pollution, resource shortage, pandemics, and international terrorism. Our wealth is more and more concentrated in the hands of a few people. In 1986, in the United States, 1% of the people were in possession of 8% of the wealth of the society and today one generation later they own 25% of it, more than three times the earlier number. In my generation, one parent worked. My father was a farmer. When I went to college, my father gave me 1000 dollars. At that time men worked and women stayed at home with the children. I worked hard and got a scholarship of 500 dollars, and I worked in the summer to earn 300 dollars. The total of 1800 dollars was enough to pay for both the college tuition and the cost of living. Now if I wanted to send my grandchildren to the same university, it would cost more than 60,000 dollars. Even with both husband and wife going out to work and earning a professional salary, the financial burden for children to go to college is still out of reach. 1% of people have amassed great wealth, and they have no use for so much money. We need to figure out a solution. China's profile is even worse, with the top 1% owning a full third of the national wealth. It is in this sense that we are in the best times and at the same time, in the worst times. I think that the root of our problems at a personal, corporate, and international level lies in the ideology of individualism—single actors playing to win, and leaving losers in their wake. We have to come to understand that we do better when our neighbor does better. A teacher needs a good student to be a good teacher, and the better the student, the better the teacher. We need to understand that we either win together or all lose.

**Yue:** The education of young people in China is very important and the situation is not that optimistic.

**Ames:** I think it is quite simple. We have a predicament in which if we do not change our values, our intentions, and our practices, the human race will not have a future. If we do not change our course as a world community, our young people will not have a 22<sup>nd</sup> century. The 1% are sitting on the deck in first class on the Titanic. Perhaps it will be necessity itself rather than human wisdom that will bring us to our senses. This is the simple truth.

**Yue:** Then how to change it? With a revolution?

**Ames:** Yes and no. Think about the “green” revolution we have experienced over the last generation.

Green was a very new and revolutionary idea and has now become widely accepted. I think that the most important contribution of Chinese philosophy lies in its understanding of the primacy of vital relationality in family and community. Human beings are interdependent, and either win together or lose together. Relationality is the starting point in every issue that we must face. Nothing and no one does anything by themselves.

**Yue:** As a resource and a core value, relationality is a very prominent feature of Chinese philosophy.

**Ames:** Yes, this is the most fundamental idea. I personally think that China's thinking will have a very important contribution to make to the world. For the past 200 years, China has suffered from imperialism to the extent that it has lost confidence in its own way of thinking. But the new China has turned a corner and entered a new era in which it is celebrating its own traditional values. Chinese philosophy with its focus on relationality can now have an impact that is essential to the future of mankind. To quote from *Daxue* by way of conclusion: We must cultivate the moral self, regulate the family, maintain the state properly and bring peace to the cosmos. It is time to apply the Chinese thought to bring peace to the world.

**Yue:** China's idea of governing the world is not in the same as that of imperialism. Today in China many people still have the misunderstanding of power, and the wrong hope that China is going to become as powerful as the old empires such as the Roman Empire, British Empire and even Japanese Empire.

**Ames:** But expansionist empire is not the traditional Chinese way. President Xi Jinping emphasized cultural diversity and inclusiveness in his speech at the International Conference of Confucianism. Chinese will not follow the imperialist road.

**Yue:** Without strict control there will be no stability. We can't risk the collapse we saw with the Soviet Union.

**Ames:** Yes, instability is dangerous.

**Ames:** To take an example, with Africa, what China is doing is to encourage them develop in their own way. By contrast, the United States and Europe helps Africa on the condition that they follow Western benchmarks in their development. At the same time, many of the world's problems are traceable to these same capitalist benchmarks. American democracy has many problems of its own. The relationship between the police and African-Americans, for example, has become a vicious cycle. And capitalist values are the root cause—economic disparity.

**Yue:** It has become a historical problem.

**Ames:** The process of the urban development in Hawai'i has also been at the expense of the local population and its culture. Some 50% of prisoners are aboriginal people because they have been made desperate in their own home. With limited opportunities, African-Americans are facing the same challenges as well as in the mainland United States.

**Yue:** The United States also have policies that encourage fertility. Welfare can become a way of life. In order to benefit from welfare, poor African-American families grow bigger and bigger without opportunities for good education. The election of Obama as a president was very good

turn.

**Ames:** Obama has had a very good education. The problem African-Americans have had has a long and complicated history. The only way to solve this problem is to give this population the same chance at education as everyone else, and enable them to find change for themselves. It is important for philosophy to promote the social intelligence necessary to make such changes. I personally as a pragmatist have no interest in technical philosophy, but I think philosophy as social wisdom plays a decisive role in making the world a better place.

**Yue:** So for the future, is modernization the only way? What is the core value of modernization? Is modernization of diversity?

**Ames:** The concept of modernity and modernization is also invested in progress. On the one hand, we can say, we are now facing more conflicts. On the other hand, if there are no conflicts, there would be no opportunities for diversification. In fact, we can argue that the greatest opportunities for diversification are where the conflicts are most persistent. Therefore, the conflicts should become the opportunities for diversification. We should study more about Islam. If we understand it we will have a chance to communicate with it. But for now, unfortunately there is only misunderstanding, fear, and the opposition that always comes with ignorance.

**Yue:** But now some European leaders, such as the German chancellor, seem to have alternative concerns, especially after the Charlie's Weekly Incident.

**Ames:** Female leaders might be good for mankind. Women are more inclusive, less exclusive and have a greater commitment to family values. There will be an opportunity if Hillary is elected. But perhaps we should not generalize too quickly. Margaret Thatcher is an exception to this rule for she sacrificed culture in order to make money.

**Yue:** People pursuing modernization together is the way to modernization by diversity too?

**Ames:** Yes. We have very good opportunities, though conflicts are inevitable. We can create a new pluralism through conflicts, and I hope we will remain optimistic.

**Yue:** I hope so too. Pessimism is harmful for mankind.

**Ames:** I visited the botanical garden in Singapore when I delivered my lectures in 2013, and watched a "timeline" documentary that claimed within 50 years on our current trajectory, the earth will have increased in temperature by 3 degrees, killing half of all living species. Within another 50 years with a 5 degree increase, there will be no life on this planet. The beautiful garden city of Singapore tells us clearly: if we human beings do not change our values, intentions, and practices the world as we know it will disappear. We need to change. And we can only do this together by embracing pluralism and diversification, and by using our differences as a resource for growth and human flourishing.

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