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## History, tradition and the China dream: socialist modernization in the world of great harmony

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*How will China influence world politics in the twenty-first century? Many people answer this question by looking to Chinese history, and particularly to traditional models of Chinese World Order. This essay seeks to complicate this question by asking which history, and which tradition? While it is common to look at China's pre-modern history as "tradition," this essay argues that we also need to appreciate how "socialism" is treated as a tradition alongside Chinese civilization. It does this by examining how China's public intellectuals appeal to two seemingly odd sources: Mao Zedong's 1956 speech "Strengthen Party Unity and Carry Forward Party Traditions," and the "Great Harmony" passage from the two millennia-old Book of Rites. It will argue that these two passages are employed as a way of salvaging socialism; the ideological transition thus is not from communism to nationalism, but to a curious combination of socialism and Chinese civilization. This new socialist/civilization dynamic integrates equality and hierarchy into a new form of statism, which is involved in a global competition of social models. Or to put it another way, what these two passages have in common is not necessarily a positive ideal, but a common enemy: liberalism, the West and the United States.*

## Introduction

Where is China going? How will it influence world politics in the twenty-first century? As this special issue of the *Journal of Contemporary China* shows, such questions currently vex commentators not only in the West, but within the People's Republic of China (PRC) as well.

Passages from New Left political scientist Pan Wei and the liberal authors (including Nobel-laureate Liu Xiaobo) of "Charter 08" show how China's future direction is a shared concern. Charter 08 asks: "Where is China headed in the twenty-first century? Will it continue with 'modernization' under authoritarian rule, or will it embrace universal human values, join the mainstream of civilized nations, and build a democratic system?"<sup>1</sup> In his introduction to *The China Model*, Pan likewise feels that China is at a "crossroads." But he suggests a different approach: "In the next 30 years; what direction will the Chinese nation take? Will it preserve China's

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<sup>1</sup> Liu Xiaobo, et al., "Charter 08," in *No Enemies, No Hatred: Selected Essays and Poems*, ed. Perry Link, Tianchi Martin-Liao and Liu Xia, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), p. 301.

rejuvenation? Or will it have superstitious faith in the Western ‘liberal democracy’ system, and go down the road of decline and enslavement?”<sup>2</sup>

In Xi Jinping’s first month as China’s leader in 2012, he addressed this concern when he proposed the “China Dream” (中国梦) as his vision of the PRC’s future direction. Xi’s “China dream” is for the “great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation,” which, as he later explained, means “achieving a rich and powerful country, the revitalization of the nation, and the people’s happiness.”<sup>3</sup>

This discussion of directions and dreams is actually part of a broad and ongoing debate about the “moral crisis” that China faces after three decades of economic reform and opening up. In other words, China’s New Left, military intellectuals, traditionalists and liberals all worry about the “values crisis” presented by what they call China’s new “money-worship” society.<sup>4</sup> Intellectuals from across the political spectrum thus are engaged in what Chinese call “patriotic worrying” (忧患意识); they feel that it is their job to ponder the fate of the nation, and to find the “correct formula” to solve China’s problems.<sup>5</sup>

Curiously, in this broad discussion, two quotations keep appearing, which offer quite distinct “correct formulas” for saving China. Many appeal to a quotation from Mao Zedong’s “*Strengthen Party Unity and Carry Forward Party Traditions*” (1956) speech to frame China’s direction and objectives in the twenty-first century:

“Given fifty or sixty years, we certainly ought to overtake the United States. This is an obligation. ... [I]f after working at it for fifty or sixty years you are still unable to overtake the United States, what a sorry figure you will cut! You should be read off the face of the earth. Therefore, to overtake the United States is not only possible, but absolutely necessary and obligatory. If we don’t, the Chinese nation will be letting the nations of the world down and we will not be making much of a contribution to humanity.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Pan Wei, “Dangdai Zhonghua tizhi: Zhongguo moshi de jingji, zhengzhi, shehui jixi,” in Pan Wei, ed., *Zhongguo moshi jiedu renmin gongheguo de 60 nian* (Beijing: Zhongyang bianzhi chubanshe, 2009), p. 82.

<sup>3</sup> Xi Jinping in Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, ed., *Xi Jinping guanyu shixian Zhonghua minzu weida fuxing de Zhongguo meng: Lunshu gaobian* [Xi Jinping on realizing the China dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation: Discussion edition], (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, December 2013), pp. 3, 5. Hereafter the book will be cited as *Xi Jinping guanyu Zhongguo meng*.

<sup>4</sup> See Liu Mingfu, *Zhongguo meng: hou Meiguo shidai de daguo siwei zhanlue dingwei* [The China dream: The great power thinking and strategic positioning of China in the post-American era], (Beijing: Zhongguo youyi chubanshe, 2010); Xu Jilin, *Dangdai Zhongguo de qimeng yu fan-qimeng* [Enlightenment and anti-enlightenment in contemporary China], (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2011); Pan, *Zhongguo moshi*; William A. Callahan, *China Dreams: 20 Visions of the Future*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); William A. Callahan, “Citizen Ai: Warrior, Jester and Middleman,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, 73(4), (2014): 899-920.

<sup>5</sup> Gloria Davies, *Worrying about China: The Language of Chinese Critical Inquiry*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Liu, *Zhongguo meng*.

<sup>6</sup> Mao Zedong, “Zengqiang dang de tuanjie, jicheng dang de chuantong” [Strengthening Party Unity and Carry Forward Party Traditions], (August 30, 1956), Speech at the first session of the preparatory meeting for the Eighth

Many also appeal to the two millennia-old utopian ideal of Great Harmony (大同) from the *Book of Rites* (礼记):

“When the Great Way prevails, the world will belong to all. They chose people of talent and ability whose words were sincere, and they cultivated harmony. Thus people did not only love their own parents, not only nurture their own children. ... In this way selfish schemes did not arise. Robbers, thieves, rebels, and traitors had no place, and thus outer doors were not closed. This is called the Great Harmony.”<sup>7</sup>

References to these two rather different passages—that propose quite different “correct formulas” that lead to distinct directions, goals and ideals—have become common in works by citizen intellectuals, especially New Left intellectuals like Hu Angang, Liu Mingfu, Pan Wei, and Zhao Tingyang as well as establishment intellectuals like Zheng Bijian and Zhang Weiwei.

This essay will examine how New Left and establishment intellectuals have addressed China’s “moral crisis” with an appeal to tradition. As these two quotations show, “tradition” here refers not simply to China’s pre-modern civilization, but also to China’s modern revolutionary and reformist ideology. In contemporary China, tradition is both “socialism” and the more familiar pre-modern “Chinese civilization.” This is an odd combination. According to common Chinese understandings of intellectual and social history, socialism challenged Confucianism, as modernity challenged tradition. Indeed, the standard narrative of the history of political thought in China sees these two quotes are contradictory: modern socialist equality vs. traditional Confucian hierarchy. Yet now Chinese intellectuals commonly say that in order to solve the PRC’s current problems they need to appeal to three traditions: Reform, Revolution, and Chinese civilization.<sup>8</sup>

This essay will do two things. It will conduct a textual analysis of these two quotations, first to locate them in their original context, and then to examine how they have been rejuvenated as guides for the twenty-first century. Then it will examine how they complement each other as part of a what could be called a “nostalgic futurology” that looks back to key events like the Great Leap Forward in order to look ahead to Chinese success in the twenty-first century.

