



XI JINPING AND THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF “GREAT LEARNING”

by Pierre Beaudry, July 4, 2015



INTRODUCTION

In the spirit of this historical Fourth of July 2015 week-end, when the Greek Referendum is initiating an axiomatic change for the benefit of the whole of mankind, I thought it would be appropriate to introduce how the President of the People’s Republic of China, Xi Jinping, identified the way to solve the problem of geopolitics and avoid the danger of thermonuclear war. The solution that Xi found is located in the millennial way that the Confucian sages have used in order to increase the moral power of knowledge of the common people.

Xi Jinping has been looking at the question of [Great Learning](#) in the Chinese culture; and that is how he was able to address the political role of China as a peace maker in the world from that process. However, the difficulty in increasing the awareness of people to higher levels of knowledge resides in the fact that the individual human being must accept to go through axiomatic transformations by shedding their former obsolete knowledge. The method, therefore, must call for axiom-busting in a three-step method of discovery.

The method that Xi proposed for solving this problem is located in what he identified as the “Core of Socialist Values” for the Chinese people. The irony, however, is that although the

“social” aspect of the principle is unique to China, it is also valid for the rest of the world; because the principles underlying those so-called “socialist values” are not ideological in character, they are simply universally human.

The unique epistemological feature of this pathway of knowledge is characterized by the performative action by means of which the mind discovers the process of discovery of principle from the top down, changes the way it thinks, and goes back up again; that is to say, it starts from the most universal intention, changes by time reversal, and goes back forward again to the most universal future intention.

1. THE ANCIENT PERFORMATIVE CONFUCIAN TEXT OF “GREAT LEARNING”

Great Learning

大学

Dà Xué

大學

1. What the Great Learning teaches is: to illustrate illustrious virtue; to renovate the people; and to rest in the highest excellence.

大学之道在明明德，在亲民，在止于至善。

Dàxué zhī dào zài míngmíng dé, zài qīnmín, zài zhǐyú zhì shàn.

大學之道在明明德，在親民，在止於至善。

2. The point where to rest being known, the object of pursuit is then determined; and, that being determined, a calm unperturbedness may be attained to.

知止而后有定；定而后能静；

Zhī zhǐ ér hòu yǒu dìng; dìng ér hòu néng jìng;

知止而后有定；定而后能静；

3. To that calmness there will succeed a tranquil repose. In that repose there may be careful deliberation, and that deliberation will be followed by the attainment of the desired end.

静而后能安；安而后能虑；虑而后能得。

Jìng ér hòu néng ān; ān ér hòu néng lǜ; lǜ ér hòu néng dé.

靜而后能安；安而后能慮；慮而后能得。

4. Things have their root and their branches. Affairs have their end and their beginning. To know what is first and what is last will lead near to what is taught in the Great Learning.

物有本末；事有终始。知所先后，则近道矣。

Wù yǒu běnmò; shì yǒu zhōngshǐ. Zhī suǒ xiānhòu, zé jìndào yǐ.

物有本末；事有終始。知所先後，則近道矣。

5. The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the kingdom, first ordered well their own States.

古之欲明明德于天下者，先治其国；

Gǔ zhī yù míngmíng dé yú tiān xià zhě, xiān zhì qí guó;

古之欲明明德於天下者，先治其國；

6. Wishing to order well their States, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons.

欲治其国者，先齐其家；欲齐其家者；先修其身；

Yù zhì qí guó zhě, xiān qí qí jiā; yù qí qí jiā zhě, xiān xiū qí shēn;

欲治其國者，先齊其家；欲齊其家者；先修其身；

7. Wishing to cultivate their persons,

欲修其身者，先正其心；欲正其心者，先诚其意；

they first rectified their hearts. Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts.

Yù xiū qí shēn zhě, xiānzhèng qí xīn; yù zhèng qí xīn zhě, xiān chéng qí yì;
欲修其身者，先正其心；欲正其心者，先誠其意；

8. Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost their knowledge. Such extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things.

欲誠其意者，先致其知；致知在格物。
Yù chéng qí yì zhě, xiān zhì qí zhī; zhìzhī zài géwù.
欲誠其意者，先致其知；致知在格物。

9. Things being investigated, knowledge became complete. Their knowledge being complete, their thoughts were sincere.

物格而后知至。知至而后意誠。
Wù gé ér hòu zhī zhì. Zhī zhì ér hòu yì chéng.
物格而后知至。知至而后意誠。

10. Their thoughts being sincere, their hearts were then rectified. Their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated.

