

7.1 China and Climate Change

It's fashionable to dismiss China as a viable partner in coping with global warming because of their dismal track record on the environment. It's true that China has a long history of attempting to control the forces of nature, especially as they manifest themselves in water or a lack of same, whether in floods or droughts. Mark Elvin has written a comprehensive study, *The Retreat of the Elephants: An Environmental History of China*, and the story he tells is grim. Chinese civilisation inflicted serious damage on its natural environment—but not really worse than the Greek and Roman civilisations did, or the Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and Mayan for that matter.¹ Advanced cultures tend to be quite retarded when it comes to sustainability over the long term.

The brighter parts of the story tell how traditional Chinese ideas and beliefs concerning the natural world were more 'environmentally friendly' than their counterparts in the West, but they were sadly ineffectual in preventing environmental devastation. Practices shaped by good ideas, Elvin concludes, are insignificant 'in comparison with the massive effects of the *pursuit of power and profit*'.²

The story gets especially grim after the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. The Communist Party took control of a country already ravaged by two decades of civil war—and indeed by many previous wars. Then Mao Zedong launched the Great Leap Forward, in which the government vigorously promoted collectivisation and industrialisation 'to make the country strong'. The reigning ideology of that era was the complete antithesis of traditional Chinese wisdom: instead of aiming for a harmony between human beings and nature, Mao announced that 'Man must conquer nature' and 'overcome the natural' by deploying the power of the masses and industrial technology.³

It didn't turn out well, as exemplified by the Great Chinese Famine between 1958 and 1962, when tens of millions perished.⁴ By the end of the Mao period the country had indeed become stronger, but at the expense of severely weakening its natural basis.

After Mao and Deng Xiaoping, the message changed: now the point was to live in harmony with the powers of Heaven and Earth after all. But the message was merely words, with little in the way of action to back it up. (Very un-Chinese actually: the good Confucian is expected to stand by his word.) As the economy began to take off in the 1980s, many people began to understand the maxim attributed to Deng—'To be prosperous is glorious'—as meaning 'Greed is great' and 'Conspicuous consumption is

cool'. A burgeoning consumer culture among those millions who could afford to indulge began to further deplete natural resources and increase pollution.

But after Xi Jinping assumed power in 2012 things really began to change, and for the better. They had to, because while pollution of the soil and water mainly hits people in rural parts of the country, air pollution in the big cities—and many of China's cities are very big—affects everyone except the super-rich (as long as they're content to live in hermetically sealed air-conditioned and -filtered apartments and workplaces).

And if the urban middle classes threaten to rise up, as they did when a documentary on air pollution by the journalist Chai Jing burst onto the Internet in 2015, the CCP is obliged to take note and take action. After just one week and between 200 and 300 million views, *Under the Dome* was removed by the authorities, and to this day it isn't easily viewable in China.⁵ The incidence of protests over environmental issues has been rising steadily for years, and civil unrest on this scale makes the Party uneasy. This means they have to reduce air pollution in the major cities and as much of the country as possible—which they're doing by closing coal-fired power plants and heavily polluting industries. Unfortunately China is at the same time financing and building many new coal-fired plants abroad, in places where it's exporting its heavy industry.⁶

Judith Shapiro, author of *Mao's War against Nature: Politics and the Environment in Revolutionary China*, provides a fine survey of contemporary issues in a later study, *China's Environmental Challenges* (2016). She bemoans how long it takes for the vast machinery of government to take effective action, as well as the weakness of civil society in China, which hampers the efforts of non-governmental organisations to effect needed changes from the ground up. And yet she's optimistic that the government might see the benefits of taking a leading role in tackling the climate crisis and act accordingly. The most recent (and a very accessible) update on the Chinese natural environment is Daniel K. Gardner's *Environmental Pollution in China*.⁷

Perhaps the best book on the environmental crises in China is the quirkily titled *When a Billion Chinese Jump: Voices from the Frontline of Climate Change* by the journalist Jonathan Watts.⁸ He travelled around China, north and south, from west and east, to document the effects of climate change and let the people affected by it speak. It's a 'read it and weep' narrative, but the author's humour keeps you going. I've been to some of the places he describes and tears came to my eyes, whether from air pollution or despair over the destruction of such beautiful landscapes. But Watts takes you all over that vast Central Kingdom, as an excellent guide.

China overtook the US in 2007 to become the world's greatest contributor to carbon dioxide emissions, and ten years later its contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions (from fossil fuel burning and cement production) reached almost 27% of the world total. This gave the country a bad reputation in many circles. But their population is around four times larger than that of the United States, and if we look at metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions per capita, we find China emitting less than half the US contribution: 6.7 versus 17 tons per capita.⁹

We also need to distinguish between 'territorial' emissions, the total generated within China's borders, and that part which comes from manufacturing commodities for export. Those latter emissions—coming from things that we in the developed world are buying—although produced in China are also *our* emissions. As 'consumption' or 'embedded emissions', they should arguably be charged to the country that consumes the goods rather than the one that produces them (after some adjustment for profits). In 2014, 40*% of China's emissions came from manufacturing for export. [*ADD latest figures.]

One thing the climate crisis demands is a reduction in conspicuous consumption, and corresponding adjustment to the economy, on the part of the rich—including the many very rich people in China. A surge in consumption is understandable, given that the last century brought poverty and hardship to most of the Chinese people. But there's another factor at work here. For over two millennia Chinese culture was sustained by Confucian ideas and practices, but these fell out of favour in the twentieth century and were totally rejected by the Communists after the founding of the PRC. By the time people began seeing an increase in their incomes when the Chinese economy opened up, they no longer had much faith in Leninism or Maoism either—and so for many people the void was filled by consumerism.¹⁰ The meaning of it all is to get rich and buy things.

Xi Jinping experienced hardship as a youth when he was 'sent down' to work in rural areas so that he could experience at first hand life on the land; and his subsequent appreciation of Confucian and Daoist ideas about sufficiency, knowing how much is enough, inclines him toward asceticism and gives him a strong aversion to consumerism. In a speech to the Central Committee of the CCP in 2013, he decried the adoption by many of 'a luxurious and dissolute lifestyle': 'We should keep in mind the ancient warning that "hedonism and extravagance lead to decline and demise".' But the CCP needs to *act* on this reasonable exhortation by making affluent citizens pay the environmental and social costs of their consumption.¹¹ Reducing your contribution to global warming doesn't require full-on asceticism: moderation will be enough.

A key consideration here is China's special interest in coping with global warming, because climate models predict that the country is especially vulnerable to its worst effects. Just two examples, the first concerning heat-waves. Researchers at the University of Hawaii examined thirty-five recent years of lethal heat-waves, which become steadily more frequent as the years go by. Almost a third of the world's population is already exposed to lethal temperature and humidity for at least 20 days a year, and the authors predict that by 2100 this figure will rise to almost 50%—even with 'drastic reductions of greenhouse gas emissions'. (With continuing emissions growth it will be more like 75%.) They conclude by underscoring 'the current and increasing threat to human life posed by climate conditions that exceed human thermoregulatory capacity.'¹² That threat is especially high in the North China Plain. And then there are cities like Shanghai, which will have to be evacuated when the sea rises.

It's clearly in the interests of the Chinese people that the world achieve 'drastic reductions of greenhouse gas emissions', and since the Communist Party claims that its first concern is with the well-being of the people, one hopes they will deliver. And fortunately for the rest of us there isn't a global warming denial movement in China. There was one for a while (much of it motivated by conspiracy theories—they're everywhere!), but it lost momentum and petered out almost a decade ago.¹³ Nevertheless, or perhaps because of restricted information, Chinese people, and especially the young, are less likely to be seriously concerned about global warming than people in other countries.¹⁴

In any case, the good news is that it's in China's best interests domestically to reduce air pollution, which means lower carbon emissions, and that the government is taking significant steps to do this by phasing out coal and switching to renewable sources of energy.¹⁵ This is nicely in line with what the rest of the world needs right now: lower emissions of GHGs globally. Barbara Finamore has examined various possible scenarios in this arena in her timely book *Will China Save the Planet?* She shows that China is committed to phasing out the burning of coal and is employing a variety of measures to do so—but mainly by leading the world in installed capacity and investment in solar and wind power.¹⁶

Thanks to the enormous investments China has made in renewable sources of energy, the prices of solar panels, wind turbines, and storage batteries have been coming down steadily over the past several years. China is also the world's leading producer of electric or 'new energy' vehicles. All this proves the stupidity of the American insistence that moving away from fossil fuels will 'hurt the economy'—and lets the rest of the world reduce

GHG emissions in an economical manner, for which the Chinese are due our gratitude.

At any rate, what it comes down to is this: fortunately unencumbered by global warming deniers, the Chinese government knows that several densely populated regions of the country are going to suffer dire effects from the climate crisis, and they have to take action to avoid those. This situation offers the possibility of fruitful cooperation, as long as we take the right approach.

7.2 Drawbacks of Democracy

Plato's low opinion of democracy is well known, and some of his criticisms are consonant with the concerns of political thinkers in ancient and contemporary China. They are relevant to our current situation insofar as they can provide some directions for salutary reform.

In its reaction against oligarchy the new democratic regime values above all the principles of *equality* and *freedom*, which—unquestionably good though they may seem to us—give Socrates some misgivings. Yes, the democratic city is 'full of freedom and free speech' and there is 'license in it to do whatever one wants'; and where there's license, 'it's plain that each man would organize his life in the city privately just as it pleases him'. But the danger here is that just as an oligarchy is eventually destroyed by greed for wealth, a democracy is debilitated, and devolves into tyranny, through greed for freedom. (To suggest that an excess of freedom may be harmful is not to negate the suffering of those many people in the world who are subject to an extreme lack of freedom. Here, as in many situations, there's a middle way.)

