



# The Civilization of China and the Civilizations of the World

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*Edited by*  
Genyou Wu

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*Translated by* Fei Ma

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# PREFACE I

In the context of globalization, it's very difficult to discuss "the dialogue of civilizations", because of the semantic differences of the term "civilization" in different ethnic and national cultural traditions, semantic deviations occurring in the process of the dialogue, and the complexity of civilization carriers which contributed more to this tricky situation. National and ethnic carriers of civilization differ greatly from that of small groups or individuals, which results in different dialogue effects and outcomes. An individual can't represent a civilization, but countries and ethnic groups qualified as civilization representatives always express their "civilization" through specific individuals. Therefore, as one of the ways and methods to build a community of shared future for mankind, "the dialogue of civilizations" has ideal and desirable goals. However, once applied to practical activities in human society, it will encounter various unexpected difficulties and obstacles.

Although the history of human culture isn't short, it did not take long for mankind to move from a barbaric to a civilized state. Even after entering the so-called "civilized state", many human behaviors do not meet the inherent requirements of "civilization". The fighting between ancient clan societies was a common occurrence, where the heads of defeated foreign leaders were turned into wine cups. The numerous recurring battles between nomadic and agrarian civilizations around the world, large-scale robbery and killing, and the overthrow of different dynasties again and again, the cruelty and blood, have been recorded in

the history and legends of different ethnic groups. Over the past four hundred years, with the rise of capitalist civilization, conquerors have colonized, plundered, and killed people around the world, and under the guise of “civilization”, labeled the conquered as backward and barbaric. Conquerors not only insult and kill the conquered in the flesh, but also insult and trample on them spiritually and culturally. Among civilizations, war, conflict, and conquest are the norm, while dialogue, exchange, and mutual learning are often temporary and fleeting. But it is these short intervals that have brought immeasurable positive effects to the progress and development of human civilization.

After the 1950s, with the competition of major powers and the emergence of nuclear weapons, civilization competition among human nations has reached a new balance. In the 1990s, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, a new situation of “one superpower and many strong players” emerged in the competition among major powers in the international community. As the “one superpower”, American society was worried that the world pattern would develop in a direction unfavorable to the United States. Huntington, who stands for the national interests of the United States, proposed the theory of “the clash of civilizations”, predicting that future wars between international societies would occur between the fault lines of civilizations, and the conflict between ethnic states will give way to the “clash of civilizations”. Since the 1990s, several wars launched by the United States have not actually been a “clash of civilizations”, but rather a conflict of national interests between the United States and other ethnic nations. However, in reality, the clash of civilizations is just a false proposition. Some countries are only waging wars under the pretext of “civilization” to compete for national interests. As a typical modern free-capitalist country, its so-called national interests are only that of a very small number of capital groups.

Peaceful communication between civilizations is not only possible, but also effective, which can find the proof in the history of China’s interaction with neighboring ethnic groups since the Qin and Han dynasties of China. The “Silk Road” (or the “Porcelain Road”) opened up by ancient China and other countries around the world, as well as the “Tea Horse Road” between various ethnic groups, are all main paths of peaceful dialogue between civilizations. Zheng He’s voyages to the West brought peace and prosperity through trade to various parts of the world. In the late 16th and early 17th centuries, Jesuit missionaries from Europe came to China to spread Christianity, and Chinese culture was also brought

back to Europe by these missionaries. The mainstream of this more than 130-year history of cultural exchange between China and Europe was also a history of peaceful dialogue, exchange, and mutual learning. However, due to the conservative missionary policies of the Roman Catholic Church at that time, which interfered with China's internal affairs and changed the correct path of missionary work proposed by Matteo Ricci, the interruption of cultural exchange between China and Europe occurred. And, it was also due to the ignorance of the Qing Dynasty's Emperor Qianlong at that time, who refused several requests from the British government for trade and commerce, that the Chinese society was disconnected from the development of modern industrial and commercial civilization, and was ultimately invaded and humiliated by capitalist powers for more than a century. It was not until October 1949, when the new China was established under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, that it began to be independent politically and gradually get rid of the fate of being bullied by capitalist powers and other strong countries.