意誠而后心正。心正而后身修。
Yì chéng ér hòu xīn zhèng. Xīn zhèng ér hòu shēn xiū.
意誠而后心正。心正而后身修。

11. Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families being regulated, their States were rightly governed.

身修而后家齐。家齐而后国治。
Shēn xiū ér hòu jiā qí. Jiā qí ér hòu guó zhì.
身修而后家齊。家齊而后國治。

12. Their States being rightly governed, the whole kingdom was made tranquil and happy.

國治而后天下平。
Guó zhì ér hòu tiānxià píng.
國治而后天下平。

13. From the Son of Heaven down to the mass of the people, all must consider the cultivation of the person the root of everything besides.

自天子以至于庶人壹是皆以修身为本。
Zì tiānzǐ yǐzhìyú shùrén yīshì jiē yǐ xiūshēn wéi běn.
自天子以至於庶人壹是皆以修身為本。

14. It cannot be, when the root is neglected, that what should spring from it will be well ordered.

其本乱而未治者，否矣；
qí běn luàn ér mē zhì zhě, fǒu yǐ;
其本亂而未治者，否矣；

15. It never has been the case that what was of great importance has been slightly cared for, and, at the same time, that what was of slight importance has been greatly cared for.

其所厚者薄，而其所薄者厚，未之有也。
qí suǒ hòu zhě báo, ér qí suǒ báo zhě hòu, wèi zhī yǒu yě.
其所厚者薄，而其所薄者厚，未之有也。

[[Great Learning](#) was one of four Confucian books that that were selected, since the Song Dynasty, 1127-1279, for the examinations of students applying for state civil service in China. The other three books are *Doctrine of the Mean*, *Analects*, and *Mencius*. See Helga Zepp LaRouche, [China's Confucian Legacy In Today's World](#), The Schiller Institute reprinted from Fidelio, Vol. V, No. 1. Winter 1996.]

2. YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD PRACTICE THE CORE OF SOCIALIST VALUES

On May 14, 2014, Xi Jinping gave a speech at a seminar with teachers and students of Peking University in which he stated the fundamental tenants of his organizing principle for a responsible citizen. In fact, the principles he advocated are the required qualities and virtues necessary for the Presidency of any true Republic in the world today. Xi said:



“An ancient proverb goes, ‘The way to great learning is to manifest bright virtue and to treat the people as one’s own family, thereby arriving at supreme goodness’ ([Great Learning](#) [Dà Xué 大学]). Core values are in fact individual virtues, as well as public, social and national virtues. A country cannot prosper without virtues, nor can anyone succeed without virtues. Without shared core values, a nation and country will be at a loss to know what is right and what is wrong, and its people will have no code of conduct to follow, the result being that the nation and country can never progress. It has commonly occurred in our history, and still happens across the globe.” (Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China*, Foreign Language Press Co. Ltd., Beijing, China, 2014, P. 187)

Figure 1 Xi Jinping

“The way to great learning is to manifest bright virtue” is Xi’s way of saying what the ancient [Great Learning](#) document teaches us at the beginning, when it says: “*What the Great Learning teaches is: to illustrate illustrious virtue...*” And, the Confucian idea of manifesting “*illustrious virtue*” means that one’s root core of innerdirectedness is capable of nurturing one’s inner moral luster into social visibility in a manner such that it has the power “**to renovate the people**”; that is, the power of changing people performatively from the top down and back up again by inversion.

In the translation of this ancient Confucian text, I have found a very interesting commentary by another Confucian axiom-busting philosopher, [Cheng Yi](#) , [1033-1107), who created a school for the study of the underlying principle of Li [理]; that is, for the underlying supreme principle of reason and order in the universe. If Confucius was the Plato of China, then,

Cheng Yi was the Leibniz of the Confucian school who, at the age of 18, memorialized to the Emperor a brilliant report on how to solve the current political crisis and put an end to the hardships of the common people. Cheng Yi identified the transcendental principle of Li as the highest moral principle in the same way that Leibniz developed the principle of sufficient reason. The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (IEP) explained this fundamental concept as follows:

“Understood as such, Li plays an action-guiding role similar to that of moral laws. Apart from the moral sense, Li also signifies the ultimate ground for all existence. This does not mean that Li creates all things, but rather that Li plays some explanatory role in making them the particular sorts of things they are. Therefore, Li provides a principle for every existence. While Cheng Yi was aware that different things have different principles to account for their particular existence, he thought that these innumerable principles amounted to one principle. This one principle is the ultimate transcendental ground of all existence, which Zhu Xi later termed [taiji](#) (“great ultimate”) – the unitary basis of the dynamic, diverse cosmos. While the ultimate principle possesses the highest universality, the principle for a certain existence represents the specific manifestation of this ultimate principle. Therefore the latter can be understood as a particularization of the former.”
([Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#))

Thus, the primary principle of Li can be understood as the enfolding of the supreme process of creativity, while a secondary principle of chi [qi, [氣](#)] can be identified as the unfolding of Li [[理](#)]. The Li principle is the unity of the opposites identified as a transcendental monist principle of sufficient reason ensuring a constant progress of the universe through the interaction of all things in diversity, and most emphatically as the principle of progressive balance between the physical and the spiritual.

Although it manifests itself in the vital energy flow called chi, the principle of Li corresponds to what enfolds the unity of the opposites, as Nicholas of Cusa demonstrated to be the principle of increase in a higher form of cognitive knowledge of the universe, and not in the form of mere understanding. Interestingly, from the standpoint of etymology, chi is a performative logogram formed by the combination of steam rising [气](#) from cooking rice [米](#). In other words, chi implies the ability to increase in power by means of the use of fire. Understood from the standpoint of Leibniz, the principle of Li is the equivalent of human nature understood as morally good. The IEP further explains:

“According to Cheng Yi, all actions performed from human nature are morally good. Presenting itself in different situations, human nature shows the different aspects of Li -- namely, humanity (ren), righteousness (yi), propriety (Li), wisdom (qi), and trustworthiness (xin). (These five aspects of Li also denote five aspects of human nature.) Human beings are able to love since ren is inherent in their nature. When the heart-mind

of compassion is generated from ren, love will arise. Nevertheless, love belongs to the realm of feeling (qing) and therefore it is not human nature. (Neo-Confucians tended to regard human feelings as responses of human nature to external things.) Cheng Yi argued that we can be aware of the principle of ren inherent in us by the presentation of the heart-mind of compassion. Loyalty (zhong) and empathy (shu) are only feelings and, thus, they are not human nature. Because of ren, human beings are able to love, be loyal and be empathetic. Nevertheless, to love, in Cheng Yi's words, is only the function (yong) of ren and to be empathetic is its application." ([Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#))

Thus, when mind is in conformity with Li, it becomes identified with human nature and it gets transformed from an individual human mind (ren xin) to a universal mind of dao (dao xin); that is to say, by way of increasing its energy-flux-density. As Helga showed in her report on China, according to Confucius, there is also a crucial connection between music and Li:

"[m]usic rises from the heart when it is touched by the external world. Therefore, if sorrow gives you the sound, then the sounds of the music are somber. Satisfaction: the sounds of the music are languorous and slow. Joy: the sounds are glorious. Anger: the sounds are harsh and strong. Piety: the sounds are simple and pure. Love: the sounds are gentle and sweet.

"These moods are produced by impact from the external world. Therefore, the ancient kings were ever-careful about things that affect the human heart. They tried to guide the people's ideas and aspirations by means of *Li*, to establish harmony and sounds by means of music. *Li*, music, punishment, and government have a common goal, which is to bring about the unity in the people's heart, and carry out the principles of political order.

"Music rises from the human heart. When the emotions are touched, they are expressed in sounds, and when sounds take definite forms, we have music. Therefore, the music of a peaceful and prosperous country is quiet and joyous, and the government is orderly. The music of a country in turmoil shows dissatisfaction and anger, and the government is chaotic." (Quoted without reference by Helga Zepp LaRouche, [China's Confucian Legacy In Today's World](#), The Schiller Institute, reprinted from Fidelio, Vol. V, No. 1., Winter 1996)

The point to be made is that Confucius knew that Li is to music as reason is to mind, and when music degenerates, as it continually does in our western societies, so goes the minds of the people and their sense of morality. Confucius may have also known that the principle of classical composition, as developed later by J. S. Bach, includes within the well-tempered system of music the required elements necessary to cause axiomatic changes by means of the placement of the human voice.