These two “correct formulas” are not the only contradictory formulations in contemporary China. It is popular to argue that the PRC is both developed and

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National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, *Mao Zedong Wenji*, vol. 7, (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1999), pp. 88-89.

<sup>7</sup> See W. T. de Bary, ed., *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, vol. 1, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), p. 176.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Qin Yaqing, “Guoji guanxi lilun Zhongguo pai shengcheng de keneng he biran” [The Chinese School of International Relations Theory: Possibility and Necessity], *Shijie jingji yu zhengzhi* no. 3 (2006), pp. 7-13; Hu Angang, “Mao Zedong de qiangguo meng: 60 nian chaobuguo Meiguo ying kaichu qujian” [Mao Zedong’s strong nation dream: If you can’t surpass America within 60 years, then you should be read off the face of the earth], *Renmin wang*, October 17, 2013, <http://blog.people.com.cn/article/2/1382003195623.html>.

developing, rich and poor, and large and small.<sup>9</sup> Rather than understand Deng Xiaoping's "socialism with Chinese characteristics" slogan as a contradiction that masks a growing nationalism, this essay will examine how these two passages likewise are linked in a creative tension where each defines the other. Here the conceptual strategy shifts from dialectical materialism's understanding of a contradiction as a problem that needs to be resolved, to a new strategy that allows Mao's "Strengthen Party Unity" quote and the Great Harmony passage to work together in a composite ideology that integrates equality and hierarchy into a new form of statism that is involved in a global competition of social models: the China dream versus the American dream. Hence what these two passages have in common is not necessarily a positive ideal, but a common enemy: liberalism, the West and the United States.

### **Quantity: Mao's Great Leap Forward to Surpass the United States**

Both passages are part of the PRC's current discourse about the rise/rejuvenation of China. To understand the differences between the two passages, it is helpful to understand them in terms of quantitative and qualitative strategies. Mao's quote from "Strengthen Party Unity" about surpassing the United States is very clearly a quantitative strategy. Earlier in the speech, Mao stated that "A country like ours may and ought to be described as 'great'. Our Party is a great Party, our people a great people, our revolution a great revolution, and our construction is great, too." "Greatness" (伟大) here is not measured in terms of cultural achievement, economic equality or social justice, but in terms of tonnage of steel. "Great" thus is the material quantitative measure of "big." Big-ness is not absolute, but relative, and for Mao, relative to the United States:

The United States has a population of only 170 million, and as we have a population several times larger, are similarly rich in resources and are favored with more or less the same kind of climate, it is possible for us to catch up with the United States. What are your 600 million people doing? Dozing? Which is right, dozing or working? If working is the answer, why can't you with your 600 million people produce 200 or 300 million tons of steel when they with their population of 170 million can produce 100 million tons?

Beating the United States is not simply a national goal for China, but is seen as the PRC's responsibility to the world. Otherwise, Mao argues that China "should be read off the face of the earth. Therefore, to overtake the United States is not only possible, but absolutely necessary and obligatory. If we don't, the Chinese nation will be letting the nations of the world down and we will not be making much of a contribution to mankind."

This is the first time that Mao spoke of his goal of surpassing the United States. "Strengthen Party Unity and Carry Forward Party Traditions" was delivered at a preparatory meeting for the CCP's Eighth Party Congress that was held in

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<sup>9</sup> See Zheng Bijian, *China's Peaceful Rise*, (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2005); Zhang Weiwei, *Zhongguo zhenhan: Yige 'wenming xing guojia' de jueqi* [China Shock: The rise of a "civilization-state"], (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2011).

September 1956. At this time, Mao was fighting against Zhou Enlai and others who wanted to consolidate the economic and social gains of land reform and the nationalization of industry. They criticized Mao's more radical economic ideas as a "rash advance" (冒进) that was "proceeding too rapidly without due consideration of actual circumstances and likely consequences."<sup>10</sup> Mao's 1956 speech thus was an early expression of his push for what would later be called the "Great Leap Forward" (1958–1961).

Drawing on Khrushchev's 1957 prediction that the Soviet Union would surpass the United States in fifteen years, "surpass Britain and catch up to America" (超英赶美) became Mao's main slogan for the Great Leap Forward. According to Bo Yibo, "The stated goal of the Great Leap Forward movement was to overtake Britain in iron and steel production within just two years, overtake the Soviet Union within four years, and overtake the United States within ten years."<sup>11</sup> As we can see, Mao became more ambitious as the movement developed.<sup>12</sup> But as is well-known, this ambition eventually led to humanity's greatest famine, killing more than 30 million people.<sup>13</sup> Why then would this passage, which exemplifies the key ideas of the disastrous Great Leap Forward, continue to be popular? Actually, according to the CNKI database, Mao's 1956 "Strengthen Party Unity" speech was not popular in the 1970s, 1980s, or 1990s. It regained currency in the 2000s as a way of explaining China's dramatic economic expansion, and predictions that the PRC's GDP would soon surpass that of the United States. In 2008, Chinese confidence surged due to Beijing's successful Olympics—which was credited to the China model of "authoritarian state + market capitalism"—and the start of the Global Financial Crisis in New York soon after. Futurologists no longer just spoke of the "Rise of China," but also of the "Fall of the West." For many, Mao's dream of a strong China that could beat America was coming true, and even according to his 1956 timetable of "fifty or sixty years"—i.e. 2006-2016.<sup>14</sup>

Military intellectual Col. Liu Mingfu and developmental economist Hu Angang come from very different institutional backgrounds and pursue quite divergent approaches to China's future; but they both appeal to Mao's "Strengthen Party Unity" quote to make similar arguments about China's unstoppable rise. For Col. Liu, China was in an era of strategic opportunity, when it was incumbent to seize the day and become the world's "No. 1 superpower." To describe why Mao is the top ideologist of "World No. 1-ism," Liu conducts a close textual analysis of the quote from Mao's 1956 "Strengthen Party Unity" speech. Mao is heroic for Liu because he dared to craft a grand plan to surpass America, stating that beating the United States would be China's great contribution to humanity. Liu is fascinated by the Great Leap Forward, seeing the outrageous ambition of this Maoist mass movement as the key to China's

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<sup>10</sup> Yang Jisheng, *Tombstone: The Great Chinese Famine, 1958-1962*, trans. and eds. Edward Friedman, Stacy Mosher and Jian Guo, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012), p. 90.

<sup>11</sup> Cited in Hu, *China in 2020*, p. 29.

<sup>12</sup> See Yao Runtian, "Gongheguo shishang: Ganchao kouhao de youlai yu yanbian" [The origin and development of the 'catch up and surpass' slogan in the history of the republic], *Mao Zedong sixiang yanjiu* 26(2) (2009), pp. 5-11.

<sup>13</sup> See Yang, *Tombstone*.

<sup>14</sup> See Hu Angang, *Zhongguo daolu yu Zhongguo mengxiang* [China path and the China dream], (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 2013), p. 191.

success in the twenty-first century.<sup>15</sup> Liu admits that the Great Leap Forward “suffered defeat,” and that “a large population met an irregular death.” But he concludes that “the ‘Great Leap Forward’ is the roadmap for surpassing Britain and catching up to the United States” in the twenty-first century because it shows that in order to create a new path one has to destroy old rules.<sup>16</sup> Liu thus understands Deng Xiaoping’s post-Maoist reform and opening policy as a continuation of Mao’s Great Leap Forward plan. China’s current and future success, here, is the upshot of Mao’s ambitious aspirations from the Great Leap Forward-era. Col. Liu Mingfu’s ideas and arguments are important because his China dream of the PRC as a strong military power has been largely adapted by Xi Jinping.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, the link between the China dream and the PRC’s “strong military dream” was celebrated in a set of postage stamps that were issued in September 2013 (see Figure 1).