The desire for freedom tends to 'spread to everything', such that people demand freedom from any and all hierarchies in the society—between parents and children, foreigners and citizens, teachers and students—so that everyone will feel nice and equal. (The Confucians would be appalled.) But of course children aren't the equals of parents, or students of teachers, and this is why Socrates ironically calls democracy 'a sweet regime, without rulers and many-coloured, dispensing a certain equality to equals and unequals alike'.¹⁷

It's helpful here to mention the great French political thinker Montesquieu, who warned that when 'the spirit of equality' becomes extreme, it tends to corrupt democracy insofar as 'each one wants to be the equal of those chosen to command'. In a well-ordered 'regulated democracy', he explains, 'one is equal only as a citizen', as having equal basic

rights, and *not* as occupying the same rank or role in society—‘magistrate, senator, judge, father, husband, or master’—as everyone else.¹⁸

Socrates goes on to warn that excessive enthusiasm for ‘freedom and equality’ leads to lawlessness:

Notice how tender these ideas make the citizens’ soul, so that if someone proposes anything that smacks in any way of slavery, they are irritated and can’t stand it. And they end up, as you well know, by paying no attention to the laws, written or unwritten, in order to avoid having any master at all.

Freedom thereby ends up ‘enslaving democracy’, according to the principle (also held by the ancient Chinese thinkers) that

anything that is done to excess is likely to provoke a correspondingly great change in the opposite direction—in seasons, in plants, in bodies, and, in particular, not least in regimes. ... Too much freedom seems to change into nothing but too much slavery, both for private man and city.

When people enjoy an excess of freedom they tend to become enslaved by their desires. Losing a sense of direction in their lives, they begin to crave a leader, and Socrates shows how easily opportunistic leaders in such a situation can gain power and become tyrants. They can do this because democracy ‘doesn’t care at all from what kinds of practices a man goes to political action, but honors him if only he says he’s well disposed toward the multitude?’¹⁹ And this could lead to the election of a ruler totally lacking in the education and experience necessary for being a good politician: of a real estate mogul, or television celebrity, for example, with no experience of politics.

Many people today dismiss Plato as an elitist (which he is) and totalitarian (which he isn’t), but his warning that democracy tends to lead to tyranny is timely.²⁰ Think of Bolsonaro, Duterte, Erdoğan, Orbán, Trump and their ilk.

The key according to Plato’s *Republic* is to aim for ‘a true ruler [who] does not consider his own advantage but rather that of the one who is ruled’ (more on how you manage this shortly). As helmsman of the ship of state, the philosopher kind is in the same boat as the people—among whom many regard themselves, unhelpfully, as being more qualified to steer than he is. But *his* concern, exceptionally, is for the welfare of the entire crew and passengers.²¹ As Rousseau agreed, over two millennia later under very different conditions: ‘It is the best and most natural arrangement for the wisest to govern the multitude, if we are sure than they will govern it for its advantage and not their own.’²²

Aristotle too disparaged democracy for ‘allowing everyone to live as he likes’. Nor is the reason people favour such a regime a very good one: ‘for the many it is more pleasant to live in a disorderly fashion than in a temperate one.’²³ Some two thousand years later Hobbes pronounced this

kind of liberty pernicious because it pits us against our fellow human beings: ‘For as long as every man holdeth this right, of doing any thing he liketh; so long are all men in the condition of war.’ And in that sad condition, ‘where every man is enemy to every man’, as he famously wrote, ‘the life of man is solitary and poor’, as well as ‘nasty, brutish and short’.²⁴

Democracy has degenerated in the modern era due to the power of capitalism and consumerism, which have confused people about what makes for a fulfilling life, persuading them that it depends on freedom to satisfy their desires. In the US the result is what Berggruen and Gardels aptly call ‘consumer democracy’.

The practice of one-person-one-vote electoral democracy has not come to grips with the long-term consequences of its post-World War II marriage to the ideology of consumerism. ... Democratic systems are designed to give the majority what they want when they want it. Americans want their liberty and their right to the pursuit of happiness, often reductively defined as consumer plenitude. And they want it now.

And they insist on their right to indulge in consumer plenitude even if it harms the livelihoods of others in the society or the wider world.²⁵ They also welcome a president like Trump, one of the most crass and conspicuous consumers you could ever hope to avoid meeting.

One of the justifications often given for pestering the Chinese to adopt liberal democracy is that their citizens should be free to choose who governs them. But the freedom of choice that representative democracy grants us is actually quite restricted. Whenever I’ve had the opportunity to vote (at least up until the 2019 elections for the EU Parliament) I’ve been appalled by the prospect: ‘Is *this* really the only choice we have?’

In one of his most enjoyable novels, J. M. Coetzee has his protagonist (‘Señor C’, a mask of the author) register an incisive complaint about this situation. In surveying the history of the state, he observes that for a long time political regimes were dominated by hereditary monarchies, where transfer of power was through dynastic succession.

Then democracy arrived, and the subject was for the first time presented with a choice: *Do you (collectively) want to be ruled by Citizen A or Citizen B?* ... The form of the choice is not open to discussion. The ballot paper does not say: *Do you want A or B or neither?* It certainly never says: *Do you want A or B or no one at all?* The citizen who expresses his unhappiness with the form of choice on offer by the only means available to him—not voting, or else spoiling his ballot paper—is simply not counted, that is to say, is discounted, ignored.

With this kind of set-up there’s little reason to suppose, Señor C suggests, that electoral democracy will produce leaders more competent to govern than the firstborn son of the king or emperor. In any case if you don’t like the results of the electoral process, you’re invited to try and improve the

system from within by putting yourself forward as a candidate. And this is the only legitimate option: ‘Democracy does not allow for politics outside the democratic system. In this sense, democracy is totalitarian.’²⁶ Now *there’s* something to think about.

It may also be good to think about why the Chinese don’t think liberal democracy is the right regime for them at this point in their history.

For those who unconditionally embrace democracy as obviously the best regime, it’s worth considering: that the thinkers who thought about how to maintain the political health of the Chinese Empire over two millennia—a longer-lived type of regime than any other in history—never thought that the people should play much of a role in governing. Like Plato they recommended rule by the most competent few, rather than by any of those many who lack the requisite talent, experience, and self-restraint—with the crucial proviso that government must always be for the sake of the governed. If that could be arranged, it would be absurd to deny that the citizenry may thrive better under a regime that governs well *for* the people’ than under a government *by* people who aren’t competent in governing.

This idea rests on an understanding that the people are the basis of the state, or empire, which runs throughout the Confucian tradition. Here’s a passage from a classic text from the sixth century BCE:

The people should be cherished, and never abused.

The people are the basis of the state:

If the basis is stable, the country will be at peace.²⁷

Ancient Chinese wisdom recommends paying attention to and taking care of the basis, or root, of things, and the paradigm of these activities is the parent.

The king is good at tending because he knows how to ‘nurture the heart’, the organ responsible for prudent decisions. On this topic Mencius cites ‘an ancient source’:

“There are those who use their hearts and there are those who use their muscles. The former rule; the latter are ruled. Those who rule are supported by those who are ruled.”²⁸

Those who use their hearts to determine what’s the right thing to do may thereby be qualified to rule others, but they nevertheless depend on the people for support.

Xunzi, the third great Confucian philosopher, introduced a cautionary element by citing a traditional maxim warning of the perils of instability for the ship of state:

The lord is the boat; his subjects the water.

It's the water that sustains the boat,
and the water that capsizes the boat.²⁹

The ruler has to govern with the interests of the people in mind, in part because it's in his own interest to do so—insofar as they're capable of overthrowing him.

The idea that government must always be *'for the people'* runs all the way through Chinese political philosophy—except for an interruption when the school of Legalism briefly prevailed. In his speech at Peking University (mentioned earlier) Xi Jinping reels off a series of twenty (!) 'quotations from ancient classics' for his audience—the first one of which is: 'The people are the basis of the state'.

This isn't democracy, because the people don't have the political power to choose their leaders—but it's also far from being tyranny, because the rulers are to rule for the benefit of the people rather than for their own.

And how can we be sure they will do this? There's no guarantee, but it's possible, as we're just about to see, to create conditions that lead to the emergence of a benevolent leader.

When Xi Jinping exhorted his audience at Peking University to cultivate 'core socialist values', the second value he listed was 'democracy'—which would surprise Western readers who regard China's one-party system of government as democracy's rotten opposite. It depends of course on what you mean by 'democracy'. In fact the Chinese instituted democratic elections at the local level in 1988, and made direct committee elections *mandatory* in villages throughout the country a decade later. This was no minor event, since at that time 85 per cent of the population lived in the country rather than in cities.³⁰

The 'China model' of government is usually understood as 'China's approach to the establishment of free-market capitalism under the umbrella of an authoritarian one-party state that emphasizes political stability above all else'. But Daniel A. Bell, author of an informative study called *The China Model*, has suggested that we regard the results of political reform in China since the 1980s as resulting in 'a vertical model of democratic meritocracy, with democracy at the bottom [local level], experimentation in the middle, and meritocracy at the top [national level]'.³¹ This arrangement has worked well for most Chinese (though certainly not for dissidents), and is in line with the view of Aristotle and other Western thinkers that democracy works best on a smaller scale.

What doesn't work for the Communist Party is 'Western Constitutional Democracy', the mere mention of which can elicit severe reactions. A relevant document here (often referred to as 'Document 9') is

one that was circulated among Party cadres by the Central Committee of the CCP in 2013. The first of ‘seven political perils’ the document discusses is the promotion of Western Constitutional Democracy, which the authors regard as ‘an attempt to undermine the current leadership and the socialism with Chinese characteristics system of governance’.³² Furthermore, they regard ‘the separation of powers, the multi-party system, general elections, independent judiciaries’ as a mere manifestation of the interests of the capitalist class. It’s true that political parties and general elections don’t always guarantee the best regimes; nor do they seem suited to China’s current situation.