3. THE HUMAN MIND AND THE SOURCE OF EVIL

This unity of chi and Li should not to be confused with the carefree wanderings of Daoism as developed by the Zhuangzi and the Zhuang Zhou seekers of butterfly dreams. Some of those daoist desires may end up being totally evil. Therefore, it is better to locate properly the mind with respect to Li and chi, before going any further. For example, Cheng Yi made an absolutely decisive distinction between mind and Li, which is also to be found in western philosophy in Cusa's distinction between the processes of unfolding and enfolding. The difference hinges on the distinction between opposites and the unity of opposites. Here is how Cheng Yi conceived of this difference with respect to mind:

“The duality of Li and qi in Cheng Yi's ontology also finds expression in his ethics, resulting in the tripartite division of human nature, human mind and human feeling. In Cheng Yi's ethics, the mind of a human being does not always conform to his nature; therefore a human sometimes commits morally bad acts. This is due to the fact that human nature belongs to the realm of Li and the mind and feelings belong to the realm of qi. Insofar as the human mind is possessed by desires which demand satisfaction, it is regarded as dangerous. Although ontologically speaking Li and qi are not separable, desires and Li contradict one another. Cheng Yi stressed that only when desires are removed can Li be restored. When this happens, Cheng maintained, the mind will conform to Li, and it will transform from a human mind (ren xin) to a mind of dao (dao xin). Therefore, human beings should cultivate the human mind in order to facilitate the above transformation.” ([Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#))

This is a difficult matterofmind to digest, but it is essential that it be reflected on in its full epistemological implications, because it poses the problem of the origin of evil in the human mind in a very unique way. Let me explain. Since the human mind is of the domain of chi, a man can have a more or less good quality of chi; evil might arise from an unbalanced situation as a result of this interaction, should this unbalance remain onresolved. This does not mean that we are born good or evil; it simply means that the balance of the vital force of our energy flow may be off and cause a state of dissonance. Therefore, harmony and equilibrium must be restored. What is then required to stem evil is the discovery of a willful means of using this dissonance in order to increase the energy-flux-density of one's chi and bring it to a higher level of energy-flux-density.

This becomes a most important galactic issue when one poses, as Xi Jinping does, the question of the survival of the planet as a whole; that is, the question of one's capacity for both moral and immoral pursuits with respect to the harmonic ordering of each nation in the world. This is a question that the present criminal form of the British-run Trans-Atlantic financial system is also currently forcing on the entire world by its incompetence and banality. However,

the answer to solving the world crisis question is found in the specific approach of Cheng Yi, who provided a handle in a commentary to [Great Learning](#). Cheng Yi added the following very instructive comment on the epistemological implication of “investigation of things.” He said:

“The statement that extending one’s understanding lies in investigating things means that wishing to extend our understanding we must go straight to things and fully penetrate their principles. Most likely, the spirituality of the human mind never lacks the power to understand and the things of the world never lack principles [that may be understood]. It is only that there are sometimes principles that have not been fully penetrated, and thus understanding may not be fulfilled.

“For this reason, the first teachings of the *Great Learning* necessarily make the learner go straight to the various things of the world. In every case, one relies upon the principles one already understands and increases one’s penetration, seeking to reach to the limit. After one has exerted oneself at this for a long time, suddenly – all at once – things all link up. Then one can reach all the inner and outer aspects of things, their fine and coarse points, and in every instance, the full body and great operation of our minds is brilliant.” ([Great Learning](#))

In other words, what is required in the investigation of things is not what you are capable of accomplishing by introspection, but what you are capable of doing by wishing to expend your understanding in science. The reader will discover, in due time, that the answer to this question can only be found in the discovery of principle of the “La” function that Lyndon LaRouche used with respect to classical musical composition and the placement of the human voice as a reflection of the placement of the human mind in the universe.

4. XI JINPING AND LAROUCHE

This call by Xi Jinping for individual and public virtue resonates entirely with Lyn’s call for adopting the classical artistic principle of Bach and Furtwangler to human society generally. Regarding Furtwangler’s principle of composition of Schubert’s Ninth Symphony, Lyn said:

“There’s a model in the 20th century for this: Furtwängler. And you take his adaptation of the score provided by Schubert, that that performance contains all the elements, necessary elements, of the very principle, the most profound underlying principle, of musical performance and composition.

“Because he was always changing, he was not repeating notes. He was always changing; the stress was it. He *moved* them, everything *moved*. So you have the element parts, which seem to be different parts of the chorus, but they’re not! They’re all the same

thing, but they distinguish the part aspect, into these separate parts -- what seem to be separate parts, but you have about five beats between each separation in the development of each phase of the completed work. And Furtwängler just took this operation, and took this as a point which he worked from, to perfect the intention of Schubert.” (Lyndon LaRouche, *Morning Briefing* for Tuesday, June 16, 2015.)