Figure 1: “China Dream: a wealthy and strong country” postage stamps (2013)  
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Hu Angang also quotes the “Strengthen Party Unity” speech at length to argue that Mao and the speech are important because they created “the strategic concept of catching up to, and then surpassing the United States.”<sup>18</sup> He elaborates on the Mao’s materialist quantitative way of measuring power and status, quoting Mao to explain that because of its large territory, large population and superior socialist system, China is the only country in the world that is capable of catching up to and

<sup>15</sup> Liu, *Zhongguo meng*, p. 9-13.

<sup>16</sup> Liu, *Zhongguo meng*, p. 10-11, 13.

<sup>17</sup> See *Xi Jinping guanyu Zhongguo meng*; Jeremy Page, “For Xi, a ‘China Dream’ of Military Power,” *Wall Street Journal*, March 13, 2013; “What does Xi Jinping’s China Dream mean?” BBC News, June 6, 2013.

<sup>18</sup> Hu, *China in 2020*, p. 14; also see Hu, *Zhongguo daolu yu Zhongguo mengxiang*, pp. 191-209.



surpassing the United States.<sup>19</sup> Like Liu Mingfu, Mao is important for Hu Angang because he dared to dream of China as the “World’s No. 1” power.<sup>20</sup> Hu Angang’s understanding of China’s future direction is important because he is a very influential citizen intellectual. He leads a research institute, Tsinghua University’s China National Conditions Research Center, which writes important reports for the Chinese government and consults for the PRC’s Five Year Plans. In asides and footnotes, Hu actually acknowledges the problems with Mao’s “leap-forward” economic policy, and is quite critical of the negative economic impact of the Great Leap Forward: “By 1965, GDP was 41 percent less than it would have been had the Great Leap Forward not taken place.”<sup>21</sup> Former World Bank Chief Economist Justin Yifu Lin explains that Mao’s “leap-forward strategy” did not lead to sustainable economic growth because its capital-intensive development model defied the country’s comparative advantage of abundant cheap labor.<sup>22</sup> Since Mao’s political campaigns to develop heavy industry—i.e. steel production—actually retarded China’s economic growth, Mao’s grand political goal of beating the United States could only be achieved by discarding Mao’s economic policies. Hence most economists contrast the problematic first three decades of the Maoist planned economy and the successful three decades of Deng Xiaoping’s reform and opening policy.

Hu, on the other hand, follows China’s New Left to rehabilitate the Maoist period, arguing that “China’s pre-1978 social and economic development cannot be underestimated.”<sup>23</sup> He challenges the popular notion of the Cultural Revolution as “ten lost years,” explaining that this “ten-year upheaval . . . made reform and opening possible. It provided the circumstances necessary for the last thirty years of progress towards increased unity, stability and prosperity.”<sup>24</sup>

It certainly is odd to imagine China’s future in terms of the audacious aspirations and disastrous results of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. But this is not simply a historical lesson. Mao’s “great leap strategy” is back in vogue. China’s recent “great leap forward mentality” can be seen in the leadership’s demands for rapid and glorious achievements such as the PRC’s high-speed train network. This rush to greatness, critics argue, has led to a rash of accidents, including a major train accident in 2011, as well as to broader social and environmental problems.<sup>25</sup> Hu Angang, however, is unconvinced, reasoning that Mao’s 1956 “Strengthen Party Unity” quotation actually is the origin of the economic reform plans unveiled by Deng Xiaoping in 1979.<sup>26</sup> Hu thus concludes: “It now seems that Mao Zedong’s grand

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<sup>19</sup> Hu, “Mao Zedong de qiangguo meng.”

<sup>20</sup> Hu, *Zhongguo daolu yu Zhongguo mengxiang*, pp. 191, 196, 208.

<sup>21</sup> Hu, *China in 2020*, p. 29.

<sup>22</sup> See Justin Yifu Lin, Fang Cai, and Zhou Li, *The China Miracle: Development Strategy and Economic Reform*, rev. ed., (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2003).

<sup>23</sup> Hu, *China in 2020*, p. 27.

<sup>24</sup> Hu, *China in 2020*, p. 19.

<sup>25</sup> Yao Liwen and Liu Jianping, “Dayuejin shi fazhan weishenme ‘zhiming’” [Why Great Leap Forward-Style Development Is “Deadly”], *Nanfang zhoumo*, September 29, 2011.

<sup>26</sup> Hu, *China in 2020*, p. 32.



strategy for China is on the verge of being realized. China overtaking the United States in terms of GDP, regardless of how it is calculated, is inevitable.”<sup>27</sup>

Like Pan Wei and Hu Angang, Zhang Weiwei is interested in how the China Model can be an alternative to what they call the “Western Model.” Zhang argues this point in his book *China Shock* (中国震撼), which was translated into English as *The China Wave*.<sup>28</sup> *China Shock* is important because it sold over 1 million copies in China, was assigned reading at communist party study sessions in Shanghai, and was read by Xi Jinping in Summer 2012, just before he became China’s leader.<sup>29</sup>

While Liu Mingfu focuses on military power, and Hu Angang focuses on economic power, Zhang Weiwei focuses on political power. His main goal is to show that China’s political system is better than the (Western) democratic system. To do this, he cites many Western sources to “prove” that China will soon surpass the United States economically, politically and culturally—and even argues that his native Shanghai is already better than New York.

In a section called “To the Top,” Zhang reviews British economist Angus Maddison’s predictions of China’s surpassing the United States by 2015, before noting: “This reminds many Chinese of a famous observation made by Chairman Mao in 1956.” Zhang then reproduces the “Strengthen Party Unity” quotation in full, to conclude, “Maddison’s prediction seems to tally well with Mao’s forecast back in 1956.” After citing predictions from PriceWaterhouseCoopers and Goldman Sachs that China soon will overtake the United States, Zhang concludes the chapter by stating that “Like it or not, China has risen, or to say the least China is now being held by many as the ‘No. 2’ in the world economy. Taking a longer-term view, China will eventually be ‘No. 1’ in the future.”<sup>30</sup> Once again, Mao’s 1956 quote is used alongside current economic analysis to explain how the PRC is destined to become the world’s top power. Once again, the huge differences between Mao’s method of analysis and those of Maddison, PriceWaterhouseCoopers or Goldman Sachs are effaced simply because they come to similar conclusions. In his latest book, *China Surpasses: The Glory and Dream of a ‘Civilization-State’* (2014), Zhang combines Mao’s “surpass America” trope with Xi Jinping’s “China dream” slogan to argue that China has already overtaken “the West and the Western model,” and will soon be at the top of the world.<sup>31</sup>

The last example comes from a recent essay by Zheng Bijian, who was Hu Jintao’s top foreign policy intellectual. He is most well-known for creating the “peaceful rise” strategy that guided Beijing’s very successful good neighbor policy in the mid-2000s. His elaboration on Deng’s “bide and hide policy,” however, was criticized by Liu

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<sup>27</sup> Hu, *China in 2020*, p. 45.