Nevertheless, there are proven advantages to the separation of powers and independent judiciaries, and commentators have suggested ways in which the Party could modify their current system of governance in the light of ideas from both ancient Chinese and Western political traditions.³³ In view of their commitment to strengthening ‘the rule of law’ in China, steps toward a modest system of checks and balances would receive enthusiastic support from the middle classes—and greatly enhance China’s reputation abroad.

Many political philosophers in China are uninterested in trying to promote liberal democracy at the national level, where the CCP rules without the encumbrance of elections or other political parties, and prefer to recommend reforms that derive from Confucian ideas. Jiang Qing, for example, is a contemporary thinker who calls for reform but at the same time rejects liberal democracy, proposing instead ‘a Confucian constitutional order’ to replace China’s current political system. (Too radical a proposal to endear him to the regime). He identifies quite a few ‘flaws of democracy’, which derive from the predominance of the will of the people and their desires: ‘extreme secularization, contractualism, utilitarianism, selfishness, commercialism, capitalization, vulgarization, hedonism, mediocratization, this-worldliness, lack of ecology, lack of history, and lack of morality.’

Quite a list. Let’s not worry about the lack of morality right now, nor about this-worldliness, which is too broad an orientation to be so easily dismissed. But the rest of those flaws, especially when you consider the current state of American political culture, are genuinely problematic. The problem isn’t so much the particular -isms and -ations themselves; but in the absence of any sense of history or ecology, they become pernicious in combination.³⁴ It’s undeniable that democratic systems tend to ignore the natural world in which any polity has to exist. As Jiang writes, ‘Since democracy makes the will of the people the sole source of legitimacy, it is unable to tackle environmental problems at the root.’

Jiang proposes a Confucian constitution that would have a tricameral parliament with a broad source of legitimacy, based on the classic Confucian notion of the 'three realms' of 'heaven, earth, and humans'.³⁵ The system is complex, and overly focused on Confucian true religion, but it has the virtue of granting the powers of heaven and earth, the natural world that surrounds the state, a voice in the setting of government policy. Otherwise, as is obvious when we consider the environmental degradation caused by most human societies, the world of nature goes unrepresented and is more or less ignored once we've extracted what we want from it. And the waning of a sense of the sacred in nature makes things even worse.

Another political philosopher, Bai Tongdong, has identified from the perspective of Chinese thought several further problems with democracy. Insofar as democracies are based on a premise of individualism, they can easily lose sight of the public good and neglect the interests of non-voters, such as children, foreigners, and future generations. Drawing on research in American political science, he observes that voters in current democracies, far from constituting a well-informed electorate, simply 'lack political understanding and judgement'. If things were bad when he pointed this out in 2012, they're far worse in the brave new age of filter bubbles, fake news and alternative facts.

In ancient Athenian democracy, Bai reminds us, the institution of slavery afforded citizens the leisure to engage in politics effectively, in the context of a manageable size of polis. In today's democracies, by contrast, most of us have to work, which means we don't have time to inform ourselves sufficiently about the complex workings of the political system, so as to be able to vote on issues from a position of understanding.³⁶ But however well-informed the electorate is, it doesn't really matter since their views have almost no effect on government policy anyway—at least in the world's most powerful democracy. According a 2014 study by political scientists at Princeton and Northwestern University, 'economic elites and organized groups representing business interests have substantial independent impacts on U.S. government policy, while average citizens and mass-based interest groups have little or no independent influence.'³⁷

As for Xi Jinping's attitude toward liberal democracy, Kevin Rudd, a former prime minister of Australia who knows him well, tells us that he finds it, unsurprisingly, 'totally unsuited to China'. As Xi himself has observed: 'One part of the now long-standing Chinese leadership critique of Western-style democracy is that it is prone to paralysis and gridlock and ultimately governmental weakness.'³⁸ A hard judgment to refute when you consider the American and British versions over the past decade or two—

not to mention the dismal track record of democratic nations on the issue of slowing global warming.

7.3 Approaching the Chinese Leadership

One of the reasons why we in the Western world aren't very adept at dealing with the Chinese is because we don't try to understand where they're coming from politically, and how they view what's going on now in geopolitics.

As heirs of the longest continuous civilisation of any country in the world, the Chinese have always cultivated a deep sense of their history. In a speech he delivered on first taking office as General Secretary of the Communist Party in 2012, Xi Jinping reminded his colleagues that 'throughout 5,000 years of development, the Chinese nation has made significant contributions to the progress of human civilization.'³⁹ These contributions continue to be documented in the monumental series initiated by Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China* (27 hefty volumes between 1954 and 2017, and counting).

China has been a unified country for the last two millennia, but its political philosophy developed during the centuries before the unification, known as the Warring States period (475-221 BCE). We Europeans think the Thirty Years War went on for a horrendously long time, but the Warring States period lasted for 250 years. In reaction to those centuries of internecine strife, ancient Chinese philosophy and culture developed a distinctly unwarlike ethos, and so all the major schools of Chinese thought (except Legalism) advocate avoiding war at all costs. That long period of conflict also engendered a national obsession with maintaining order in the polis, and in keeping the empire *unified*. I think the leaders of the CCP today sincerely believe that only they can hold the whole thing together—and perhaps for the time being they're right.

But it's *recent* history that looms especially large for China: we tend to ignore or forget what many Chinese remember as 'the century of national humiliation', which began with their defeat in the first Opium War (1839-42) and lasted until the Communists took power in 1949.⁴⁰ Other humiliating events were: a series of 'Unequal Treaties' that China was obliged to sign with European colonial powers and Japan; the Second Opium War, near the end of which British and French soldiers, in an act of utter barbarism, looted and destroyed the magnificent Old Summer Palace and several other historical sites and gardens in Beijing; the Sino-French War, and the First Sino-Japanese War—in all of which China suffered

defeat. During this period China was reduced from a major world power to a country carved up by invading colonialists.

I don't remember ever learning about the Opium Wars in history classes at school: they certainly don't constitute the most shining chapters in the history of British imperialism. It was a prototype of that now familiar business model—get your customers addicted—but in that instance employed to rectify a trade imbalance. And if the Chinese government objects, send in the gunboats, and not only those. As Marx and Engels famously wrote, not long after the War, about bourgeois civilisation:

The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilisation into their midst, to become bourgeois themselves.⁴¹

Prophetic indeed, from 1848. And all this compulsion in the name of 'free' markets and 'progress'. And it worked like a dream.

One factor behind China's weakness during this period was civil strife *within* the empire, especially in the form of the Taiping Rebellion, one of the bloodiest civil wars ever, which raged from 1850-64. (The Second Opium War took place within this period.) The whole thing was started by Hong Xiuquan, a man who failed the Confucian public service examinations four times and then became a fanatical convert to Christianity. After dreaming of meeting a celestial family and other heavenly visions, he came to believe that he was a Son of God and younger brother to Jesus Christ.⁴²

Hong set out on a faith-driven mission to rid the country of Confucianism and its Manchu rulers, who were 'demon-devils' (foreigners, after all), and transform China into a Christian nation. He gathered a huge following of 'God-worshippers' and a large enough army to capture the major city of Nanjing. There they established the 'Heavenly Capital' from where Hong as Heavenly King would rule over the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, comprising several provinces in southern China. More than twenty million people are said to have perished in the course of the fourteen-year conflict—according to some estimates millions more—before Hong finally died and his army was defeated.

It's amazing that someone so deluded could have attracted so many followers and caused such mayhem, making it easier for the British, French and Americans to win the Second Opium War. Nor is it surprising, in the light of the Rebellion's ravages, that the Chinese government should now be somewhat wary of Christianity. This isn't to justify but rather to explain their tendency toward suppression. And yet you have to admit that

adherents of the faith, for all the good they may do, can cause major trouble when missionary zeal sets in.

On the ninety-fifth anniversary of the May Fourth Movement (1919), which was a response to the betrayal of China by the Triple Entente at the Versailles Peace Conference (another humiliation), Xi Jinping delivered a long speech to students and faculty at Peking University. In connecting the spirit of the May Fourth Movement with a long-standing Chinese 'dream of a great national rejuvenation', he said this:

China used to be a world economic power. However, it missed its chance in the wake of the Industrial Revolution and the consequent dramatic changes, and thus was left behind and suffered humiliation under foreign invasion. Things got worse especially after the Opium Wars of the 1840s, when the nation was plagued by poverty and weakness. ... The country was humiliated, its sovereignty was infringed upon, and its people were bullied by foreigners. ... We must not let this tragic history repeat itself.⁴³

The concern to avoid further humiliation by Western or neighbouring powers is surely understandable. And the traditional ways of doing this do not require military aggression.

Against this background the venerable tradition of 'China bashing' in American politics seems distinctly undiplomatic. Given the horrors perpetrated on China in the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, and the urgency of gaining their cooperation in the twenty-first, is the Cold War super-hawkish approach appropriate? Shouldn't we rather try to develop a less aggressive attitude toward the Chinese?

This is not to deny we need to be firm in dealing with China, because the regime's behaviour since Xi Jinping assumed power has become steadily more assertive. An even-handed report by a joint Task Force on U.S.-China Policy, 'Course Correction: Toward an Effective and Sustainable China Policy' (2019), lays out the major issues and recommends reasonable strategies for responding to them. The authors sum up the main problem as follows:

Xi Jinping is enacting policies that put China's impressive development success story at risk by diminishing its once self-professed hopes for a 'peaceful rise' in a stable international environment. ... In reality, the global community is reacting not to China's success and growing capabilities [as the Chinese government claims], but to how the current leadership has sought to use China's new wealth and power in ways that are inimical to the very global order that fostered China's rise.⁴⁴

The seventeen members of the task force are all China experts and their collective attitude is moderate, which means that this description of what's happening is, like the bulk of the report, fair enough. (This is not to deny

that China might have legitimate reasons to question the current global order.)