After more than 40 years of efforts, China has returned to the center of world politics, economy, and culture, standing as a modern civilization with the implementation of the reform and opening-up policy. The contemporary China has summarized its own development history, drawn from the development history of human civilization, and especially learned from the experiences and lessons of the two world wars since the 20th century, seeking a path of peaceful development that is not only suitable for China itself, but also bring gospel and blessings to the world. It advocates dialogue, exchange, and mutual learning among civilizations, and strives to explore and actively build a community of shared future for mankind.

Understanding as it is today. In this global village, the fate of humanity is closely interconnected. Unless humanity does not want to continue living collectively and continues to recklessly destroy the earth's environment, or even launch a nuclear war, the major civilizations can only take peaceful dialogue, communication, and mutual learning to enhance human well-being. There are "species differences" and "generational differences" (such as between industrial civilization and agricultural civilization) among human civilizations. The future of mankind will gradually move towards a bright realm, as long as they adhere to the basic consensus of "shared future and shared breath among humanity", adhere to their own cultural traditions, religious beliefs, or other beliefs, abandon the



“pagan” concept, and persist in carrying out various forms of exchanges through “dialogue”.

Aside from venting dissatisfaction, war can’t bring what either side wants while only brings bloodshed, death, and pain, and increases mutual resentment and hostility. Dialogue between civilizations is a long, tortuous road, even full of misunderstandings. However, as long as we follow the correct path of “dialogue”, some misunderstandings between nations and countries will be gradually resolved along with the deepening of exchanges. The main credit for the development of human civilization is due to peaceful exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations.

Over thirty years ago, when Mr. Tu Weiming advocated the idea of “the dialogue of civilizations” to the world in English at Harvard University in the United States, few people responded to it, and at the same time Huntington put forward the theory of “the clash of civilizations”, which caused a stir. With the time going by, Huntington’s theory has been increasingly criticized by scholars and politicians for the progress and well-being of human society, while Tu Weiming’s has been increasingly favored by scholars and politicians. This dramatic historical transformation is not because “the dialogue of civilization” is so profound, but because this theory advocates for the shared future of human being, and can bring peace and well-being to the world. Today, in China, we take up Mr. Tu’s proposal and promote “the dialogue of civilizations” as an academic endeavor, hoping to receive more support and help from scholars and other knowledgeable individuals who care about the future of humanity.

May our collection of “Dialogues on Civilization” contribute its humble efforts to promoting human well-being.

Wuhan, China  
January 2021

Genyou Wu

## PREFACE II

### PREFACE TO THE SECOND *DIALOGUE* OF *CIVILIZATION COLLECTIONS*

“The dialogue of civilizations” is a metaphorical term that views different civilizations as individuals with the ability to think and speak. Actually, it is just describing cultural exchange activities between different civilizations. The foundation of civilization is culture. Anything in culture that is in line with human nature, highlights human nature, and leads the whole of humanity towards a more rational direction can be regarded as civilization. Its early prominent representatives were the embodiment of three materializations: language and writing, city-states and nations, technology and artifacts. As a concept describing the overall progress and results of human culture, “civilization” actually contains the dialectical principle of the spirit, that is, the process of civilization contains certain uncivilized content and phenomena. Therefore, we should maintain a cautious and critical attitude towards every step of human civilization.

Civilization is a spiritual achievement with structural but not easily visible holistic features in culture. This determines that dialogue of civilizations is both a continuous and holistic cultural exchange activity, as well as a material and spiritual exchange activity in different fields. If the above overview of the characteristics of civilization is generally acceptable and correctly stated, then we do not need to have an overly pessimistic

attitude towards the difficulty of the “civilizational dialogue” brought about by the anti-globalization movement in the current world.