<sup>28</sup> Zhang, *Zhongguo zhenhan*; Zhang Wei-wei, *The China Wave: Rise of a Civilizational State*, (Hackensack, NJ: World Century Publishing Corporation, 2012).

<sup>29</sup> Zhang, *The China Wave*, ix; Li Cheng in “Intellectuals Divided: The Growing Political and Ideological Debate in China” panel transcript, (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, September 14, 2011), p. 21; Interview with Zhang Weiwei in Oxford, UK, June 10, 2014.

<sup>30</sup> Zhang, *The China Wave*, p. 24-25, 26.

<sup>31</sup> Zhang Weiwei, *Zhongguo chaoyue: Yige ‘wenming xing guojia’ de guangrong yu mengxiang* [China surpasses: The glory and dream of a ‘civilization-state’], Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2014.

Mingfu, the hypernationalists of *Unhappy China*, and many New Left intellectuals as either too weak or as a betrayal of the Han race.<sup>32</sup>

Since he is not popular with the New Left, it is noteworthy that Zheng begins his “The Three Globalizations and China’s Fate” essay (2013) with a reference to Mao’s famous quote:

”As early as in 1956, Chairman Mao Zedong said that if we failed to turn China into a great socialist country, then we would not be qualified to be citizens on this planet. Today, maybe it is fair to say that if we fail to achieve industrialization and modernization and if we can’t realize the great renaissance of the Chinese civilization in the first half of the 21st century, sooner or later we would be disqualified as citizens of this world. Therefore the China dream today finds its logical beginning and historical root in their firm belief in the “survival and rejuvenation of the nation” born of the two centuries of internal crises and foreign aggression.”<sup>33</sup>

Zheng uses this passage to open up an analysis of China’s three turning points in the context of the world’s three globalizations: 1840 to mark the Opium War and Britain’s rise in the first globalization of the industrial revolution, while the Qing dynasty fell; 1949 to mark China’s liberation from the second globalization of imperialist financial capitalism; 1978 to mark the peaceful rise of China through socialism with Chinese characteristics in the third era of globalization. Rather than return to Cold War-thinking, Zheng advises all countries to “enlarge the convergence of interests and build communities of interest with all countries and regions, first of all with surrounding countries and regions.” It is curious, then, that even a global bridge-builder like Zheng finds Mao’s “Strengthen Party Unity” quote useful for discussing the emergence of China as a superpower in the twenty-first century.

This diverse group of citizen intellectuals exhibits the “catch-up mentality” typical of Mao in the 1950s. They measure China’s success in terms of the accepted international standards of modernity: steel production, GDP, Transparency International, foreign futurologists, and so on. The catch-up mentality is permeated by status anxiety, sees international politics as a competition between great powers, and crafts familiar strategies of international development (for the economists) and “peace through strength” (for the strategists) to build the PRC’s international stature. They are drawn to Mao’s 1956 “Strengthen Party Unity” speech because it frames China’s objectives in these materialist quantitative terms: surpass the United States in terms of military and economic measures. Certainly it’s not strange for China’s citizen intellectuals to think about how the PRC could be a great power, while looking to previous predictions of when China would be the world’s No. 1 power. It is odd, though, that they all choose a reference to the Great Leap Forward, which was on such a different path from the Reform and Opening policy that facilitated China’s

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<sup>32</sup> Song Xiaojun, et al., *Zhongguo bu gaoxing: Da shidai, da mubiao, ji women de neiyao waihuan* [Unhappy China: The great era, grand objective, and our domestic troubles and foreign calamities], (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 2009).

<sup>33</sup> Zheng Bijian, “Sanlun jingji quanqiu hua yu Zhongguo mingyun” [The Three Globalizations and China’s Fate], *Huanqiu shibao*, November 5, 2013, [http://opinion.huanqiu.com/opinion\\_world/2013-11/4528850.html](http://opinion.huanqiu.com/opinion_world/2013-11/4528850.html); Zheng Bijian, “The Three Globalizations and China,” *Huffington Post*, January 27, 2014, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/zheng-bijian/globalization-and-china\\_b\\_4668216.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/zheng-bijian/globalization-and-china_b_4668216.html).

rejoining the world starting in 1978. In other words, Mao's quote does not make sense for the twenty-first century because it embodies two serious misreadings: 1) rather than being an example of causation (i.e. Mao's Great Leap Forward idea led to China's current economic success), it is actually an example of correlation (Mao's prediction of success in 50-60 years came true in spite of his tragic policies that retarded China's economic growth); and 2) Mao's notion of national power measured in terms of steel production does not make sense in the context of the current global political-economy that is characterized by transnational production chains in a knowledge-based innovation economy. Indeed, China's massive production of steel is now not seen as a strength, but is taken as a sign of the weakness of an overcapacity that has to be subsidized by the state.

The attraction of Mao's 1956 quote thus is not economic, but political. Liu Mingfu and Hu Angang both stress the ideological and conceptual value of "Strengthen Party Unity." For the New Left, this is part of a campaign to rehabilitate Mao, the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution in order to confirm the continued relevance of socialism and the CCP in China.<sup>34</sup> In many ways, it is an example of nostalgia for the imagined equality and order of the Maoist period, which is figured as the antidote for China's current money-worship society.<sup>35</sup> Mao's "Strengthen Party Unity" speech continues to strike a chord because it was memorized by a whole generation of Chinese who grew up in the Cultural Revolution; its currency also benefited from the rise of Maoist websites like Utopia in the mid- to late-2000s, which further publicized such radical thought.<sup>36</sup> Hu Angang's fascination with steel production is also nostalgic in a more personal way; his given name, "Angang" (鞍钢), is short for the Anshan Iron and Steel Factory, where Hu's parents were "national model workers." Although establishment intellectuals like Zheng advise us to get rid of our "Cold War mentality," Mao's "Strengthen Party Unity" quotation clearly limits our imagination to a Cold War-style bipolar contest between China and the United States.

### **Qualitative: Great Harmony and a New Kind of Superpower**

International relations theorist G. John Ikenberry recently declared that China simply "does not have the ideas, capacities, or incentives to tear down the existing international order and build a new one."<sup>37</sup> But as the above analysis suggests, China's quantitative dream to surpass the United States has its qualitative aspects. Mao Zedong sees surpassing the world's "most advanced capitalist country" as the moral obligation of China as a "superior socialist country." This task is framed as an all or nothing quest: either China beats America to become the number one country in the world, or it gets "read off the face of the earth."

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<sup>34</sup> See Anthony Garnaut, "The Mass Line on a Massive Famine," *The China Story* (October 8, 2014), <http://www.thechinastory.org/2014/10/the-mass-line-on-a-massive-famine/> (accessed November 23, 2014).

<sup>35</sup> See Kevin Carrico, "The Imaginary Institution of China: Dialectics of Fantasy and Failure in Nationalist Identification, as Seen through China's Han Clothing Movement," PhD dissertation, Cornell University, 2013.

<sup>36</sup> Zhang, Interview; email correspondence with Gloria Davies, June 14, 2014.

<sup>37</sup> G. John Ikenberry, "The Rise of China, the United States, and the Future of the Liberal International Order," in *Tangled Titans: The United States and China*, edited by David Shambaugh, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012), p. 55.