They identify three especially harmful trends in China's behaviour: its 'pursuit of a mercantilist high-tech import-substitution industrial policy', which is protectionist and discriminates against foreign companies doing business in China; its measures to 'project power and influence in East Asia' and especially in the South China Sea; and the regime's 'hardening authoritarianism', as evidenced in the confinement in 're-education camps' of hundreds of thousands of Muslims in Xinjiang, and the imprisonment of 'civil rights lawyers, feminists, environmental activists, and citizen petitioners'.

The gargantuan 'Belt and Road Initiative' (BRI) promises to bring benefits to many places, but the Task Force warns that the construction of naval bases and other investments in infrastructure suggest 'a long-term plan to extend Chinese military access beyond Asia to the rest of the world.'⁴⁵ If China is committed to 'peaceful development' and has no ambitions to become the world hegemon, what's the point of such a plan? Is this not the American way, which China has long vowed *not* to follow? And although the government has insisted that the BRI will be 'green', in 2016 China was involved in 240 coal-fired power projects in 25 of the participating countries.⁴⁶ The impression that China is 'exporting' its fossil fuel infrastructure is unavoidable. In any case the BRI loses much of its lustre if it aggravates rather than alleviates the climate crisis.

A major theme of the 'Course Correction' report is that, whereas China's rise depended on the international community's observing certain norms of behaviour in economic and other interactions, the current regime has been increasingly flouting principles of 'fairness and reciprocity'. Give the evidence presented in the report, these criticisms seem justified. The Chinese government *professes* to practise reciprocity (*shu*), which is a central idea in the Chinese tradition and prominent in Xi Jinping's pronouncements. For example, in a speech titled 'Diplomacy with Neighbouring Countries Characterised by Friendship, Sincerity, Reciprocity and Inclusiveness', he said:

We must treat neighbours with sincerity and cultivate them as friends and partners. We should cooperate with our neighbours on the basis of reciprocity, create a closer network of common interests, and better integrate China's interests with theirs, so that they can benefit from China's development and China can benefit and gain support from theirs.⁴⁷

It's unlikely that China's neighbours around the East and South China Seas would say that the regime has stood by its word on this issue. But the Task Force authors would welcome the sentiment of Xi's speech, insofar as they recommend *against* 'opposing rising Chinese power across the board',

saying rather that ‘the end goal should be for China to contribute at a global level in ways that benefit the global community as well as itself.’⁴⁸ Which is just what the regime has said they want.

People who understand China, like the members of the Task Force, counsel a firm but careful and reasoned approach to dealing with the country’s more aggressive behaviour. People who don’t understand China prefer to get belligerent rather than trying to understand. Along with increased China bashing in the US, the year 2019 saw the resurrection of ‘Red Scare’ mongering and the Committee on the Present Danger, with the help of former Trump advisor Steve Bannon.⁴⁹ Their programme is not only unhelpful but also, under the current circumstances, downright dangerous.

A war between the US and China, which neither side wants (unless it’s Trump), is a serious and terrifying prospect. The situation fits a pattern that Graham Allison at Harvard has called ‘Thucydides’s Trap’. In his *History of the Peloponnesian War* the ancient Greek historian Thucydides wrote that Athens and Sparta broke their peace treaty because ‘the growth of Athenian power inspired fear in the Spartans and forced them to war’.⁵⁰

The pattern keeps recurring: a ruling power is afraid that a rising power will deprive it of hegemony, and so resorts to military force to prevent this, is common—and history teaches that three times out of four it leads to war. China is a rising power ‘in spades’, as they say, and the US regards itself as the world hegemon. Therefore, Allison writes in a rare case of italics, ‘*war between the US and China in the decades ahead is not just possible, but much more likely than currently recognized.*’ Although the importance of economics in national and world affairs is generally overstated, this is a case where we need to be grateful: the US and Chinese economies are now so tightly intertwined that the interdependence is a deterrent to either side’s declaring war on the other.

Our record in the West of negotiating with the Chinese is marred by an insistence on framing the issues in Western terms that we presume to be universal. (Only *we* enjoyed the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, the Age of Reason, thanks to which we think we know what’s right, universally.) If we want to make progress on the climate crisis, we have to reframe the terms of our conversation with the regime in Beijing.⁵¹

The US isn’t alone responsible here. As Kerry Brown, Xi Jinping’s English biographer, has written:

On Tibet, Taiwan and human and social rights generally, the EU has a tendency to become very preachy toward China. This is the source of its particular ability to irritate Xi Jinping. ... The EU can come across sometimes as promoting the idea that it wants China to change its political system to fit

in. This is something that has figured in every main policy document that the EU has issued on China since 2006.⁵²

Yes, Tibet and Xinjiang and Hong Kong and Taiwan are all issues we need to talk to the Chinese about, but preaching and condescending are clearly counterproductive. We make matters worse by chastising the Chinese for not being democratic, in spite of their insistence that liberal democracy isn't appropriate for their cultural and political situation. Does it never occur to us that the *dēmos* of China, the Chinese people, might have some different values from those embraced by Americans? That they may for instance prefer social harmony to unlimited personal freedoms?⁵³

And since the capitalist ideas and high technologies that have enabled the Chinese to degrade their natural environment came from the West, it won't help to enter this crucial diplomatic engagement armed only with *more* Western ideas—this time about environmental ethics, international relations, and so forth. Better by far to propose an approach through *their* philosophical tradition, and then through what is best, and most compatible, in our own.

If we consider the philosophical ideas being promoted by the Xi Jinping regime, we find that they are more helpful for dealing with the climate crisis than the Western notions that have been driving our high-energy activity so far. Some people maintain that Xi is simply playing lip service to the Chinese tradition when he cites philosophical texts, and that it's basically propaganda designed to make the Party look good. (When I first mentioned to my wife, who has a degree in international relations, that Xi was quoting some of my favourite philosophers, she asked, 'You don't think he means it, do you? Isn't he a politician?')

It's true that the regime doesn't always live up to its rhetoric, but a better way, pragmatically, of getting them to stop doing things we find abhorrent is to focus on their professed philosophy and exert diplomatic persuasion on that basis. I suggest that our concern here be with the pertinence of the ideas: the extent to which President Xi and his colleagues are enacting them is a separate (and important) issue.

But in fact, the fact that most of the ideas that Xi Jinping invokes are Confucian makes it more likely that he's being sincere. The reason is that the Confucian tradition emphasises the importance of keeping one's word. In his speech at Peking University, the president cited Confucius's exhortation to be 'true in word and resolute in deed', and quoted his question, 'If a man does not keep his word, what is he good for?'⁵⁴ Xi Jinping wouldn't look good for much if he failed to keep his word on this one: it's awkward to make a habit of professing Confucian philosophy insincerely.

7.4 The Functional Family

Before I invoke Confucian ideas of the family, I should enter a proviso. When I was first teaching Chinese philosophy at the University of Hawaii, I felt self-conscious as a white man from Scotland presenting ancient Chinese thought to an audience comprising many Asian-American students and usually some visitors from China, Hong Kong or Taiwan. But I soon realised that they knew next to nothing about the original philosophy, which justified the exercise, although most of them were painfully familiar with the ‘Confucian experience’. They instructed me richly concerning the aims and consequences of a strict Confucian upbringing, which sounded like an extreme version of what I myself had gone through growing up in Scotland. I emphasised the importance of distinguishing Confucius from the Confucians, just as with Jesus and the (fundamentalist) Christians. Let’s read the primary texts, I said, and then you can tell me where you see the unacceptable authoritarian elements coming in.

The Confucian conception of the person begins at the beginning. When we come into the world (unless we’re unfortunate to be orphaned) we enter into a family, or family-like group, as the daughter of these particular parents or the son of those, with these persons as grandparents and those as aunts and uncles. It’s all a matter of relatives and relations.

— But it’s hierarchical, a student would always object, and even worse, *patriarchal*. Yes, it’s a field of power relations, which are hierarchical by definition; but it’s a dynamic system, and not fixed or static. As an infant you’re powerless and dependent, and in being brought up you’re taught to obey and defer to your parents. But then when you’re grown up you can be a parent too, and assume the position of power—and responsibility—in the parent-child relationship. And when you’re old and infirm, you become powerless and dependent again. But if you’ve been a good parent you may well have children who will take care of you, in gratitude for your having taken care of them when young. (When I was young, I wasn’t that impressed by this Confucian arrangement, but now that I’m old I think it’s terrific.) It’s a fluid hierarchy that functions in cycles.

If I’m a husband and father, I am owed deference for the experience, if not wisdom, that I’ve accumulated in those roles—by comparison with a child, who lacks such experience. But if I become a hopeless husband or deadbeat dad, I forfeit any claim to deference on the part of my wife or daughter. The Confucian *Classic of Family Reverence* is clear on this (‘family reverence’ translates a Chinese term that’s often rendered as ‘filial piety’): ‘If confronted by reprehensible behaviour on his father’s part, a son has no choice but to *remonstrate* with his father How could simply obeying the commands of one’s father be deemed filial?’⁵⁵

— But what about the patriarchal elements? Yes, the relation of marriage in the Confucian tradition (as in many agrarian societies) sets the husband over the wife. But I'm not suggesting that we all become traditional Confucians, but simply that we draw on Confucian thinking for ideas that can help in our current situation. And since patriarchy is neither necessary nor desirable in modern industrial society, we can simply revision the husband-wife relation on the model of the one Confucian relationship that's non-hierarchical: the relation of friend to friend. (The others are older brother to younger, father to son, and ruler to minister.) Conservative Confucians might say this change would cause the whole fabric of Confucian thought to unravel, but I've never seen any evidence for this.