The globalization movement in the modern world is not a spiritual product of man’s subjective thinking and imagination, but has gradually emerged and rapidly developed with the mass production mode of modern capitalism. So far, the socialized mass production of capitalism has far exceeded the limitations of the political territory of national states and become a global capitalist mode of production. Without understanding the objective historical process of modern capitalist globalization, one can’t understand the global movement of modern humanity, and of course, can’t understand the spiritual global movement of human cultural exchange and civilization dialogue on a global scale. Since the end of 2019, the global COVID-19 has broken out, the US government has blockaded China in an all-round way from Trump to Biden and the Russia-Ukraine conflict broke out in February 2022. These three major world-historical events have created huge obstacles to the current human globalization movement. “Anti-globalization” has become the real phenomenon and main trend of the current international community. This has once again plunged the process of human globalization into a very difficult historical stage. However, from the perspective of modern history, these anti-globalization human activities can’t fundamentally prevent the globalization movement of humanity. Therefore, the dialogue activities among the major civilizations of humanity will certainly be carried out in a new and tortuous way along with this objective historical process of globalization.

Just looking at the three sets of data on international trade in the three years since the outbreak of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the anti-globalization movement can temporarily reduce or decrease global trade volume, but it can’t prevent the necessary economic and trade exchanges worldwide.

The first set of data is China’s total foreign trade. According to statistics from the World Trade Organization, China’s total merchandise exports in 2019 were \$2499457 million, imports were \$2078386 million, and total trade was US\$4577843 million. In 2020, merchandise exports totaled \$2589952 million, imports totaled \$2065964 million, and trade totaled \$4655916 million. Merchandise exports totaled \$3363959 million and imports totaled \$2687529 million in 2021. Total trade amounted to \$6,051,488 million. Total trade over the three years has maintained an overall growth trend, while in 2021 it grew by nearly \$140 million.

The second set of data is the trade data between China and the United States. In 2019, China's exports to the United States were 2.8865 trillion yuan (16.7% of China's total exports), imports were 845.4 billion yuan (5.9% of China's total imports), and the total trade volume was 3.7319 trillion yuan. In 2020, China's exports to the United States were 3.1279 trillion yuan (17.4% of China's total exports), imports were 931.9 billion yuan (6.6% of China's total imports), and the total trade volume was 4.0598 trillion yuan. In 2021, China's exports to the United States were 3.7224 trillion yuan (17.1% of China's total exports), imports were 1.1603 trillion yuan (6.7% of China's total imports), and the total trade volume was 4.8827 trillion yuan. In addition, in 2019, China's total import and export volume with the United States was 54.156028 billion US dollars. In 2020, China's total import and export volume with the United States was 58.697967 billion US dollars.

Since 2019, the United States has increased its trade tariffs on China in an unprecedented way. In addition to the global COVID-19, even with such double major resistance, it has not stopped the overall trend of trade growth between China and the United States. It can be seen how strong the demand for economic and trade exchanges between China and the United States is! The scientific and technological exchanges between China and the United States have been greatly disrupted due to human obstruction by the United States, and cultural exchanges have also been greatly affected, but overall, the communication is still maintained.

The third set of data is the trade data between China and the European Union. In 2019, China's exports to the EU amounted to 2.9564 trillion yuan (17.2% of China's total exports), imports amounted to 1.9063 trillion yuan (5.5% of China's total imports), and the total trade volume was 4.8627 trillion yuan. In 2020, China's exports to the EU were 2.7084 trillion yuan (15.1% of China's total exports), imports were 1.7874 trillion yuan (12.6% of China's total imports), and the total trade volume was 4.4958 trillion yuan. In 2021, China's exports to the EU were 3.3483 trillion yuan (15.4% of China's total exports), imports were 2.0028 trillion yuan (11.5% of China's total imports), and the total trade volume was 5.3511 trillion yuan. In this set of data, there was a slight decrease in 2020 compared to 2019, but a rapid rebound in 2021. The slight decrease in 2020 may be mainly due to the impact of the epidemic. Although cultural exchanges between China and Europe have also been reduced or decreased due to US obstruction, overall, trade and economic relations have remained stable.