So, what is the common resonance between Xi Jinping and Lyndon LaRouche? The principle of this matterofmind is located in the Lydian interactions between the interconnectedness of the twelve core human values, as Xi Jinping developed them, in a triply-connected series of phase-change-dissonant-moments among the nation, the state, and the individual citizen.

Reference, again, the text of [Great Learning](#) and identify the division of the whole piece into the same three levels of responsibility, which requires that problems of conflict be resolved between the different levels of interest. Note the Lydian dissonances among the first twelve steps made up of four minor-thirds: The first, from 1 to 3, is the concluding resting place of deliberation on the Mandate of Heaven and its intention; the second, from 4 to 6, is the top-down ordering of the affairs of the State, the Family, and the Self; the third, from 7 to 9, is the cultivating of the individual person with truthfulness and sincerity; and the fourth, from 10 to 12, is the inversion, from bottom-up, of the governance of the Self, the Family, and the State, back to the original intention. Once these dissonances are resolved by appropriate governance, at every level and throughout the way, the whole process from 13 to 15 reflects the accomplishment of the well ordered Mandate of Heaven.

It is the resolution of the dissonances between those three levels that Xi has applied to the nation, the state, and the individual citizen, which forms the crux of the changing process. This is the same self-interactive problem-solving process that Lyn has been emphasizing with the principle of the placement of the voice as the placement of the mind in terms of artistic composition. In other words, the twelve core human values that Xi develops reflect the well-tempering Lydian functions of change in artistic composition as J.S. Bach understood them as dissonances of the well-tempered musical system as a whole. See my five reports on the [LYDIAN PRINCIPLE](#). As Xi put it:

“The core socialist values that we should cultivate and practice are prosperity, democracy, civility, harmony, freedom, equality, justice, the rule of law, patriotism, dedication, integrity and friendship.

“The values of prosperity, democracy, civility and harmony are for the country; those of freedom, equality, justice and the rule of law for the society; and those of patriotism, dedication, integrity and friendship for citizens. They explain what sort of country and society we are striving for, and what kind of citizens we are cultivating.

“Since ancient times, the Chinese people have developed their country through studying the nature of things, correcting thoughts with sincerity, cultivating the moral self, managing the family, governing the state and safeguarding peace under Heaven. As we see it today, the principles of ‘studying the nature of things, correcting thoughts with sincerity and cultivating the moral self’ are for individuals; the principle of ‘managing the family’ is for the society; and those of ‘governing the state and safeguarding peace under Heaven’ are for the country.” (Ibidem, p. 188)

It is the tension among the applications of those three levels which produce the relevant dissonances to be resolved in order to achieve peace. These twelve well-tempered human principles are also expressions of the fundamental tenants of the Peace of Westphalia of 1648, which, when understood strategically and historically, represent the only true solution to the problem of geopolitical war games. This is how Lyn considers the Xi Jinping peace winning principle of the BRICS, today:

“That's what the BRICS principle is, what has become known as the BRICS principle, is exactly that. Which is the same thing as the China "win-win" concept. Same thing. We don't conceive of the human being as being divided by different species, in the name of nationality. What we realize is "win-win": Is each must develop the best they can do, at that time, try to get improvements over what they had been able to do, and go on to perfect which would be more and more converging upon mankind as a whole.

“And we can start thinking about Kepler's idea about how the Solar System is organized, which is still little understood, still today, in most quarters. And then, go further, to the Galactic conception, which is the higher level we have to get to. We don't think of mankind as an animal, just another animal parading around on Earth. We think of mankind as growing up to become beyond practical, as happened in the case of Kepler.

“Kepler created the *understanding* of the existence of the Solar System. And what we're doing now, is to perfect the idea of how the Galactic complement of the Solar System is under man's control! And that's it. We don't know where this is all going. We're living in shadow-land on many of these issues. But we know certain things are definitely trends, and they establish themselves as solid trends. This is one of them.

“Our destiny as mankind, now, is no longer what it was before. It's now Galactic. Because we know, it's the Galactic forces within the system, with which we are now becoming familiar.” (Lyndon LaRouche, *Morning Briefing* for Tuesday, June 16, 2015.)

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