A great advantage of taking family relations as a model is that they work on the basis of *love*, which renders ethical responsibility and moral deliberation irrelevant. If a close family member is in trouble you help spontaneously, without calculating the costs in terms of time or money—simply because that's what parents do for children, and vice versa. But the family won't work as a paradigm if it's dysfunctional, which modern families sometimes are (even where 'family values' are trumpeted). Nonetheless most people have some sense of the harmonious family, where openness and acceptance prevail among its members—and it's such a family that is the focus of Confucian reflections.

In Confucian societies, responsibilities to family members take precedence over social or legal obligations. When Confucius was told about a man who was known for being upright because, when his father stole a sheep, he reported him to the authorities, he responded: 'Where I come from, being upright is quite a different matter: a father covers for his son, and a son covers for his father.' Correspondingly, Socrates is horrified when a self-righteous acquaintance announces that he's prosecuting his own father for murder: 'Is the one who was killed by your father a relative?' Socrates asks; 'But of course he was,' he answers himself, 'for you would never bring a charge of murder against him on a stranger's account.'⁵⁶ The point of both stories is that humane and perspicacious behaviour, discerning the right way to behave in the context of family and society, may be more important for the smooth functioning of the polity than blind adherence to the letter of the law.

This goes against our modern ideas of equality before the law and of justice being in that sense blind. And there are of course drawbacks to the natural inclination to give preference to blood relatives. An enduring phenomenon in the Chinese context is *guanxi*, the system of familial and social relations that work on reciprocity: doing something for the other and vice versa. (A prevalent phenomenon in many traditional societies.) But it's

when the desire for profit or gain predominates—a condition that Confucius constantly warns against—that the really harmful forms of nepotism prevail. In any case corruption among politicians is hardly peculiar to Confucian societies.

But think, for instance, of how the family can work as a model when applied to a social group such as an academic department in a university. One option is to run it more like a legal entity, enforcing rules and regulations that apply to all members equally. Unless you're very lucky, you're going to have some colleagues whose egocentrism drives them to game the system when they can get away with it, and to work toward advancing their own careers (by staying home as much as possible to write their books) rather than for the interests of the department. Rules that prevent such people from abusing their privilege often have to be so restrictive that they disadvantage the more community-minded colleagues. In any case regulations generally fail to elicit the desired contributions to the teaching and 'service' sides of the department anyway.

Things go better, in my experience, if you can minimise the rules and regulations and work rather on the basis of trust and reciprocity, which will generally develop as the members get better acquainted with each other. A good chair or head of department, who fulfils the 'parent' role, can be impartial while at the same time encouraging and rewarding those whose contribution to the programme is greater. The problem with so many managers is that they fail to get to know the people they supervise, so as to distinguish between the freeloaders and those who make the valuable contributions.

It's no surprise, then, that Xi Jinping should often invoke the notion of the family. He refers to 'the tens of millions of overseas Chinese' around the world as 'all members of the Chinese family'. This is more convincing in Chinese, where the literal meaning of the word for nation or state (*guojia*) is to this day 'country-family'. And instead of the individualistic expression 'everyone', when the Chinese want to refer to everybody they say 'big family'. Xi also promotes the idea, for obvious reasons, that the populations of mainland China and Taiwan are 'one family'.⁵⁷

The idea of the human family, or 'family of man', may sound sentimental to Western ears, but it's taken seriously in ancient Chinese thought, where the model of the family is extended to the state, and from there to all the countries under the Heavens. When asked how one becomes fully human or humane, Confucius on one occasion replied simply, 'Love your fellow human beings.' He recommends extending the love you naturally feel for your parents, siblings and children to more distant relatives, and from there analogously to other members of society. This love

for one's fellow human beings is somewhat similar to what Jesus enjoined as the second great commandment: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'⁵⁸ But, by contrast with the Christian ideal of universal love, the love advocated by Confucius is 'gradated': my love for immediate family members is properly greater than for distant relatives, friends, or neighbours.

Xi Jinping invokes this idea by citing the version found in Mencius, who was the second great Confucian thinker:

Treat with the reverence due to age the elders in your own family, and extend this treatment to the elders of other families; treat with the kindness due to youth the young in your own family, and extend this to the young of other families.

He also quotes the more general statement of Mencius, corresponding to Confucius's idea of loving one's fellow humans: 'The heart of compassion is the germ of humaneness', where 'humaneness' (*ren*) is the highest Confucian 'virtue' of becoming consummately human.⁵⁹

This idea underlies Xi's talk of China as 'an important member of the Asian family and the global family'. His aim is to promote internationalism on the part of the Chinese as well as a sense of interdependence in international relations: 'China cannot develop itself in isolation from the rest of Asia and the world. For their part, the rest of Asia and the world cannot enjoy prosperity and stability without China.'⁶⁰

Xi naturally emphasises a need for patriotism when he discusses 'the Chinese Dream', but he balances this with frequent encouragement to 'promote exchanges between China and other civilisations'. In the spirit of the ancient philosophers he wants to extend the sense of interdependence: 'We must open still wider to the outside world, strengthening our connectivity and interaction with it, and enhancing our understanding and friendship with other peoples.'⁶¹ The contrast with Trump's 'America First' isolationism is stark, and with the libertarian ideology that promotes the individual abstracted from context, and the private realm separated from the public.

In the political realm, if the people are one family then the ruler is the father. In ancient times it was natural, in seeing familial relations writ large in the wider world of the nation, to regard the 'Son of Heaven', or emperor, as the paterfamilias of the people, and thus responsible for taking care of his broadly extended family. The venerable *Book of Songs* refers to the noble ruler as 'father and mother of the people', a designation that would later come to be applied to the imperial family.⁶² The implication, for Confucian thinkers, is that the rulers are to be like parents in being unselfish, in putting the interests of the ruled before their own.

When asked about the best way to govern, Confucius would emphasise ‘treating the people with kindness’ and being ‘generous in caring’ for them. Likewise Mencius said that the virtuous man ‘becomes a True King by tending the people’—in other words, the ruler must act as ‘the people’s father and mother’.⁶³ Xi Jinping cites a well known line from one of the Confucian ‘Four Books’ which says of the ultimate ruler that he is to ‘manifest bright virtue and treat the people as his own family’—an allusion to the extension of familial love to those in circles around and beyond the family.⁶⁴

In ancient Greece, correspondingly, the household (*oikos*, root of our word ‘ecology’) was the basic social unit. Nevertheless, perhaps in view of the tensions that arise between loyalty to family and to state—a frequent theme in ancient Greek tragedy—Plato tended to downplay the importance of the family. (Although it plays no part in the *Republic*, it figures in his other great dialogue on politics, the *Laws*.) His student Aristotle insisted on the priority of the polity and family over the particular person: ‘The polis is *prior in nature* to the household and to each of us individually, since the whole is necessarily prior to the part. For if the whole body is dead, there will no longer be a foot or a hand.’⁶⁵ The members of the polity are thus bound together with the body politic as a whole. (Our word ‘member’ comes from a Latin root meaning ‘limb’, and limbs can’t live separately from bodies.)

Perhaps because of this early ambivalence the family—that powerful vortex of relatives and relations—hasn’t played as pivotal a role in political philosophy in the West, though thinkers such as Rousseau and Hegel thought it important.⁶⁶ But if you have a society where the family functions well, there are definite advantages to the Chinese practice of regarding the family with its network of relations as exemplary, mediating the particular person’s relation to society or state and giving everyone the feeling of being ‘in the same boat’. When Xi Jinping emphasises the interdependence between citizens and the nation by saying ‘one can do well only when one’s country and nation do well’, he could be echoing Socrates on the desirability of finding a ruler who will care for the polity because loves it—‘supposing that if the city did well, he too himself would do well along with it, and if it didn’t, neither would he.’⁶⁷

For Plato this interdependence is a special case of the dependence of the particular human being on the whole cosmos. He encourages us to acknowledge the primacy of ‘the life of the whole’, which hasn’t come into being for our sake, but rather the other way round. Like the good doctor who has a holistic view of the patient, the wise statesman ‘does everything for the sake of a whole, creating a part which strives for what is best in

common, for the sake of the whole'.⁶⁸ In other words, the good ruler will orchestrate the citizens' activities so as to optimise their distinctive contributions to the public good.

Some people worry that the analogy between the family and the nation encourages noxious forms of nationalism. The CCP is of course obliged to pay attention to the nationalists in the population, but Xi Jinping is careful to balance calls for patriotism with reminders of the benefits of internationalism in a globalised world. In a speech called 'Exchanges and Mutual Learning Make Civilisations Richer and More Colourful', he emphasises how much the Chinese tradition was enhanced by learning from other cultures. He encourages his audience to 'promote exchanges between China and other civilisations', on the grounds that 'China will thrive only when the world prospers'.⁶⁹

The roots of this emphasis on interrelations are to be found in the ancient Confucian classic *Great Learning*, which we just saw Xi invoke on the topic of treating the people as one's own family. In the context of the practice of self-cultivation, the text says that one's household will be well ordered only if the person in charge has cultivated himself successfully, the state will be well ordered only if the household has been, and that only if the state is well ordered can harmony be brought to All-under-the-Heavens. 'From the Son of Heaven to the common person, for all alike, cultivating the person is the root'—with effects that extend beyond the plurality of nation states to the whole world.⁷⁰

But before we follow the implications of expanding the dynamics of the family out into larger social and political structures, let's first turn to the microcosm and consider the way these dynamics are mirrored within the particular person.

7.5 Physical and Musical Education

But how are political leaders to be educated so as to be the best at ruling for the benefit of the ruled? The question is worth posing not only because Confucian and Platonic political philosophy give similar answers, but also because these answers are so far from our idea today of how rulers, or any of us, are to be educated. For those ancient thinkers say: teach *music* and *physical training*—rather than statecraft, which can come in later.⁷¹ A measure of how far we've come since ancient times is the absence of these two disciplines from the curriculum in so many schools in the Western world.