In the current international environment, when discussing “the dialogue of civilizations”, we must face two realistic problems. The first is the comprehensive containment of China’s development initiated by the US ruling elites, and the second is the terrible situation of the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. These two huge anti-globalization trends seem to completely negate the dialogue between civilizations, but in fact, they are only a kind of artificial political counter-current. These two counter-currents may change the form of communication between human civilizations, increase its difficulty, but can’t completely prevent the dialogue between the major civilizations of humanity. Because, compared to the globalization of capital, the Russia-Ukraine war can only be a short episode in human globalization. It will cause significant regional obstacles to economic, political, and cultural exchanges for a short period of time, but it will not and can’t stop the trend of communication between human civilizations as a whole. To be fair, the fundamental cause of the Russo-Ukrainian war is the result of the US-led NATO expansion, which appears to be a military action, but in reality, it is an attempt by the big capital forces of the US and Europe to monopolize technology and interests through political influence, and then completely strangle the Russian nation with great potential for development and competitiveness. Therefore, it can be said that it is a partial problem caused by the interest pattern and competition led by European and American big capital. This partial problem is manifested in a specific historical stage in the form of national political and territorial security anxiety, but ultimately it will be synchronized with the globalization of new capital and receive an appropriate solution. Marx’s prediction of the overall trend of capitalist development is still not outdated. Therefore, this new capital globalization movement may be popularized globally in a new socialized market economy mode, and the Socialist market economy that China currently adheres to may be one of the special manifestations of this kind of economy.

Contemporary China has always adhered to the principle of developing its economy in a peaceful and ecologically sustainable manner, benefiting the people, and engaging in economic, cultural exchanges, and mutual benefit activities with different countries and regions through civilized communication and mutual learning. We firmly believe that with the growth of international peace forces represented by China, the exchanges and mutual learning activities between civilizations of different nations in the world will be further expanded to new heights and breadth. Our

academic research on the dialogue of civilizations also contributes to the arrival of this era.

Wuhan, China

Genyou Wu

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Human Spirit and its Manifestations:  
A Civilizational Perspective



# “Heaven’s Heart-Mind” as the Spirit of World History

*Chen Yun*

In his reply to his friend Ren An, Sima Qian (司马迁) said, “Exploring the relationship between the Heavenly Way (天道) and Human Affairs (人事), understanding the ancient and modern changes, and becoming a unique and systematic theory or works”. Qian Mu (钱穆) pointed out in his *Chinese Historical Masterpieces* (《中国史学名著》): “There should be a boundary between ‘Human Affairs’ and ‘Heavenly Way’. It is extremely important to know where we can’t reach in human affairs, and we must wait for the ‘Heavenly Way’. Sima Qian’s father valued the teachings of Taoism, and Taoism focused on discussing this ‘Heavenly Way’. Sima Qian valued Confucius and Confucianism, while Confucianism focused on discussing ‘Human Affairs’. What is this boundary between ‘Human Affairs’ and ‘Heavenly Way’? And in ‘Human Affairs’, we also need to understand the changes of ancient and modern times—how to connect from ancient times to modern times, there should be a continuous thread. This sentence can be said to be the highest realm that historians pursue, or it can be said to be a kind of historical philosophy. Westerners talk about historical philosophy as a philosophy that only involves history. If Chinese people also have historical philosophy, it should not be a philosophy, but still a kind of history, just with

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a set of ideas emerging from history. For example, ‘Exploring the relationship between the Heavenly Way and Human Affairs, understanding the ancient and modern changes’, this is truly the historical philosophy of the Chinese people”. Qian Mu’s meaning is that Western historical philosophy is essentially looking at history through philosophy, so in fact history is subordinate to philosophy, with philosophy as the foundation and history as the end. While Chinese historical philosophy takes history as the foundation and philosophy as the end, and the principles of history are specific and practical, with principles within the events. That is to say, one should seek the truth based on facts, rather than first outlining the framework of truth to limit the facts.

