



Harmony

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What is it?

The relevant definition of harmony refers to a state of equilibrium in a human relationship. It is an ongoing process in which people ceaselessly endeavor to accommodate each other's needs in order to reach an interdependent fellowship and cooperation in the network of human communication. Although it is a universal goal for human societies to pursue a harmonious state of interaction, every society tends to have a different emphasis on the practice of the concept.

Who uses the concept?

While harmony is a universal goal of human societies, it is the Chinese people who most emphasize the concept. Chinese culture treats harmony (*he xie*) as the cardinal value. Only through harmony can a conflict free network of human relationship be achieved. It is harmony that mirrors the indirect, subtle, adaptive, consensual, and agreeable style of Chinese communication, in contrast to the Western direct, expressive, dialectical, divisive, and sermonic style of communication dictated by the axiological assumption of confrontation. Thus, the ability to develop and maintain harmony in the process of communication becomes the key to judging whether a person is socially and morally competent in Chinese society.

Fit with intercultural dialogue?

If we treat intercultural dialogue as an infinite game played by two cultural beings, aiming to extend the degree of mutual understanding, to explode the force of mutual respect, and to expand the space of mutual acceptance, then it should refer to a harmonious state of equilibrium and co-production originated from the mutual exchange of verbal and

nonverbal messages between *yin* and *yang* or the two opposite poles. It is harmony that lubricates the boundary of *yin* and *yang* by developing the interculturality, in which stereotypes and prejudices are dissolved and interpenetration and interfusion between the two parties are activated.

What work remains?

As the world becomes more interconnected and interdependent, how to nourish and maintain a multicultural co-existence to establish a global civic culture will first require the cultivation of a global community embedded in harmonious interaction. In other words, harmony is not only a concept for academic research, but also important in its practical application. In addition, scholars need to treat harmony as not only the ultimate goal or the end in human society, but also the means of human interaction. The integration of theoretical and practical aspects of the concept reflects the value and its critical role in this globalizing society.

Resources

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