Socrates stresses the importance of gymnastics for the health of the body and the spirited part of the soul: a strong and fit body is the basis for a soul

that's courageous. But if gymnastics is practised intensely on its own, without being balanced by music, it can make the spirited soul 'savage and hard'—just as music brings harmony to the soul, but without physical training of the whole body it can make the soul 'soft and tame'. A good education will balance training of both aspects.

The equivalent education in ancient China involves more components: among the 'Six Arts' that every well educated young man would have to master, five involve focused physical practice: archery, charioteering, calligraphy, the playing of music, and ritual propriety.⁷² The last two arts were the most important, especially for the training of potential rulers, insofar as their exercise hones and attunes one's interactions with both people and things. The practice of ritual propriety, while less overtly energetic physically, corresponds to gymnastic training in Plato.

In Confucian self-cultivation you 'overcome the self' by practising ritual propriety, which hones your interactions with other people and things. In the ancient rituals you had to integrate your actions with those of your fellow participants, and also handle the ritual implements with care. You set self-will aside in order to practice 'the form' (what the Japanese call *kata*): I learn to do it *their* way and forget about 'my way'. The method is furthermore *reciprocal*, putting yourself in the other person's shoes. The better you get at doing that, the greater the capacity for empathy, the easier it gets to experience yourself as a network of relations, and the more you can let your energy and motivations come from the people and things around you as well as—and then rather than—your self.

In ancient Greece and China the notion of music included poetry and song, which in both cases portrayed heroes and rulers from ancient times as exemplary. The imitation of models is a powerful technique, as Socrates explains, with effects that are long-lasting: 'If imitations are practiced continually from youth onwards, they become established as habits and nature, in body and speech and in thought.'⁷³ Confucius said, 'Find inspiration in the *Odes*, take your place through ritual propriety, and achieve perfection with music.'⁷⁴ In playing music you conform your activity to the musical work as well as to the activity of your fellow players. In this sense it perfects the practice of 'taking one's place among others' in society.

Music contributes to social and political order because it's attuned to the deeper and broader source of order, the natural world. The ancient *Book of Ritual* observes that music flows naturally from 'generation and change', and particularly in 'the processes of growth in spring and of maturing in summer'.

Music is an echo of the harmony between Heaven and Earth; ritual propriety reflects the orderly distinctions in the operations of Heaven and Earth. From that harmony all things receive their being; to those orderly distinctions they owe the differences between them.⁷⁵

Through the practice of music one takes one's place among others—not only among other people but among all under the heavens.

Just as the musical education of the Confucian gentleman is intended to lend grace to his movements and encourage cultivation of taste and style more generally, so for Socrates education in music is 'sovereign'. This is because 'rhythm and harmony most of all penetrate deeply into the inmost part of the soul, having the most powerful effect on it in bringing gracefulness with them'.⁷⁶ If you're looking to produce exceptional and above all humane human beings, not just polymaths or technocrats, you'll aim to harmonise the student's energies and attune them to those of other people and the world as a whole.

For Socrates the ruler achieves inner harmony by bringing reason to bear on his decisions and doings through a proper ordering of the inner regime. Thanks to the isomorphism between parts of the soul and classes in the polis, the ruler can extend this harmony (in a move that the Confucians would applaud) as if he were the musical director, or conductor, of the societal symphony. When this works,

Moderation extends throughout the entire city, over the whole scale, making the weaker ... the stronger and those in the middle all sing in unison. So we would quite rightly claim that moderation is this agreement about which of them should rule—a natural harmony of worse and better, both in the city and in each individual.⁷⁷

In a later dialogue by Plato, the *Timaeus* (along with the *Republic* the most influential of his dialogues), the context is broadened to the harmonising of the rational part of the soul with the soul of the entire world. The ruler is for Plato a special case of the type of human being who finds fulfilment in life by understanding its place in the whole. If we're going to be able 'to live, now and in the future, the best life', we do so 'by studying the harmonies and revolutions of the universe' and thereby 'assimilating our intellect' to the soul of the cosmos.⁷⁸

Just as, for Plato, it's the 'philosopher king' who is best suited to bring about such harmony, so Xunzi writes: 'It is the lord of men who is the indispensable element wherewith to "arrange the musical scale" of the classes of men.'⁷⁹ Insofar as the ruler in the Chinese tradition gets his power to rule from the forces of Heaven and Earth, he can bring about harmony in the human world by resonating with the greater harmony of nature through appropriate music. A warning for us today: this means that the more of the natural world we destroy, the more disorder we can expect in the human

realm. And the more acrimonious our politics, the greater the damage we'll suffer from prolonged global warming.

Educating candidates for rulership in statecraft would be too narrow, because what you need in a ruler is not competence in one or many particular fields, but rather a lover of wisdom (a philosopher) who will be wise concerning the workings of the polity *and* its broader context. And both Plato and the Confucians think that an appropriate musical education will develop the required capacities for resonance with events. But Socrates also illustrates this point by introducing a new image into political thought, the ruler as helmsman of 'the ship of state'.

Imagine the polity as a ship, and the usual situation is that you have a crew of politicians who all think they're capable of steering, of being the pilot, 'even though they've never learned the art'. (The pilot is the *kybernētēs*, *gubernator* in Latin, the governor who's at the helm, or steering wheel, of the ship of state.) They regard the philosopher as 'useless', a 'stargazer', even though the philosopher is the only one competent to navigate. But why is the lover of wisdom alone competent to govern? The reason is that the ruler's understanding must be comprehensive, embracing what happens on board the ship *and* all around it.

Steering a ship is a matter of cybernetics (that word too comes from *kybernētēs*): you move the tiller in response to the ship's moving in relation to the wind, currents, and so forth; which changes its course, putting it in a new relation to its surroundings; which requires a new adjustment—in a continual feedback loop. The crew of politicians don't realise, Socrates says, that 'for the true helmsman it's necessary to pay careful attention to year, seasons, heaven, stars, winds, and everything that's proper to the art, if he's really going to be skilled at ruling a ship.'⁸⁰ To rule the polity competently, one has to be holistic and attend to the broader context, which includes the natural environment. There's a great deal that's proper to the art, and only the philosopher has a sufficiently comprehensive understanding of how the whole thing works.

The ancient Chinese thinkers have a similar understanding of what makes for a thriving polity. Within a world of energies they call *qi*, human beings are regarded as particular configurations of this energy—and to harmonise these with the patterns of the whole field leads to human flourishing. They don't share Plato's emphasis on the divinity and rationality of the cosmos, but the basic practice is the same: pay attention to the broadest relevant context of what's happening around you, and integrate your activity into it in the most productive manner. Do this well, and it all acquires significance; do it really well, and your good example will

inspire others to do likewise; do it better than anyone else and you can run the whole show.

Corresponding to Plato's philosopher-ruler the Chinese thinkers talk of the 'sage-king'. Confucius consistently praises the legendary sage-kings Shun and Yao for the way they ruled by virtue of their virtuosity. For Mencius the 'true King' likewise exercises the highest degree of humaneness through the transformative power of his virtue. And Xunzi similarly recommends rule by the 'humane authority' of the 'sage king'.⁸¹ So, with respect to our current situation something else becomes clear: not only do we need to get money and incompetents *out* of politics—we also need to get some sagacity and *philosophy in*.

The 'sage king' who rules by resonating with all the energies of the cosmos remained an ideal that was never attained in the mundane world of real politics, but at least it kept the minds of Chinese political thinkers alive to the benefits of an education geared toward political meritocracy, where the most competent at governing are in charge.

7.6 Open Letter to President Xi Jinping

President Xi Jinping
 General Secretary Office
 Central Committee of the Communist Party of China
 Zhongnanhai Ximen, Fuyou Street
 Xicheng District, BEIJING 100017
 People's Republic of China

Vienna, May 4th 2019

Dear President Xi,

Please excuse my encroaching upon your valuable time, and just in case you've come across the name Parkes before, let me introduce myself in the interests of what they call 'full disclosure'.

Although I'm a Scot, three quarters anyway, my father's father's family was English: hence the not so Scottish name of Parkes. And from the little I know of my ancestry, I'm afraid I might be related to Sir Harry Smith Parkes (1828-85), whose name you may know because some historians hold him responsible for the events that ignited the Second Opium War, when he was the acting British consul in Canton. Though a man of considerable abilities, he was also arrogant and a hothead.⁸² (Please excuse and just ignore these endnote markers: they're for a book I'm writing.)

At the end of that wretched War, the temporary detainment of Sir Harry and other envoys was the pretext for the looting and burning of the magnificent Yuanming Yuan by British and French forces in 1860.⁸³ I saw the ruins with great sadness when I first visited what was left of the Gardens of Perfect Brightness in the mid-1980s (when the site was more or less deserted). Since I don't believe that anyone ever said they were sorry for that unconscionable act of cultural vandalism, I now extend my sincerest apologies, for what they're worth.

At any rate, I've been thinking about China a lot since you became president, and I'm especially interested in your philosophy of socialism with some 'traditional' Chinese characteristics.⁸⁴ I would like to confirm that I'm understanding it properly, and to make a few diplomatic suggestions on the basis of what I believe I understand.

Back in 2014 a Chinese colleague in Shanghai gave me the English translation of the first book of your speeches, The Governance of China. Since I teach philosophy for a living, I was delighted to read in the Publisher's Note at the beginning that the speeches in the book 'embody the philosophy of the new central leadership'.

However, I'm sorry to say that the point of the book, 'to enhance the rest of the world's understanding of the Chinese government's

philosophy', seems to have been lost on most readers of the English translation (at least to judge from those I've talked to and the reviews I've read). That's a pity because we in the West really need to cooperate with you on tackling the climate crisis, and I'm sure that work would go better if we acquainted ourselves with your Party's philosophy and expressed due appreciation of it.

