

POLITICS AS VIEWED THROUGH THE PRINCIPLE OF EXTENSIVE CONNECTION

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What is called ideal politics are: the framing of right measures; the creation of fair opportunities by virtue; and the development of natural abilities. This creates the possibility of living together, through mutual understanding and mutual respect, under any circumstances. Thomé H. Fang observes that:

The only essential thing being that the principle of social justice should be strictly observed and that, different nations, with their distinct characteristic traditions of culture, can enter into a harmonious interrelationship according to a scheme of thoroughly open-minded and openhearted co-operation.¹

One could say that this does not work. Why are there still so many problems? To this we could say that not everyone lives these values and social justice is not always observed.

One could say that this is just an ideal. But if we did not have an ideal vision we would not have anything to move toward. Fang brings this to clarity:

It is only under the guidance of such an ideal that the happiness of human existence can come to be realized. If it were otherwise, ideal politics would soon become degenerate, gradually losing its ideality, until eventually it would take the fearful form of political demonry.²

In the Chinese language, virtue is explained as meaning being in harmony with. The aim of politics of virtue is for all people to be in harmony with the spiritual context of life. This constitutes a person, a nation, humanity and the universe. All the elements and participants enter into a comprehensive harmony. Philosophically it is a system of dynamic ontology founded upon perpetual creativity in incessant change.

At the farthest horizon this is located in Chinese cosmology which is a value-centric philosophy. The Principle of Extensive Connection that is rooted in the Book of Change tells us that everything leads through life to the attainment of ultimate value. It is said to be great and extensive in the way of appropriating functioning.

With the Principle of Extensive Connection we see: life in the mode of creative creativity; the mutual relevance of all forms of existence in

respect of inherent meaning and value; the never-ending process of change and transformation; a thread of connection running through all forms of life, by reason of mutual relevance and interpenetration, constitute the universe.³

With the Principle of Extensive Connection the importance of one can be ascertained by the other. The transformation in respect of the change and exchange of each is followed closely by a concomitant change. This is the process of creative creativity. It is the same confluence of life permeating all. No system of metaphysics is without interpenetration. The Principle of Extensive Connection is a prelude to the principle of creativity that is basic to the principle of life in the process of value-realization.⁴

Each can enjoy the cultural and spiritual consanguinity of concurrent life. With the Principle of Extensive Connection each can be enriched in the meaning of life, in the realm of thought, in the field of social and political action.

Notes

- 1) Thomé H. Fang, *The Chinese View of Life* (Taipei: Linking Publishing Co. Ltd., 1980), pp. 148-149.
- 2) *Ibid.*, p. 149.
- 3) *Ibid.*, p. 51.
- 4) Thomé H. Fang, *Chinese Philosophy: Its Spirit and Its Development* (Taipei: Linking Publishing Co. Ltd. 1986), p. 109.