

Prof. Rex Li's Writings

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Title: East and West: Similarities and Differences

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Summary/ Abstract: This is a framework on the similarities and differences between the East and the West. I discover some underlying concepts that are perennial and universal.

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East and West: Similarities and Differences

	East / China	West
Differences	Collective	Individualistic
	Conformity / Control / Constraint	Freedom
	Follow the rule	Creativity
	Family-based	Feudal-based
	Harmony	Challenge / fighting
	Hierarchy	Equality
	Autocratic	Democratic
	Man in roles (君君、臣臣、父父)	Human emancipation (人的解放)
Similarities	(君權神授 / 天子)	Christianity / God
	秦、漢、明 醬缸歷史文化	Middle age / Dark age
	儒家 / 大同說	Christian Ideal / Utopia
	王權(由上而下)	神/君權(由上而下)
	士大夫	Church controls knowledge
	中華帝國侵略	帝國主義侵略
	愛(泛愛，兼愛，平等(?))	神愛世人、平等
	民本	民主
	中庸	Aristotle (Golden mean)
	經商	Capitalism / business

(1) In my 20s / 30s, I discovered the East – West difference as the collective and the individual. This explains a lot of cultural differences.

(2) At the same time, I see similarity in domain but they are different in meaning and ideas:

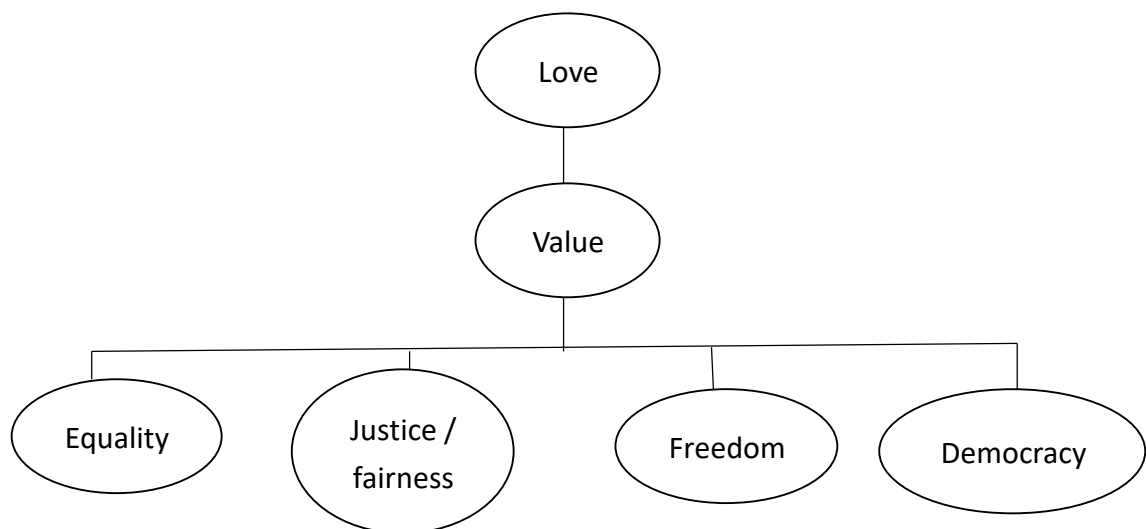
West		East
Democracy (民主)	vs	For the people (民本)
Utopia / Republic	vs	? (大同)

(3) In recent years, I discover similarity: same human species in different environment and setting creating different culture, philosophy for similar goals (?)

(4) Both East / West were autocratic. Both have dark ages, both had hierarchy, both exerted control on people. Both have skills to improve life (hunting, farming, cooking, living) and both have means of resource allocation. Both have high ideals too.

(5) The rise of science transforms the earth and human history.
Science – rationality serves to lead us to the present world.

(6) A few underlying concepts are perennial and universal:



(7) Reflecting on modern Chinese history:

(a) 中國原是一個共同文化 – 儒家思想和歷史，民族。以往是朝代天下觀，在西方壓力下形成國家觀念。

- (b) 百年中國滄桑史，有謂中國爭扎求存，廿世紀上半葉最大危機是日本侵華，其實只是另一次外族入侵（五胡、金、元、清），以失敗告終。
- (c) 廿世紀下半葉中國大一統，便是在民族自主，國家統一的大形勢下立足世界 (cf Ottoman Empire and Turkey)
- (d) 此所謂「和平崛起」
- (e) 「和平崛起」背後是什麼理念？

半西(Marxism)半中(Chinese aristocracy)？民族尊嚴？國家神聖領土？中式道路？
什麼價值觀？如何立足 21 世紀？