In the twenty-first century, Col. Liu Mingfu shares Mao's zero-sum "worrying mentality" to argue that if Beijing misses its current great opportunity for grand success then it risks total failure: "If China in the twenty-first century cannot become world No. 1, cannot become the top power, then inevitably it will become a straggler that is cast aside."<sup>38</sup> As we saw above, Zheng Bijian came to a similar conclusion for China's current dream: "if we can't realize the great renaissance of the Chinese civilization in the first half of the 21st century, sooner or later we would be disqualified as citizens of this world."

Everyone here assumes that China's quantitatively surpassing the United States will directly lead to qualitative change: China will provide a new, different, unique and superior normative world order. Hu Angang's quantitative appeal to Mao's "Strengthen Party Unity" speech is part of a larger qualitative argument about how China can be a different type of superpower: "a mature, responsible, and attractive superpower" that would never "seek hegemony and world domination."<sup>39</sup>

Actually the link between quantitative and qualitative strategies is not as clear as China's citizen intellectuals assume. In fact, China surpassed the United States in steel production in 1995 and became the world leader in 1996—but the world order did not change.<sup>40</sup> Since 2007, the European Union's GDP has been larger than America's GDP; while there was hope that this would lead to a new postmodern normative world order, the EU has yet to emerge as a different kind of world leader.<sup>41</sup> The previous political-economic transition was also multilayered: the United States became the world's largest economy when it passed Britain in 1872—but it did not become a global power until seventy years later with the advent of World War II.

Nevertheless, many citizen intellectuals feel that the PRC will have to assume global political leadership soon after it becomes the largest economy in the world. They see global leadership as a "crown" that is passed from one world capital to another: from London to Washington in the 1940s, and now from Washington to Beijing in the 2010s. While the quantitative arguments generally appeal to shared international standards of measurement—steel production, GDP growth, Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), Human Development Index—it is also common for citizen intellectuals to argue that China needs to create its own norms and standards. Firstly, they note that Western predictions of China's growth have characteristically been wrong;<sup>42</sup> (unfortunately, they don't likewise acknowledge that Chinese economic predictions haven't fared much better). Even so, the conclusion of these patriotic worriers is that China needs to discover its own "correct formula": its own system of measures, methods and norms that will better reflect its own experience, because the unique

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<sup>38</sup> Liu, *Zhongguo meng*, p. 9. Also see Hu and Yan, *Zhongguo*, p. 1.

<sup>39</sup> Hu, *China in 2020*, pp. 12, 15.

<sup>40</sup> Rachel Tang, *China's Steel Industry and Its Impact on the United States: Issues for Congress*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, September 21, 2010. Hu Angang has different figures, but comes to the same conclusion (Hu, *Zhongguo daolu yu Zhongguo mengxiang*, 196).

<sup>41</sup> See Jeremy Rifkin, *The European Dream: How Europe's Vision of the Future Is Quietly Eclipsing the American Dream*, (London: Tarcher, 2004).

<sup>42</sup> See Hu, *China 2020*, p. 5; Zhang Weiwei, *Zhongguo zhenhan*; Zhang Weiwei, *The China Wave*, p. 1; Jin Canrong, *Zhongguo de weilai* [China's future], (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2011).

China Model can only be evaluated by uniquely Chinese criteria.<sup>43</sup> This is part of the critique of “universal values” found in most New Left literature. According to philosopher Zhao Tingyang, to be a true world power the PRC needs to excel not just in economic production, but also in “knowledge production.” It needs to stop importing ideas from the West, and exploit China’s own indigenous “resources of traditional thought” to “create new world concepts and new world structures.”<sup>44</sup> Only then can China gain the “discursive power” of the “China voice” and “China perspective” that are necessary for a new type of superpower.<sup>45</sup>

Since the early 2000s, “harmony” has been promoted as China’s alternative to the ideas of freedom and democracy. Hu Jintao’s twin slogans were Harmonious Society for domestic politics and Harmonious World for international politics. For many then, harmony is taken as the quintessentially Chinese ideal. However, on closer examination, what we now call “harmony” in Chinese and English can have two quite different meanings: *he er butong* (和而不同) means harmony-with-diversity, while *Datong* (大同) is Great Harmony.

Great Harmony describes an overarching unity: the “*tong*” in *Datong* also means sameness. This sameness is seen as harmonious because it describes a united universal utopia. As we saw in the introduction, the main source of the ideal of Great Harmony is a famous passage from the *Book of Rites*; it remains one of Chinese thought’s key ideals, and still informs plans to create a “perfect world.”<sup>46</sup>

While Great Harmony creates perfection through a unified organic order, “harmony-with-diversity” questions the utility of sameness, and finds value in contingent relations. In the famous passage which gives us the phrase “harmony-with-diversity,” the Confucian *Analects* discusses the harmony/sameness (和/同) distinction that is found throughout classical Chinese literature: “The exemplary person harmonizes with others, but does not necessarily agree with them (i.e. harmony-with-diversity); the small person agrees with others, but is not harmonious with them.”<sup>47</sup> Here *The Analects* tells us that agreeing with people means that you are the same as them, in the sense of being uncritically the same: sameness-without-harmony. Harmony-with-diversity, on the other hand, allows us to encourage different opinions, norms and models in a civil society.

Rather than describing the same value that is instinctively known by all Chinese, Great Harmony and harmony-with-difference present very different models of social order and world order: one appeals to the benefits of overarching unity, while the other seeks to encourage opportunities for diversity.

This is not simply a philosophy lesson: these two concepts of harmony continue to be invoked by political leaders and citizen intellectuals in China as a way of describing Chinese visions of future social order and world order. This is not a totally new trend: Kang Youwei’s the *Book of Great Harmony* (大同书) from the turn of the

<sup>43</sup> Hu, *China in 2020*, pp. 25, 30.

<sup>44</sup> Zhao Tingyang, *Tianxia tixi: Shijie zhidu zhexue daolun* [The under-heaven system: The philosophy for the world institution], (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin chubanshe, 2011), p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> Hu, *2030 China*, p. 215.

<sup>46</sup> See Shiping Hua, *Chinese Utopianism: A Comparative Study of Reformist Thought with Japan and Russia (1898-1997)*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009).

<sup>47</sup> *The Analects*, 13/23.

twentieth century revived this ancient concept as a way of solving the problems of modern society.<sup>48</sup> The *Book of Great Harmony* gives a detailed plan whereby all boundaries between nations, classes, races, genders, families and species are “abolished,” thus creating the “Era of Great Peace and Equality.” In 1926, Guo Moruo continued this trend in a short story where Marx and Confucius discuss their shared utopian goal of Great Harmony.<sup>49</sup> In June 1949, Mao Zedong also saw Great Harmony as the goal when he wrote, “When Kang Youwei wrote *The Book of Great Harmony*, he had not, and could not, have found a path to that Great Harmony.”<sup>50</sup> During the Great Leap Forward there was much discussion of Great Harmony as a model and a goal; indeed, party leaders at a pilot commune project were provided with copies of *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx’s *Critique of the Gotha Program*, and Kang Youwei’s *Book of Great Harmony*.<sup>51</sup> In June 1958, Liu Shaoqi explained how the Great Leap Forward was using Marxism to fulfill the Great Harmony objective:

“Kang Youwei wanted to break the nine boundaries, that is, the boundaries of the nation-state, male versus female, the family, private property, and so on. Conditions weren’t ripe for implementation of utopian socialist ideas at that time. Now Marxists have seized hold of class struggle and have already abolished class or are in the process of doing so, and are thereby implementing the utopia that utopian socialists were unable to implement.”<sup>52</sup>