Although “Exploring the relationship between the Heavenly Way and Human Affairs” and “understanding the ancient and modern changes” are two parallel themes in historical philosophy, through the writing of *Records of the Grand Historian* (《史记》), it can also be understood that “understanding the ancient and modern changes” is in itself a way of “Exploring the relationship between the Heavenly Way and Human Affairs”. The relationship between the Heavenly Way and Human Affairs must be placed in the historical perspective of understanding the ancient and modern changes. Indeed, if we do not start from the existing human experience to understand the relationship between the Heavenly Way and Human Affairs, then we have to resort to conceptual idealization, that is, to construct the relationship between Heavenly Way and Human Affairs through thought and conceptual methods that detach from experiential content and only exist at the level of language and logic. This situation, in the Western world after the decline of absolute philosophical thinking and in the modern era of decline in speculative historical philosophy, has already declined. Historical reflection has had to resort to empiricism, to the point where it ultimately rejects the theme of the relationship between Heavenly Way and Human Affairs. Historical philosophy has completely become an internal affair of society, not only fading cosmic consciousness, but even the world spirit is no longer taken into consideration. In contrast, in classical Chinese historical thinking, there is neither a reliance on the absolute of metaphysics, nor an abandonment of the grand theme of the relationship between Heavenly Way and Human Affairs. However, this theme is being incorporated into historical perspectives for consideration, at least not being detached from historical consciousness.

Zhao Tingyang (赵汀阳) also expressed a similar idea in his “Yu Qiao’s History View”<sup>1</sup>: “China has a spiritual world based on history, or, history is the foundation of the Chinese spiritual world... The reason why Chinese civilization always takes history as its foundation lies in turning history into a method. Method is not doctrine, but constantly growing open experience”. This means that the problem between heaven and man can’t be separated from the historical perspective of change between ancient and modern times, but what is gained is not a relativistic historicism, but instead, it is the “Heaven’s Heart-Mind” as the spirit of world history. However, this “Heaven’s Heart-Mind” does not appear in the sense of “thought” in Hegel, but gradually emerges at any time in the historical process of human civilization.

### “HEAVEN’S HEART-MIND” AS THE WORLD SPIRIT AND THE “HUMAN”

Chinese thinker Wang Fuzhi (王夫之) in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties put forward a common belief in Chinese thought—that the world belongs to the people of the world. This means that the world does not belong to one person or one family, but to all the people of the world. Saying that the world belongs to the people of the world implies that the ruling power of the world should be public, not private to one person, family, or clan. This is the concept of “the world belongs to the public”, where the emperor or ruler governs the world, and although power may shift between people, in essence, it is only “acting on behalf of heaven to govern the people” and “acting on behalf of heaven to govern things”. The monarch is the son of heaven, governing the world on behalf of heaven, and therefore is an executor rather than a legislator. When we talk about the world, it refers to the world under heaven, emphasizing that there is a perspective in the historical order of the world that can’t be understood solely from the perspective of “human mechanism”, that its process has dimensions that can’t be discussed in terms of human desires, interests, and knowledge, and it has its own order, that is, the “heavenly mechanism”. Understanding the historical process has two perspectives: one is the perspective of human affairs changes, and the

<sup>1</sup> Yu Qiao is a metaphor, representing the absolute bystander of history, and therefore an impartial commentator on history.



other is the perspective of the natural transformation under the “heavenly mechanisms”. Although human affairs are created by people, their development and changes form the historical order, which goes beyond the human will, desire, and understanding.

