

CO-ENLIGHTENERSHIP: A NEW PHASE OF SINO-AMERICAN
RELATIONSHIP – SUPERPOWER AND SUPERWISDOM: TWIN
PILLARS AS MILESTONE IN HUMAN HISTORY

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The world is at a turning point in history: turning towards the best of times or the worst of times! Secretary of State Gen. Powell found neither the term strategic partner nor strategic competitor is adequate to describe the current Sino-American relationship; he is at a loss about a third, better expression. We provide the following for consideration:

1) The relationship between China and US is such that, he ze liang li, fen ze liang hai, that is, cooperation is to the best interest of both; separation is to the worst disaster of both. Symbiotic interrelationship or concrescence (growing together) is the model of cosmic life, the way of nature. The principle of mutuality and reciprocity should be given top priority concern.

Both Jesus and Confucius said the same: “What you don’t like the others to do to you, don’t do to them.” In Chinese it is called shu dao.

In Great Learning, Confucius elaborated it into the fair square/or fair measure: What you dislike in your superior, don’t display to your inferiors; what you dislike in your right side, don’t display to your left side...”

Psychologically the highest guiding principle in morality is based on What People Don’t Like! That is to say, on a broader ground than What People do Like, which is a matter of personal taste, individual preference, even bias and prejudice. The source of trouble in the world is a deplorable lack of mutual respect. “Do as I say, or...”

2) Our former President Linden Johnson was heard saying at the Square of Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall, Taipei, in the 60s: “My country is young; your country is old. The young have a great deal to learn from the old ...” Rhetoric or not, his saying deserves due consideration.

3) Dr. H. G. Creel (Chinese name: Gu Li-ya), former professor of history at Chicago University, one of the four greatest sinologists in the world, spent eight years (1931-39) studying Confucius and Chinese culture in Beijing. Later when asked by Kong De-Cheng (descendant of the Sage), that Confucius was two thousand years ago, now we are living in the 20th century, the age of industrialism and technology, does his thought still have any values for our modern age? Dr. Creel replied: “I was from a Christian family; I was studying history of religion at the University of Berlin when young. I discovered Confucius, to my surprise, in the University’s library.

That changed my whole life. Had I found his thought without value, how is it that I have devoted more than forty years of my life to the study of it?" Co-author George Sun was there serving as interpreter for both sides at Academia Sinica, Taipei, 1980. In his most popular book *Chinese Thought: From Confucius to Mao Tse-tung* (p. 262), he concluded thus:

"Chinese philosophy does not provide the answer to every problem confronting modern man. Neither, for that matter, does any philosophy that has yet been devised. But the Chinese have seen many things -- and some things that we have missed -- with peculiar clarity, and the things they have said about them are often helpful."

4) China has developed uniquely an unbroken history about five to seven thousand years. Even up to the mid-17th century the Ming Dynasty still proved the greatest empire in the world, in civilization as well as in military prowess. The cause of her weakness in recent times, according to Hermann Keyserling, is superficialism on the part of the intellectualists!

When the Chinese intellectualists and political leaderships become aware of the problem, and strive to be less superficial, there lies the hope not only for China alone but also for the whole world and for the future of all mankind.

5) What is the New Hope for China and the World? After teaching at the University of Beijing (1920-21), the great British philosopher Bertrand Russell pointed out 80 years ago: The hope consists in a new synthesis of the distinctive merits both of the Chinese and the Western civilization.

"They must work out their own salvation by means of a new synthesis. The Japanese adopted our faults and kept their own, but it is possible to hope that the Chinese will make the opposite selection, keeping their own merits and adopting ours."

"The distinctive merits of our (Western) civilization, I should say, is the scientific method; the distinctive merit of the Chinese is a just conception of the ends of life. It is these two that one must hope to see gradually uniting."