The Great Leap Forward’s violent pursuit of equality and unity was actually in line with Kang Youwei’s One World plan. As Kang wrote with excitement and anticipation, “by the time we have our World of Great Harmony, the people of all the earth will be of the same color, the same appearance, the same size, and the same intelligence.” However, achieving this goal of unity and equality would be disastrous for difference: to achieve racial equality, for example, Kang provides a detailed plan of how the white and yellow races can “annihilate” the black and brown races through a social Darwinist process of “smelting and amalgamating.” Large states will likewise “annihilate” small and weak states in the pursuit of global unity.<sup>53</sup> Much like in the Great Leap Forward, Kang’s World of Great Harmony pursues “sameness-without-harmony” at the expense of “harmony-with-diversity.” After the Great Leap Forward, Chinese civilization became a key target during the Cultural Revolution that sought to destroy the Four Olds, and then again during the early Reform period where it was seen as “feudal superstition” that needed to be modernized in Deng Xiaoping’s Four Modernizations campaign. Chinese culture

<sup>48</sup> Kang Youwei, *Datongshu* [The Book of Great Harmony], (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2005).

<sup>49</sup> Guo Moruo, “Makeese jin wenmiao” [Marx enters the Confucian temple], In *Guo Moruo zuopin jingdian*, vol. 3 [Guo Moruo’s classic works, vol. 3], (Beijing: Zhongguo huaqiao chubanshe, 1997), pp. 394–402.

<sup>50</sup> Mao Zedong, “On the People’s Democratic Dictatorship” (June 30, 1949), *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, vol. IV, (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1961).

<sup>51</sup> Yang, *Tombstone*, pp. 170–71, 249.

<sup>52</sup> Liu Shaoqi cited in Yang, *Tombstone*, p. 262.

<sup>53</sup> Kang Youwei, *Ta Tung Shu: The One-World Philosophy of K’ang Yu-wei*, Laurence G. Thompson, trans., (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1958), pp. 148, 141, 89.

became important again with Jiang Zemin's focus on patriotic education and spiritual civilization in the 1990s. Chinese tradition was seen as useful in the CCP's transition from being a revolutionary party that demanded radical change, to being a ruling party that advocates stability maintenance; Jiang Zemin's "Three Represents" specifically argued that the CCP had to represent "China's advanced culture," and not just socialist culture.<sup>54</sup>

Discussion of Great Harmony thus reemerged at the turn of the twenty-first century, but in a curious place: the alternative academic space of communist party schools, policy institutes and military research institutes that run parallel to elite universities.<sup>55</sup> Rather than arguing that Confucianism had replaced communism, these articles generally looked at how Great Harmony could—or could not—work with Marxism in China. Those who argued that Great Harmony could help Marxism looked to the links between Confucian thought and radicals such as Taiping Rebellion leader Hong Xiuquan, Kang Youwei, Sun Yatsen and Mao Zedong. This made Great Harmony patriotic, while at the same time confirming the nationalist authenticity and legitimacy of the CCP.

Those who questioned the utility of Great Harmony contrasted the timeless ideal of its utopian socialism with scientific socialism's logic of class struggle. According to historical materialism, China was in the period of industrialization, therefore Great Harmony was criticized as a utopian socialism that grew out of the agricultural society of sage kings and Confucius. Critics also noted that the Great Harmony-inspired Taiping Rebellion and Great Leap Forward both led to catastrophes for China: it pushed Mao to skip historical stages to prematurely rush into communism.<sup>56</sup> The declaration of Hu Jintao's Harmonious Society and Harmonious World slogans in 2004-05 signaled victory for those who valued Great Harmony. Harmonious society promoted a very detailed set of policies that looked to the party-state to solve China's economic and social problems. Therefore, Harmonious Society's state-centric intervention into society appeals to a particular blend of socialist modernity and Chinese tradition. While English-language descriptions of the policy stress its Confucian roots, in Chinese it is called "harmonious socialist society." This also has global implications: Chinese writers commonly proclaim "harmonious society is the model for the world."<sup>57</sup>

According to China's official Xinhua news agency, harmony-with-diversity was the Chinese idiom that Premier Wen Jiabao "most frequently used" on his visit to the United States in 2003.<sup>58</sup> Although Wen repeated the phrase during his visits to

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<sup>54</sup> Jiang Zemin, *On the "Three Represents,"* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2002).

<sup>55</sup> For a detailed analysis of harmony discourse in the early 2000s see: William A. Callahan, "Remembering the Future: Utopia, Empire and Harmony in 21<sup>st</sup> century International Theory," *European Journal of International Relations*, 10(4), (2004), pp. 569-601; for a comparative analysis of utopia (including Great Harmony) in China, Russia and Japan see Hua, *Chinese Utopianism*.

<sup>56</sup> Chen Jianhua and Zhuang Xiaolong, "Shilun datong sexiang de lishi yiyun ji qi juxianxing" [The meaning and limitations of Great Harmony thought], *Qiushi* no. 1 (2000), p. 48.

<sup>57</sup> Qin Xiaoying, "Harmonious Society to Be Model for the World," *China Daily*, October 13, 2006.

<sup>58</sup> Xinhua, December 11, 2003.



America and the Arab League in 2009, harmony-with-diversity has decreased in popularity since the mid-2000s; on the other hand, declarations of Great Harmony as China's long-term goal have become very popular in recent years.

Great Harmony thus informs a Chinese futurology that looks to the past for ideals to shape a utopian future. Curiously, the endgame for most of China's chief economic, social and political forecasters is the World of Great Harmony (大同世界, 世界大同, 天下大同). Unfortunately, such descriptions of Great Harmony are characteristically vague. When Justin Yifu Lin was World Bank Chief Economist (2008-2012), he had a calligraphic scroll of the Great Harmony passage on his wall in Washington D.C. Lin explained that its ideals guided his plans for the global economy because "it advocates a world in which everyone trusts each other, cares for others and not only for himself. . . . This was my vision for the World Bank. . . . We try to work on poverty reduction and promote sustainable growth."<sup>59</sup>

In *The China Model*, Pan Wei argues that the patriarchal values of village life, which is presented as a conflict-free organic society, is the source of the PRC's economic success. He sees the PRC as village society writ-large, where the party loves the people like a caring father, and the masses are loyal, grateful and respectful, like well-behaved children. There is no room in this national village for open debate in "civil society," which Pan condemns as a battleground of special interests that can only divide the organic whole. For him, diversity is "division," and thus a problem that needs to be solved by the state. Unity here is the guiding value because Pan—like Kang Youwei—sees social order as a process of integrating divisions into the organic whole, ultimately into the World of Great Harmony.<sup>60</sup>

Like with the China Model, China Dream discourse focuses primarily on domestic issues. But there is a growing discussion of its global implications. For example, Chapter 7 of Xi Jinping's official "China Dream" book is devoted to explaining the meaning of this slogan to the world. The PRC's chief foreign propaganda organization, the State Council Information Office, held a "China Dream: Dialogue with the World" international conference in December 2013.<sup>61</sup> Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi likewise described the "China Dream" as Xi Jinping's key conceptual innovation in foreign affairs, which led to a successful year for Chinese diplomacy in 2013.<sup>62</sup>

Many commentators discuss China's global rejuvenation in terms of the "World Dream" (世界梦). As Ma Zhengang, former ambassador to the United Kingdom, declared, "China's Dream is the world's dream."<sup>63</sup> Xi Jinping explained that the China

<sup>59</sup> Cited in Annie Maccoby Berglof, "Economic Confucian," *Financial Times*, November 18, 2011.