You are saying that Deng Xiaoping's socialism with Chinese characteristics is now socialism with traditional, philosophical Chinese characteristics -- as exemplified in your frequent quoting of passages from the Confucian and Daoist classics. I very much appreciate the emphasis on ancient Chinese philosophy, and the idea that governance works best when the rulers are supremely competent at governing, and also virtuous in the sense of governing for the sake of the people rather than themselves. This seems quite compatible with Marxist socialism, which would similarly advocate a benevolent meritocracy. But did you know that it's also the ideal of Plato's *Republic*, which is a major source of our political philosophy in the West?

And when it comes to international relations, that passage you like to cite from the beginning of the Daxue [Great Learning] is perfectly relevant to our current geopolitical situation: If the rulers engage in self-cultivation in the context of their families, the power of their virtuosity will extend to the state, and from there to the plurality of states, and eventually will bring peace to All-under-the-Heavens. This last notion, tianxia, seems especially apt in today's globalised world. (You may have come across Professor Zhao Tingyang's writings on this topic.⁸⁵)

Considering your fondness for the Chinese classics, it's interesting that in political philosophy you emphasise Confucian and Daoist ideas, according to which the best way to govern is non-coercively, by having those in power set shining examples that people will naturally be drawn to follow. And similarly with interstate relations, where the Middle Kingdom uses the power of its virtuosity (especially in governing) to draw surrounding states into its orbit, rather than using military force to expand the Empire.

By contrast you quote from the Legalist tradition -- which regards the Confucian view as hopelessly idealistic and encourages the ruler to use brute force if necessary to stay in power, and coercion and punishments to maintain order -- only on rare occasions. This makes it hard to know how to respond when people criticise the Communist Party for acting in distinctly Legalist ways, as when the government is heavy-handed in dealing with dissent domestically and aggressive in its military activities in the South China Sea.

I know that you and your predecessors are interested in 'soft power' as a way of making space for China on the world stage, and events like the Beijing Olympics and the Shanghai Expo were certainly impressive. You are also spending millions on those Confucian Institutes (some of which work well, in my experience) in order to increase Chinese soft power. But every time you jail a human rights lawyer, or round up Uyghurs in Xinjiang, you lose all that soft power immediately. You see! everyone says: the Chinese Communist Party is just another authoritarian regime that can't tolerate the slightest dissent. Then all those millions spent on the Olympics and Expos and Institutes have gone to waste.

After forty years in the United States I came to appreciate certain features of the vernacular, and especially the distinction between 'talking the talk' and 'walking the walk' (what a difference a consonant makes). You have been talking the Confucian and Daoist talk, which is just what the world needs right now; but the walking has been more along Legalist lines: coercion and punishments.

But as far as I can tell, you are in an unusually strong position, with so much power that the humorous epithet 'Emperor Xi' isn't just a joke. You enjoy a high level of popular support domestically, and you come across as an upright character untainted by corruption or scandal. So when you talk about the need for the ruler to be competent and benefit the people, and to develop through self-cultivation such virtuosity that the people are drawn to follow his example -- this all rings true.

And since your anti-corruption drive has been effective, so that people can admire your colleagues in government as well, why not trust the Confucian soft power of your collective moral authority and discontinue the Legalist programme of domestic coercion and suppression of dissenting voices? You have made no secret of your enthusiasm for history, literature, and philosophy: so why not restore the venerable practice of 'remonstrance' so that qualified commentators can offer constructive criticism when appropriate?

I'm sure you're familiar with the major threats to China that are coming from global warming, the two most dire being the heating of the North China Plain and sea level rise in Shanghai and other coastal cities. Given the high domestic priority of cutting back on fossil fuel burning to reduce air pollution, your current energy policies are perfectly aligned with the global need to address the climate crisis. It's admirable that China is phasing out coal as an energy source, though not so admirable to be financing coal-fired plants in Africa and other places. It would surely be profitable enough, and far more responsible, to promote renewable energy abroad as well as domestically -- for the sake of the planet.

There's a report you may not be familiar with, and that I highly recommend: the result of a collaboration between the Stockholm Environment Institute and the Chinese Economists 50 Forum, it's called The Economics of Climate Change in China: Toward a Low-Carbon Economy. This comprehensive study shows how China can make the transition to a low-carbon economy 'while still maintaining economic growth and aspirations for development' and 'within the finite global carbon budget for greenhouse gas emissions'.⁸⁶ This would require a rapid phasing out of coal, abroad as well as in China.

Your promotion of moderation, coming from the Daoist and Buddhist traditions, is perfect for the times we're facing now. It's a pity that the Chinese middle classes have fallen for consumerism in such a big way, and I hope the CCP can persuade them that the pursuit of greater wealth and ever more pleasure is a dead end. In any case they cannot be allowed to continue to aggravate the climate crisis by their conspicuous levels of consumption. A substantial obstacle in the way of protecting your citizens from the dire effects of global heating is the general lack of public concern about the climate crisis, which is significantly lower in China than in most other countries.⁸⁷ The Party is surely in a position to rectify this detrimental lack of awareness.

The absence of any kind of leadership from the world's former hegemon, the United States, opens the way for China to lead global action to cope with the climate crisis. Please ignore the petty people who in their concern for profit want China to do nothing about the climate crisis until the United States commits itself too. If you do the Confucian thing of courageously taking the lead, you could achieve the greatest soft power coup of all time, for which China would earn the admiration and gratitude of the whole world.

I'm sorry, I've already taken up more of your time than I wanted, and must get back to writing about these very topics. So please excuse me as I take my leave, wishing you all the best for the difficult task of securing the well-being of your people.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Graham Parkes". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Graham Parkes

Notes

- ¹ Mark Elvin, *The Retreat of the Elephants: An Environmental History of China* (New Haven & London; Yale University Press, 2004). Donald Hughes, *Pan's Travail: Environmental Problems of the Ancient Greeks and Romans* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), chapter 3, and *An Environmental History of the World: Humankind's Changing Role in the Community of Life* (London & New York: Routledge, 2009), chapter 3.
- ² Elvin, *Retreat of the Elephants*, 471 (emphasis added).
- ³ The traditional maxim is *Tian ren he yi* (Heaven and Humans are One), while Mao's slogans are *Ren ding sheng tian* (Man Must Conquer Nature) and *Zhansheng ziran* (Overcome the Natural). See Judith Shapiro, *Mao's War against Nature: Politics and the Environment in Revolutionary China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 10. Another excellent, and broader, study is Elizabeth C. Economy, *The River Runs Black: The Environmental Challenge to China's Future* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 2004). The pioneer in this field is Vaclav Smil: see his *China's Environmental Crisis: An Enquiry into the Limits of National Development* (London & New York: Routledge, 1993), and *China's Past, China's Future: Energy, Food, Environment* (London & New York: Routledge, 2004).
- ⁴ See Frank Dikötter, *Mao's Great Famine* ***.
- ⁵ Chai Jing, *Under the Dome* (2015), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6X2uw1QGQM> (23 Jun 2016); Daniel K. Gardner, *Environmental Pollution in China: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 144-45.
- ⁶ See Gardner, *Environmental Pollution*, 133, and the studies he refers to in the endnotes.
- ⁷ Judith Shapiro, *China's Environmental Challenges*, second edition (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016); Gardner, *Environmental Pollution*.
- ⁸ Jonathan Watts, *When a Billion Chinese Jump: Voices from the Frontline of Climate Change* (London: Faber & Faber, 2010).
- ⁹ Jos G. J. Olivier, *Trends in Global CO2 Emissions: 2013 Report* (The Hague: PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, 2013), 15. The World Bank, 'CO2 Emissions (metric tons per capita)', <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.ATM.CO2E.PC/countries?display=default>, accessed 29 April 2016.
- ¹⁰ See Zhao Bin, 'Consumerism, Confucianism, Communism: Making Sense of China Today', *New Left Review*, 1/222 (1997): 43-59. For more from a philosophical perspective, see Geir Sigurdsson, 'Frugalists, anti-consumers, and prosumers: Chinese philosophical perspectives on consumerism', in Alison Hulme (ed.), *The Changing Landscape of China's Consumerism* (Oxford: Chandos Publishing, 2014).

- ¹¹ Xi, *Governance*, 407 (citing the *Kongzi Jia Yu*), also 399-412. See Paul G. Harris, 'Chinese Responsibility for Climate Change', in Paul G. Harris, ed., *China's Responsibility for Climate Change: Ethics, fairness and environmental policy* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2011), 223-33.
- ¹² Camilo Mora, et al., 'Global risk of deadly heat', *Nature Climate Change*, vol. 7 (July 2015): 501-07.
- ¹³ See John Chung-En Liu, 'Low carbon plot: climate change skepticism with Chinese characteristics', *Environmental Sociology* (2015), vol. 1/4:280-92; Jeff Dembicki, 'The Convenient Disappearance of Climate Change Denial in China', *Foreign Policy*, 31 May 2017, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/05/31/the-convenient-disappearance-of-climate-change-denial-in-china/> (12 Jun 2017).
- ¹⁴ * Low levels of concern about GW in China * refs.
- ¹⁵ See Gardner, *Environmental Pollution*, 167ff and 194ff.
- ¹⁶ Barbara Finamore, *Will China Save the Planet?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018).
- ¹⁷ *Republic* 557b-558c.
- ¹⁸ Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws* (1748), 8.2, 8.3.
- ¹⁹ Plato, *Republic* 558c, 557b, 563d-564a, 558b.
- ²⁰ I am not persuaded by Karl Popper's reading of the *Republic* in *The Open Society and its Enemies*, vol. I, *The Spell of Plato* (London: Routledge, 1945), though it has been well received by readers inclined to see Plato as advocating totalitarianism. Most accomplished Plato scholars dismiss the book as wrong-headed. Although Popper clearly read widely in the dialogues, his interpretation is deeply coloured by his personal situation at the time, and by his determination to see Plato as an advocate of totalitarianism.
- ²¹ Plato, *Republic* 342e, 488a-c; see also 346e-347e.
- ²² Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, III.5.
- ²³ Aristotle, *Politics* 1319b.
- ²⁴ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.14, I.13.
- ²⁵ Berggruen & Gardels, *Intelligent Governance*, 29.
- ²⁶ J. M. Coetzee, *Diary of a Bad Year* (London: Vintage, 2008), 8, 15.
- ²⁷ 'Lament of the Five Sons', in *The Most Venerable Book: Shang Shu / Shu Jing*, trans. Martin Palmer (London: Penguin, 2014), 37.
- ²⁸ *Mencius* 3A:4.
- ²⁹ *Xunzi*, trans. John Knoblock (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 9.4, 2:97.

