

Hi, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Here is an essay entitled, "Will China rule the world?", I accidentally picked up from the London Guardian web site under the general heading or topic, "Welcome to China's Millennium." So there are other articles and comment under the same heading, as noted at the beginning of this article.

You can find these articles through <<http://www.chinatoday.com/>> or directly from <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/china>> or even <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/jun/23/china-martin-jacques-economics>>.

Anyway, I am anxious to hear you opinions and comments in this space!!!!

Regards,
Richard

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Welcome to China's Millennium

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Martin Jacques, guardian.co.uk, Tuesday 23 June 2009

There is a growing recognition that China's economic rise will change the world. But that change is still seen in narrowly economic terms. There is an assumption that the political and cultural effects of China's rise will not be that great. This is profoundly wrong. The political and cultural impact will be at least as great as the economic.

There is always a time-lag in these matters but, as Paul Kennedy argues in *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, economic ascendancy is a pre-condition for broader political and cultural influence. I suspect the reason for this tunnel vision is western hubris: a belief that our modernity is the only conceivable one, that our political and cultural arrangements will ultimately be adopted by everyone else. This is an extremely provincial mentality. Modernity is not simply a product of the market and technology, but is shaped by history and culture.

In a world where many developing countries are in the process of rapid economic transformation, we are witnessing the birth of diverse modernities. The idea that China, a huge country with a very long history, will somehow be "like the west", a clone of us, is an illusion.

So what will be some of the key distinguishing characteristics of Chinese modernity?

Although China has described itself as a nation state for the last century, this is largely a surface phenomenon. China has existed within very roughly its present borders for over two millennia and for virtually the whole of that period saw itself as a "civilisation state". It was only when it was too weak to resist the western powers in the early 20th century that it finally acquiesced in an arrangement that was alien to it.

In reality, though, China remains, in essence, a civilisation state. The Chinese see themselves in terms of a civilisation rather than a nation; those things that define a sense of "Chineseness" – from language and Confucianism to customs and the family – are functions of a civilisation rather than a nation; the overriding responsibility of the state is seen as maintaining the unity of Chinese civilisation; and the roots of the Chinese sense of superiority lie in its civilisational achievements.

A civilisation state, furthermore, operates in ways that are fundamentally different from a nation state: China embraces huge variations and it would be impossible to maintain its unity unless it tolerated diversity. This is why it was natural for China to offer Hong Kong a "one country, two systems" constitutional settlement. Such systemic diversity would be entirely unacceptable to a nation state. A world whose leading country is a civilisation state rather than a nation state would, in time, change the texture of inter-state relations in a very profound way.

China as a civilisation state existed cheek by jowl with the "tributary state" system: indeed, having survived for thousands of years, it only disappeared around a century ago. It was a highly flexible system embracing much of east Asia, including Japan and Korea, and was based upon the

overwhelming dominance, both economic and cultural, of China. In return for recognising the superiority and pre-eminence of China – which was symbolically expressed in the sending of tribute to China – countries were given various forms of assistance and protection by the Middle Kingdom. It will not be long before China is once more overwhelmingly dominant in the region. It would not be in the least surprising if some of the characteristics of the tributary state system once more came to shape and inform inter-state relations in the region. In other words, the rise of China could weaken and relativise the hitherto overwhelming global dominance of the European-designed Westphalian system.

The Chinese have a highly distinctive view of race: 92% of a population of 1.4bn believe they are of one race, the Han Chinese. This is in stark contrast to the other most populous nations in the world, such as India, the United States, Indonesia and Brazil, which believe themselves to be multiracial. The Chinese attitude is primarily the product of its extraordinarily long history as a civilisation state, which has led to a long history of the mixing and melding of races and engendered a powerful sense of Chinese identity.

This is reinforced by a widespread belief in polygenism, that the Chinese are a separate branch of humanity rather than sharing a common origin with the rest of us in Africa. The Chinese sense of superiority is thus rooted in biological, as well as cultural, attitudes and beliefs. One consequence is that the Chinese have little conception of difference, which is clearly manifest in their attitude towards Tibet and Xinjiang. These attitudes are age-old and are bound to influence Chinese perceptions and behaviour as a global power.

The Chinese state is constructed in an entirely different way from western states. Unlike European states, for over a millennium the Chinese state has not been obliged to compete for power with rivals such as the church, the aristocracy or merchants. The state stands extant in society, with no competitors and no clear boundaries to its power: rather than negotiating collectively with the state, other groups have instead traditionally sought favour and advantage on an individual basis.

The fact, furthermore, that modern China dates back to 221BC means that the state has enjoyed an extremely long history. For much of that period, it was explicitly based on Confucian ideas that, for their time, were very advanced: it is no exaggeration to suggest that China is the home of statecraft and, to this day, still possesses a very sophisticated state (albeit one that has never been directly answerable to the people but rather to a set of values, for the most part Confucian, more recently communist). With the rise of China, the Chinese state will come to exercise a growing influence on the world as a model to be understood and emulated.

In an era when the European communist tradition imploded, the opposite has happened in China: contrary to almost universal western expectations after Tiananmen Square in 1989, the Communist party not only survived but reinvented itself and, over the last 30 years, has presided over the most remarkable economic transformation in human history. Nor should we expect to witness its imminent demise; it probably enjoys greater prestige than at any time since 1949.

The rise of China, therefore, obliges us to return to an issue which was regarded as closed after 1989, namely the nature of the communist tradition. In this context, rather than emphasising its differences, I would stress the lines of continuity between Confucianism and Chinese communism. Indeed, it is the Confucian, rather than the communist, tradition that remains by far the more important influence in shaping contemporary Chinese politics and attitudes.

According to Goldman Sachs projections, the Chinese economy will overtake that of the United States in 2027, and by 2050 will be almost twice the size. This – together with the rise of India, in particular – will bring down the curtain on the age of the west, which began around 1800. Instead of western universalism, we will find ourselves living in an increasingly unfamiliar world in which non-western cultures, and above all China, will be the dominant influences.

Martin Jacques will be presenting an event at the Royal Society of Arts, London on 22 June to launch his new book, "When China Rules the World."