The feasible outcome of such a synthesis: A civilization better than any one we have ever seen in human history, just as a newborn life better than either of its parents. To put it in another way: The new hope for the world consists in combining the Super Power with Super Wisdom of Life. Russell strongly advises the Chinese to preserve their traditional virtues while developing their military power but with restraint, only for defensive purpose. Abstain from war!

“It is not unlikely that the great military nations of the modern world will bring about their own destruction by their inability to abstain from war, which will become, with every year that passes, more scientific and more devastating.”

“If China joins in this madness, China will perish like the rest. But if Chinese reformers can have the moderation to stop when they have made China capable of self-defense, and to abstain from the further step of foreign conquest; if, when they have become safe at home, they can turn aside from the materialistic activities imposed by the Powers, and devote their freedom to science and art and the inauguration of a better economic system--then China will have played the part (role) in the world for which she is fitted, and will have given to mankind as a whole new hope in the moment of greatest need. It is this hope that I wish to see inspiring Young China. This hope is realizable; and because it is realizable, China deserves a foremost place in the esteem of every lover of mankind.”

6) A New Term for the Sino-American Relationship: Mutual Enlightenment! In classic Chinese philology of the Han Dynasty (200 BC to 200 AD), it is called xiang-shi (literally, co-teacher, that is friendship in the truest sense of the term peng.) During the later phase of the Clinton administration, the pet metaphor to describe the Sino-American relationship is “strategical partnership”; with the campaign language of the current Bush administration, it is “strategical competitor.” One sounds too commercial, business-like; the other, too militant, too, mutually exclusive, not free from paranoia. Neither is a happy choice.

No wonder Secretary of State Gen. Powell complained for lack of an adequate term for the case. An ideal term combines reality with ideality. Who can deny that China and the US have something to learn from each other? Who can deny that both these two great countries in world history, in spite of all their misunderstandings and misfortunes in the past, have great responsibilities for the future of mankind? With the recent 911 Tragedy in New York and Washington D. C., any enlightened person, like the Buddha, must approach the burning issue with a cold head and a warm heart.

Indeed, we are very sad at the sight of the fallen Twin Towers in New York; but we hope sincerely that there will soon be erected the (Sino-American) Twin Pillars in East and West for world peace and harmony. The US policy decision makers should better realize that an enlightened and strong new China in Asia is never a threat to the US or any other countries in the world; rather, she will prove the most worthy friend and ally to the US in the cause of righteousness. It would be a great folly to force China to take sides with the Muslims (2.5 billions of mankind involved), as Samuel P. Huntington in “Clash of Civilization and Remaking World Order,” in a campaign against the Western civilization!

Will China become more Chinese? A no small sign is found in her leader, President Jiang Ze-min's frequently quoted encouragement for the younger generation of government leaders and party calibers: "Read more of Confucius, Mencius, and The Book of the Mean!" If his words are followed, where is then the rationale for China-phobia?

7) All Winding Up in A New Outlook, A New Mode of Mindset: The source of human misery, if thought out, is due to a very simple logical fallacy: either/or. Alfred North Whitehead has called this kind of false beliefs "fallacy of vicious bifurcation of Nature as a Whole." We tend to artificially "chop in two" any alive situations, such as: either this or that, either friend or enemy, either light or dark, either A or non-A, ...

Either partner or competitor falls under the same category. Just with a little common sense, any one can tell the fallacious character of either light or dark, either true or false, either right or wrong. Even in the field of logic, besides the values True or False, there is the third value Uncertain. Three-value logic is the philosophical foundation of Quantum Physics, according to the late Professor Hans Reichenbach of UCLA. Even in the field of ethics, besides the values Moral and Immoral, there is the third value Amoral, beginning with the great German philosopher Immanuel Kant. The new world order hinges upon such a new way of thinking, feeling, and living.

Hoping the above analysis and clarification serves to fill a gap for lack of an adequate term to describe what the Sino-American relationship should be like. And we hope Secretary of State Gen. Powell would no longer be at a loss about such a term. We are developing towards a co-enlightenership, strategically or otherwise.