<sup>60</sup> Pan, "Dangdai Zhonghua tizhi," pp. 18, 29.

<sup>61</sup> *Xi Jinping guanyu Zhongguo meng*, pp. 63-74; "Zhongguo meng zhengzai fahui juda ganzhaoli: 'Zhongguo meng de shijie duihua' guoji yantaohui fayan gaobian" [The China Dream exerts enormous appeal], *Renmin ribao*, December 12, 2013.

<sup>62</sup> Wang Yi, "Biange shijie, mengxiang Zhongguo: 2013 nian xin yijie dang zhongyang waijiao chengong kaiju" [The changing world dreams of China: The new CCP Central Committee's successful start to foreign affairs in 2013], *Qiushi* no. 1 (January 2014).

<sup>63</sup> Ma Zhengang, "Zhongguo meng gei shijie lai jiyu" [The China dream will bring opportunities to the world], *Guangming ribao*, June 26, 2013; Ren Zhongping, "Zhu jiu minzu fuxing de 'Zhongguo meng'" [Building the 'China Dream' of national rejuvenation], *Renmin ribao*, April 1, 2013, p. 1; Tian Wenlin, "'Zhongguo meng' ye

Dream “not only enriches the Chinese people, but also benefits the people of the world.”<sup>64</sup> He also told various foreign audiences that the China’s world dream is not for “hegemony,” rather “the China Dream is the dream of peace, development, cooperation and win-win relations.”<sup>65</sup>

In a *People’s Daily* essay, “A Century of the ‘China Dream’ and the ‘Great Harmony’ tradition,” Hua Shiping argues that the World Dream and the China Dream include Great Harmony.<sup>66</sup> Public intellectuals are developing this idea to propose a post-American version of the China Dream/World Dream, which has China lead the rise of the Global South against the West.<sup>67</sup> Hu Angang actually started discussing this before Xi Jinping came to power. *2030 China* tells us that the “China Dream” is a dream of shared wealth in the PRC and of Great Harmony for the World.<sup>68</sup> In this way, by 2030 China will “have the capability to lead great changes in the world.”<sup>69</sup> It will “leap forward” to overtake the United States in a “great reversal” of power in which “American hegemony” will be replaced by a World of Great Harmony controlled by the Global South.<sup>70</sup>

While descriptions of Great Harmony are characteristically vague, Hu provides a detailed discussion of the concept and the goal. This includes the long quotation cited above from the *Book of Rites*, and his conclusion that “Great Harmony Under Heaven” was Confucius China Dream.<sup>71</sup> Hu then describes how Kang Youwei revived the idea because Kang “felt that developed capitalism was not the end goal of humanity, but was just for the ‘Era of Rising Peace’.” After this era there is a higher level of social development called the people’s Great Harmony of the ‘Era of Great Peace and Equality’.” Hu next looks to Sun Yatsen’s “Three Peoples’ Principles” to argue that Sun felt that “the true ‘Three Peoples’ Principles’ are the World of Great Harmony desired by Confucius” where “the world is shared by all (天下为公).” Lastly, he quotes the Mao 1949 passage, cited above, that laments how Kang Youwei could not find the correct path to Great Harmony.<sup>72</sup>

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shi ‘shijie meng’” [The ‘China Dream’ is also the ‘world dream’], *Zhongshi wangping*, September 26, 2013; “Zhongguo meng, shijie meng” (editorial) [China Dream, World Dream]. *Fangdichan daokan* [Real estate guide], no. 5, 2013.

<sup>64</sup> *Xi Jinping guanyu Zhongguo meng*, pp. 70, 71.

<sup>65</sup> *Xi Jinping guanyu Zhongguo meng*, pp. 63, 65, 67, 68.

<sup>66</sup> Hua Shiping, “Bainian ‘Zhongguo meng’ yu ‘datong’ chuantong” [A century of the “China Dream” and the “Great Harmony” tradition], *Renmin wang*, June 27, 2013, <http://theory.people.com.cn/n/2013/0627/c112851-21998307.html>.

<sup>67</sup> Chang Ming, “Bo’ao Yazhou luntan: Zhongguo nengfou tuoqi ‘Yazhou meng?’” [Bo’ao Forum for Asia: Can China uphold the ‘Asian Dream’?], *Caixun*, April 7, 2013, <http://international.caixun.com/changming/20130407-CX03ba4n-all.html>; Tian, “‘Zhongguo meng’.”

<sup>68</sup> Hu, Yan, and Wei, *2030 Zhongguo*, pp. 4-13.

<sup>69</sup> Hu Angang, “Zhongguo 2030 you nengli yinling shijie da biange” [China 2030 will have the capability to lead great changes in the world], *Fenghuang wang*, November 4, 2011, <http://finance.ifeng.com/opinion/xuejie/20111104/4991559.shtml>.

<sup>70</sup> Hu Angang, and Yan Yilong, *Zhongguo: Zouxiang 2015* [China: Moving toward 2015], (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 2010), p. 2; Hu, *China in 2020*; Hu, Yan, and Wei, *2030 Zhongguo*, p. 1.

<sup>71</sup> Hu, Yan, and Wei, *2030 Zhongguo*, p. 4.

<sup>72</sup> Hu, Yan and Wei, *2030 Zhongguo*, p. 5.

In the final chapter of *2030 China*, Hu once again appeals to Kang Youwei's emphasis on abolishing borders to summarize Great Harmony's relevance in the twenty-first century:

"What is the World of Great Harmony? It is important to abolish the three major borders and narrow the three major gaps: the gaps between people, the borders and gaps between countries, and the borders and gaps between people and nature. We must get rid of the three major 'centrisms' and stress the three major 'shared': among people, get rid of 'elitism' and 'wealthy-person-ism', and stress 'people-centered-ism' for common wealth; among nations, we must get rid of 'North-centrism' and 'power-centrism', and stress fairness, equality and shared prosperity; among people and nature, we must get rid of 'people-conquer-nature' and 'development-above-all', to stress that nature and humanity are one (天人合一), with shared life and shared respect."<sup>73</sup>

Hu concludes that "China's Great Harmony requires the world's Great Harmony, and the world's Great Harmony also requires China's Great Harmony." Thus "the 'World of Great Harmony' is not only 'China's dream', but is also the 'world's dream'."<sup>74</sup>

Hu Angang's dream thus follows the principles of Great Harmony rather than of harmony-with-difference. Like Kang Youwei, Hu sees world unity as the main goal, and recommends the "merging of civilizations."<sup>75</sup> Like with his discussion of Mao's 1956 "Strengthen Party Unity" speech that pits China against the United States, here the South will surpass the North in a new hierarchy guided by China's Great Harmony ideals.