In other words, history is not just about humans, it can't be understood solely from the internal perspective of human society, because people living in society are constantly connected to the heavens. From the perspective of “human mechanism”, the relationship between “heavenly mechanism” and “human mechanism” is not absolute or finite, but rather a cooperative relationship based on their respective abilities and works. However, from the perspective of “heavenly mechanism”, the “human mechanism” is the carrier through which the “heavenly mechanism” operates, ultimately allowing the heavenly principles to unfold through human activity in the “human mechanism”, creating an interactive relationship between humans and the heavens, and revealing themselves. In this sense, “heaven” seems to be like a will with a dominating function, but since heaven is originally without intention, there is no specific will of heaven. The so-called “Heaven's Heart” or “heart of heaven and earth” must be understood in another sense.

The “Heaven” that dominates the natural world and the historical world is originally a heartless Heaven, which manifests in all things. Because it is heartless, although it gives birth to all things, it does not choose or worry (meaning it has no bias, no love or hate, and maintains an absolute sense of fairness). The Heavenly Way itself does not have a ultimate purpose, only endless processes of change. However, although this change has no purpose, it is not without order, which is how Heaven generates all things, each with its own nature, forming the natural order of the world. Like other beings, humans are also a natural existence, but the natural order manifested by all things and their interactions can't constitute the ultimate basis for their existence.

All things other than humans live in the world, each unaware of the others, each living in their own world, even the heavens and the earth themselves seem to be clearly separated. In this sense, there does not seem to be a common world for all beings, and therefore there is no history of this common world. This lack of interaction and knowledge as a phenomenon is precisely the absence of “heaven's heart” in world history.

However, from the perspective of humans, different results will be found: the heavens and the earth interact and merge to generate all things,

and humans are produced in this process. Humans are able to contemplate the distinct and unknown aspects of the heavens, the earth, and all things, and understand the principle of great transformation, thereby making the common world and its order and meaning manifest. Essentially, humans are not an entity that can be separated from the world of all things and their connections, but are inseparable from the manifestation of the order and meaning of the world. The achievements of human beings, their nature, and the manifestation of the world order and its significance are all part of the same process. In this sense, humans are the “heaven’s heart”. Wang Fuzhi believes that the ultimate goodness and beauty manifested by the living beings of heaven and earth can only be fully displayed in humans. Humans can embody the virtues of heaven and earth through their lives based on the fundamental principles of all things in heaven and earth. The sage, on the other hand, can fully embody the great virtues of the living beings of heaven and earth through his humanity, and thus achieve human completeness. Therefore, humans, especially in the complete sense, can be regarded as the “heaven’s heart” or the spirit of the world.

The human nature that makes a person human is a response to the heaven’s creation. On the one hand, As Wang Fuzhi said: “The heart of heaven and earth is the source of one’s nature. When parents carry the virtue of heaven and earth to give birth, the energy of heaven and earth and the heart of living beings are present, and our appearance and nature are no different from our parents, and thus no different from heaven and earth”. All people are children of heaven and earth, carrying on the world and its history. On the other hand, people must manifest their identity as children of heaven and earth in their virtuous actions. Wang Fuzhi also said: “Those who do not observe the heart of heaven and earth are not worthy of this.....Only those who understand virtue can clearly see the essence of knowledge, benevolence, and courage in their nature, and are sufficient to carry out the way of the world”. The essence of the world spirit, known as “the heart of heaven and earth”, is the benevolence that is constantly regenerating. It is not only a great quality displayed by the world in the process of life, but also the essence of what it means to be human. It is important to note that benevolence, as “the heart of heaven”, the world spirit, is a quality manifested by heaven to humans, and therefore what is being referred to here is the “heart of heaven and earth” that is manifested to humans.

As the “heaven’s heart”, the human who embodies it is not a ready-made existing object that can be discussed in epistemological terms. Human existence is not only related to oneself, but also connects the entire world. Xunzi said: “Water and fire have energy but no life, plants have life but no knowledge, birds and beasts have knowledge but no righteousness, but humans have energy, life, knowledge, and also righteousness. Therefore they are the most precious in the world”. From the perspective of the heavenly way, humans are the highest achievement of the development of the natural world. The appearance of humans is as a composite entity, including all existing levels within themselves, having energy, life, knowledge, and righteousness, and possessing unique qualities that other existing levels can’t possess. In this sense, human existence can’t be understood as a ready-made object, but as an area of existence, within this area, all beings will come together to form the whole world.