- ³⁰ Xi, *Governance*, 188. Bell, *The China Model*, 168; Kerry Brown, *CEO, China: The Rise of Xi Jinping* (London & New York: I. B. Tauris, 2016), 65.
- ³¹ Bell, *The China Model*, 179, 178.
- ³² Unknown Authors, 'A Communiqué on the Current State of the Ideological Sphere', April 2013, available from *China File* at <http://www.chinafile.com/document-9-chinafile-translation#start>, accessed 20 June 2016.
- ³³ See, for example, Tongdong Bai, *China: The Political Philosophy of the Middle Kingdom* (London & New York: Zed Books, 2012), Daniel A. Bell, *The China Model: Political Meritocracy and the Limits of Democracy* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015), Jiang Qing, *A Confucian Constitutional Order: How China's Ancient Path Can Shape Its Political Future* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013), Yan Xuetong, *Ancient Chinese Thought, Modern Chinese Power* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011).
- ³⁴ Jiang, *A Confucian Constitutional Order*, 33.
- ³⁵ Jiang, 'The Way of Humane Authority', in *A Confucian Constitutional Order*, 27, 35, 28.
- ³⁶ Bai, *China: The Political Philosophy*, 77-79. See also Christopher H. Achen and Larry M. Bartels, *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government* (Princeton University Press, 2016).
- ³⁷ Martin Gilens and Benjamin I. Page, 'Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens', *Perspectives on Politics* (2014), vol. 12/3:564-81.
- ³⁸ Kevin Rudd, 'US-China 21: The Future of US-China Relations under Xi Jinping' (Harvard Kennedy School, 2015), 10, available from http://asiasociety.org/files/USChina21_English_1509.pdf (21 May 2016); Xi Jinping, quoted by Orville Schell in 'China Strikes Back!', *New York Review of Books*, 23 Oct 2014.
- ³⁹ Xi, *Governance*, 3.
- ⁴⁰ See Stephen Platt, *Imperial Twilight: The Opium War and the End of China's Last Golden Age* (London: Atlantic Books, 2018).
- ⁴¹ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (London: Penguin, 2018), 30.
- ⁴² For an excellent account of the Rebellion and its leader, see Jonathan Spence, *God's Chinese Son: The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan* (New York & London: Norton and Co., 1996).
- ⁴³ Xi, *Governance*, 89.
- ⁴⁴ Orville Schell and Susan Shirk et al. , 'Course Correction: Toward an Effective and Sustainable China Policy' (New York: Asia Society, 2019), 9-10. A

collaboration between the Asia Society's Center on U.S.-China Relations and the 21st Century China Center at UC San Diego.

- ⁴⁵ Schell and Shirk, 'Course Correction', 11-12, 27.
- ⁴⁶ Ren Peng et al., 'China's Involvement in Coal-Fired Power Projects along the Belt and Road', Global Environmental Institute (Beijing, 2017), at http://www.geichina.org/_upload/file/report/China's_Involvement_in_Coal-fired_Power_Projects_OBOR_EN.pdf.
- ⁴⁷ Xi, *Governance*, 327; also ***.
- ⁴⁸ Schell and Shirk, 'Course Correction', 32.
- ⁴⁹ See Ana Swanson, 'A New Red Scare is Reshaping Washington', *New York Times*, 20 July 2019.
- ⁵⁰ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, I.23. Graham Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?* (Boston & New York: Houghton, Mifflin, Harcourt, 2017). Allison's translation of Thucydides's statement is different, and adds emphasis: 'It was the *rise* of Athens and the *fear* that this instilled in Sparta that made *war* inevitable.' (*Destined for War*, vii).
- ⁵¹ In 1999 David Hall and Roger Ames wrote that we in the West 'need to enter a conversation with China in which the terms are set equally by both parties'. *Democracy of the Dead: Dewey, Confucius, and the Hope for Democracy in China* (Chicago: Open Court, 1999), 10. We have learned some more since then, but continue to insist on dialogue in and on *our* terms.
- ⁵² Kerry Brown, *CEO, China: The Rise of Xi Jinping* (London & New York: I. B. Tauris, 2016), 196-97.
- ⁵³ Hall and Ames, *Democracy of the Dead*, 58.
- ⁵⁴ Xi, *Governance*, 190, citing Confucius, *Analects* 15.6 (see also 1.13, 1.14, , 4.22, 4.24, 12.3, 14.27).
- ⁵⁵ Henry Rosemont, Jr. and Roger T. Ames, *The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence: A Philosophical Translation of the Xiaojing* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), 114 (emphasis added). This text is from the fourth century BCE.
- ⁵⁶ Confucius, *Analects* 13.18; Plato, *Euthyphro* 4b.
- ⁵⁷ Xi, *Governance*, 69, 64; 254.
- ⁵⁸ Confucius, *Analects* 12.22; Matthew 22:39.
- ⁵⁹ Zhang Fenzhi, *Xi Jinping: How to Read Confucius and Other Chinese Classical Thinkers* (New York: CN Times Books, 2015), VI.19, (source text, *Mencius* 1A.1), VIII.16 (*Mencius* 2A.6).
- ⁶⁰ Xi, *Governance*, 364.
- ⁶¹ Xi, *Governance*, 65.

- ⁶² Poem 170 in Arthur Waley (trans.), *The Book of Songs: The Ancient Chinese Classic of Poetry* (New York: Grove Press, 1960).
- ⁶³ Confucius, *Analects* 2.20, 5.16; also 6.30, 12.7, 13.9, 14.42, 20.2. *Mencius* 1A:4, 1A:7; also: 'The people are of supreme importance; the altars to the gods of earth and grain come next; last comes the ruler.' (7B:14)
- ⁶⁴ Xi, *Governance*, 187, citing the *Great Learning*.
- ⁶⁵ Aristotle, *Politics* 1253a19-21.
- ⁶⁶ Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote that 'the family may be regarded as the first model of political society: the leader corresponds to the father, the people to the children' (*The Social Contract* [1762], I.2). Hegel, in the *Philosophy of Right* (1820) III.1-2, argues that ethical life begins 'in its natural form' in the family, and then develops further in the contexts of civil society and ultimately the state.
- ⁶⁷ Xi, *Governance*, 38; also 190 (quoting Gu Yanwu, an early Qing dynasty historian); Plato, *Republic* 412c-e.
- ⁶⁸ Plato, *Timaeus* 90d, *Laws* 902c-903d.
- ⁶⁹ Xi, *Governance*, 283-87.
- ⁷⁰ See Robert Eno, *The Great Learning and the Doctrine of the Mean: An online teaching translation*, I.B, indiana.edu/~p374/Daxue-Zhongyong_(Eno-2016).pdf (12 May 2017). See Xi, *Governance*, 187.
- ⁷¹ For an excellent account of the role of ritual propriety in Confucian education see Geir Sigurdsson, *Confucian Propriety and Ritual Learning: A Philosophical Interpretation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015).
- ⁷² The sixth art was mathematics, which was presumably involved physical training in the use of some kind of abacus. For a classic discussion of the Six Arts, see Xu Gan (171-281), *Balanced Discourses: A Bilingual Edition*, trans. John Makeham, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2002), chapter 7.
- ⁷³ Plato, *Republic* 395d, also 377b.
- ⁷⁴ Confucius, *Analects* 19.9, 8.8.
- ⁷⁵ *The Book of Rites*, trans. James Legge (Literary Licensing, LLC, 2014), XVII, 1.2-3; 1.23; 1.28.
- ⁷⁶ Plato, *Republic* 401d.
- ⁷⁷ Plato, *Republic* 432a.
- ⁷⁸ Plato, *Timaeus*, 36e, 47d, 90c-d.
- ⁷⁹ *Xunzi* 10.4 (2:123). Xunzi also writes, 'The sage is the pitch pipe of the Way. The Way of the world has its pitch pipe in the sage' 8.7 (2:76).
- ⁸⁰ *Republic* 473d, 488a-89a.

- ⁸¹ Plato, *Republic* 473c-e, 412d-e; Confucius, *Analects* 8:18, 8:19, 15:5; Mencius 2A:3, also 4A:9, &A:9, 7B:4; *Xunzi*, chapter 11, ‘The True King and the Hegemon’.
- ⁸² See J. Y. Wong, *Deadly Dreams: Opium, Imperialism and the Arrow War in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), chs 1-3. The author admits to being ‘rather severe with Sir Harry Parkes’ (xxviii).
- ⁸³ See Young-tsu Wong, *A Paradise Lost: The imperial garden Yuanming Yuan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), ch. 7.
- ⁸⁴ See the many references to ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’ in the index of Xi, *Governance*.
- ⁸⁵ *Zhao Tingyang, *Tianxia* references ***.
- ⁸⁶ Fan Gang, Nicholas Stern *et al.*, *The Economics of Climate Change in China: Toward a Low-Carbon Economy* (London: Routledge, 2011), xvii-xviii.
- ⁸⁷ See, for example, Xinsheng Liu *et al.*, ‘Examining Public Concern about Global Warming and Climate Change in China’, *The China Quarterly*, 8 Aug 2019.