Since the China Dream became official in 2012, Hu Angang has refined his arguments in essays for the *People's Daily*, as well as in a new book, *The China Path and the China Dream*.<sup>76</sup> In December 2013, he wrote "'The China Dream' of the World of Great Harmony" for the "China Dream: Dialogue with the World" international conference.<sup>77</sup> He repeats his calls for a "great reversal" of world order: "In the next two decades, the world is going to see the collective rise of the Global South, and the end of the North's domination over the world for the past two centuries." Alongside his appeal to a future of socialist internationalism, Hu defines the China Dream and the World Dream of the twenty-first century in terms of China's traditional utopian ideals: Great Peace for All-under-Heaven (太平天下), the World Held in Common (天下为公), and the World of Great Harmony (世界大同). Hu's aim then is to "blend both traditional and modern elements" to realize the twenty-first century China Dream of the World of Great Harmony, which "is not only

<sup>73</sup> Hu, Yan and Wei, *2030 Zhongguo*, p. 193.

<sup>74</sup> Hu, Yan and Wei, *2030 Zhongguo*, p. 188.

<sup>75</sup> Hu, Yan and Wei, *2030 Zhongguo*, p. 216.

<sup>76</sup> See Hu Angang, "Zhongguo ren youzhe zeyang de 'shijie meng'" [Chinese people have what kind of "world dream"?], *Renmin ribao*, April 6, 2013. [http://www.qstheory.cn/ztck/2013nd/xjpzgm/zgmjsj/201304/t20130406\\_221235.htm](http://www.qstheory.cn/ztck/2013nd/xjpzgm/zgmjsj/201304/t20130406_221235.htm); Hu, *Zhongguo daolu yu Zhongguo mengxiang*.

<sup>77</sup> Hu Angang, "Shijie datong de 'Zhongguo meng'" ["The China Dream" of the World of Great Harmony], *Zhongguo wang*, December 11, 2013, [http://news.china.com.cn/txt/2013-12/07/content\\_30828515.htm](http://news.china.com.cn/txt/2013-12/07/content_30828515.htm).

the dream of Chinese people, but also that of people in other countries in the world.” Here Hu Angang again joins modern socialism, Chinese civilization and the PRC’s policy goals.

Like Hu Jintao’s signature policies of building a Harmonious Society in domestic space and a Harmonious World in international space, Xi Jinping’s China Dream/World Dream slogans involve an interpenetration of domestic and global politics.<sup>78</sup> The argument is that what is good for China is by definition good for the world, and vice versa. Indeed, the official slogan “One World, One Dream” of the 2008 Beijing summer Olympics—which is better translated as “United World, United Dream” (同一个世界，同一个梦想)—appealed to the ideal of Great Harmony. This was the gist of Xi Jinping’s call for the ‘Asia-Pacific Dream’ at the APEC meeting in Beijing in November 2014.

Some proponents of the China Dream/World Dream argue that China’s World Dream does not include plans to restore China’s “Golden Age” (盛世) of imperial world order.<sup>79</sup> Yet, as the other articles in this special issue attest, Chinese-style international relations theory characteristically endorses the revival of concepts from China’s imperial culture, including ideals of a hierarchical world order. Philosopher Zhao Tingyang concludes that China’s All-under-Heaven system is the “acceptable empire” for the twenty-first century because its benevolent system of governance is “reasonable and commendable.”<sup>80</sup> Chinese-style IR theory that looks to the Sinocentric world order is very popular among officials and public intellectuals.<sup>81</sup> While Mao’s 1956 speech enjoined Chinese to work hard to surpass America, the World of Great Harmony likewise rallies the South to surpass the North in a new geo-economic and geopolitical struggle. While China should be “bigger” than America in the quantitative narrative, the qualitative narrative of China’s World of Great Harmony demands that it be “better” than *Pax Americana*. The Great Harmony passage is attractive to a broad group of citizen intellectuals firstly because it provides a properly “Chinese” normative alternative to the rules of the American-led liberal international order. The Great Harmony alternative, as we have seen, is attractive not in spite of being vague, but just because its vagueness allows for a host of different utopian dreams of a prosperous, orderly and equal world society. Indeed, the more details are added—as seen in versions promoted by Kang Youwei, the Great Leap Forward, and Hu Angang—the more Great Harmony becomes “sameness-without-harmony” rather than “harmony-with-difference.” It is easy to dismiss such utopian dreams. But they are important because, like with Mao’s “Strengthen Party Unity” quote, discussions of Great Harmony as a utopian goal shape the way problems—and thus solutions—are formulated in terms of the “correct formula.” Like Mao’s 1956 speech, the Great Harmony passage nostalgically

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<sup>78</sup> See Zhang Guangzhao and Chen Zhenkai, “Xi Jinping: Neizheng waijiao xin silu [Xi Jinping’s new domestic and foreign policy ideas], *Renmin ribao*, April 5, 2013; Rosemary Foot, ed., *China Across the Divide: The Domestic and Global in Politics and Society*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>79</sup> Wang Yiwei, “Waijie dui ‘Zhongguo meng’ shi da wujie” [Foreigners’ Ten misconceptions about the ‘China Dream’], *Huanqiu shibao*, April 16, 2013.

<sup>80</sup> Zhao Tingyang, “Rethinking Empire from a Chinese Concept ‘All-under-Heaven’ (Tian-xia),” *Social Identities*, 12(1), (2006), pp. 29, 38.

<sup>81</sup> See Hua, “Bainian ‘Zhongguo meng’ yu ‘datong’ chuantong”; William A. Callahan and Elena Barabantseva, eds., *China Orders the World: Normative Soft Power and Foreign Policy*, (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011).

points to a harmonious experience in China's imagined past. In both cases, for patriotic worriers, "the problem" is a world in which China is not at the center. In both cases, the solution is centralizing the world around China, its hard military-economic power and its normative goals. Interestingly, the place where the two passages overlap most explicitly is as aspirational sources of the Great Leap Forward, the disastrous political campaign that the New Left continues to promote as a nostalgic futurology. Moreover, rather than engage in political critique, patriotic worriers' search for the single correct formula to "save China" tends to reproduce the grand narratives of the state and civilization.<sup>82</sup>

## Conclusion

It's not strange that China's citizen intellectuals and establishment intellectuals are thinking about how to be a great power, and looking to previous predictions of when China could and would become the world's No. 1 power. It is also not strange that these texts look to both quantitative and qualitative measures. As American exceptionalism shows, part of the pleasure of being a great power is celebrating the moral value of your new world order.

What is remarkable, however, is what "correct formulas" China's patriotic worriers invoke to guide their national and global aspirations. Mao Zedong's 1956 speech "Strengthen Party Unity and Carry Forward Party Traditions," and the "Great Harmony" passage from the two millennia-old *Book of Rites* make an odd pair; it is even stranger when they are invoked as part of Chinese futurology. What they have in common is an appeal to the necessity of a strong state to solve both China's problems and the world's problems. Here socialism no longer looks to class struggle, egalitarianism or social justice: it is reduced to the Leninist party-state. Likewise, the value of Great Harmony for the twenty-first century is not a caring-sharing society, but the appeal to unity over difference, and the collective over the individual. For legitimacy in the twenty-first century, Chinese ideology thus appeals to two complementary statist traditions: socialism and Chinese civilization. Indeed, even Mao saw socialism as a "tradition:" the full title of his 1956 speech is "Strengthen Party Unity and Carry Forward Party Traditions." The contradiction of equality and hierarchy thus is effaced in the China Dream, even more so as it goes global as the World (of Great Harmony) Dream, which, of course, is led by the PRC. Or to put it another way, what these two passages have in common is not necessarily a positive ideal, but a common enemy: liberalism, the West and the United States.

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<sup>82</sup> Davies, *Worrying about China*, pp. 23, 7.