Actually, Aristotle has the similar view. Eric Voegelin once said in his works *Anamnesis: On the Theory of History and Politics*: “In the area of human existence, encountering what Aristotle calls the synthetic nature of human beings — humans possess multiple levels of existence such as the human soul, animal, plant, and inorganic substances. These levels of existence in the hierarchy of existence have the following relationships: first, each higher level is based on each lower level; second, each lower level is organized by the higher level. These relationships are irreversible. On the one hand, without zēn (life, living) as a foundation, there would be no eu zēn (good life) in the Aristotelian sense. On the other hand, the order of a good life does not come from bodily foundations, but only when the entire existence is regulated by the tension of existence, it will appear. Whether it is individuals, society, or history, they all need bodily foundations. In view of this, we distinguish various fields of reality along the lines of these facts, they overlap with each other, and combine into a unified structure — the domain of human existence”.

Because humans are a complex existence, they can’t be understood as an object, but rather seen as a microcosm. Their existence not only carries themselves, but also carries the entire world. In this sense, humans are not just existing beings, but instead bear themselves and the universe, defining the burden of the universe as the inner nature of self-burden. Humans are the “heaven’s heart”, or the “world spirit”. When humans take this as their goal of self-fulfillment, they also elevate themselves. Wang Fuzhi once said: “Although human nature is small, the Way of Heaven is great. By understanding Heaven through oneself and embodying Heaven in

oneself, there is no distinction between small and great in Heaven for me”.

The “world spirit” itself contains a perspective of the unification of heaven and man. It is not to be understood from the perspective of nature itself, nor can it be grasped in the human mechanisms, but can only be fully explained in the perspective of the interaction between heaven and man. It acts upon man, and through human actions, it integrates the originally human historical process into the framework of heaven, thus making human history itself a way in which heaven unfolds. World history, as a historical change over time, is the “Yi”. Wang Fuzhi said: “The Yi is the harmonious use of Heaven and Man. Heaven is formed by Heaven, Earth is formed by Earth, Man is formed by Man, and they do not change each other. The reason why Heaven is Heaven, Earth is Earth, and Man is Man, is because they do not separate from each other. Without the Yi, there is no substance; without separation, there is no use. Use this as the substance, and the substance as the use. The reason for this is that it is fully integrated with Heaven, Earth, and Man. Therefore, the Yi manifests its use”.

The reason why people are the “heaven’s heart” lies in the fact that people combine the use of heaven and earth, bringing the changing nature of heaven and earth together with the historical process of humanity. The Way of Yi (易) is not just a pure way of natural change, but also the way in which people survive in the historical process, in accordance with the human way and the way of heaven and earth. It is only in the process of interaction between heaven and humanity that there is truly the Way of Yi. As the unfolding of the Way of Yi in the historical process, it has the significance of extending heaven and blessing humanity, and only by combining these two can each be possible. “Change is constant”, however, “change is in heaven and earth, while constancy is in humanity”. Only humans can store the ultimate changes of heaven and earth as constant, achieving their historical existence. The reason why humans have a specific “heaven’s heart” is because in the changing world history, they can adjust themselves to great changes while remain constant at the same time.

## WORLD SPIRIT AND CIVILIZATION THEORY'S VIRTUES AND MERITS

“Heaven’s heart” often intervenes in the historical process through the mandate of the emperor. Wang Fuzhi said:

Destiny is hard to predict, and fate is difficult to grasp not only because people are powerless to grasp destiny, but also because destiny does not have any constant laws that people can grasp. It is not easy for people to undertake destiny, but because destiny changes constantly according to the characteristics and changes of all things, making decisions in a tortuous way. People can’t help heaven in this regard, but heaven is extremely diligent in helping humanity. Emperors bear the destiny, the highest relying on virtue, as seen in the Shang and Zhou dynasties. The next is based on merit, as seen in the Han and Tang dynasties. *The Book of Songs* says: ‘Heaven observes the four directions in order to seek people who can bring peace to the people.’ Those who have enough virtue to pacify all nations, and enough achievements to rectify great chaos, are the ones who can stabilize the people. When they encounter a ruler who can stabilize the people and are granted the mandate of heaven, the people can live a peaceful life, and the work of heaven is considered complete.

The reason why destiny is difficult to predict is because it often changes. This is a major issue that Chinese thought has been concerned with. *The Book of Documents* says, “Heaven’s will is difficult to fathom, destiny is not constant”. *The Book of Songs* says, “Heaven’s will is not constant”. The implication is political, that the ultimate power of ruling the world lies with heaven itself, so the transfer of earthly ruling power can’t be simply understood from the perspective of human gains and losses, blessings and misfortunes, but rather that what people gain is from “heaven’s bestowal”, and what they lose is from “heaven’s deprivation”. Even if the power of ruling is only a proxy in the hands of people, rather than absolute, it must be recognized that it can’t be held indefinitely by one family or one country. Dong Zhongshu (董仲舒) explained: “Heaven’s bestowal are not constant, nor are its takings. Therefore, there were seventy-two people with different surnames becoming kings with virtues like Yao (尧) and Shun (舜). The king is what Heaven gives, and what he conquers is what Heaven takes”. Although Heaven’s bestowal and takings are unpredictable and immeasurable, from a human perspective,

the achievements and virtues that are manifested based on the “Heaven’s heart” are the basis for sharing the mandate of Heaven in people.

Dong Zhongshu once revealed the importance of virtue in relation to the mandate of heaven for people: “Heaven does not create people for the sake of the king, but establishes the king for the people. Therefore, those whose virtue is sufficient to bring peace and happiness to the people are given by heaven. Those whose evil is sufficient to harm the people are taken away by heaven”. *The Book of Documents* also states, “The great Heaven has no favorites, only virtue is its support; the hearts of the people are fickle, only the embrace of kindness”. Wang Fuzhi then further reveals that in order to receive the mandate of heaven, which is what heaven bestows, one must not only have virtue, but also have merit. Both merit and virtue are ways of “embracing the hearts of the people”. The Shang Dynasty replaced the Xia Dynasty and the Zhou Dynasty replaced the Shang Dynasty. Both were due to the lack of virtue in Xia and Shang, and their inability to care for the people. Therefore, Heaven took away the Xia Dynasty for its lack of virtue and gave the virtuous Shang Dynasty, and took away the unvirtuous Shang Dynasty and gave the virtuous Zhou Dynasty. Taking Zhou as an example, from their ancestors, generation after generation, they established a basis to become the emperor, and later to King Wu and the Duke of Zhou to complete the task, which shows the accumulated merits of several generations of sages to establish governance. It was precisely the long-term accumulation of virtues that allowed Zhou to receive the mandate of Heaven. Wang Fuzhi said: “those who inherit the world for generations all have great merits among the people in their ancestors, so if there are great evils like Jie and Zhou, then Heaven will overthrow them”. On the other hand, the founders of the Han and Tang dynasties did not establish their rule based on accumulated virtues over generations, but rather on their achievements in unifying the country and saving the people from chaos, thus gaining the divine right to rule.

Those who have great merits should rule the world, which is the deep logic of the transfer of power in the world. The so-called merits are the ability to understand the aspirations of the world and achieve the things of the world, to achieve the governance of an era, their merits are in tune with the “heaven’s heart”. It is merits that allow people to align with heaven’s heart and receive the mandate of heaven. And the reason why a person’s merit and virtue can be in tune with heaven’s heart lies in their ability to combine the virtues of heaven and earth to become a