

Preface to the English Edition

“Culture” seems to be a concept with difficultly defined boundary both in connotation and in denotation but remains flexible and widespread in application. Such phenomenon particularly exists in Chinese academic context. Different subjects share little normalized common view on culture. Due to speakers’ different western or eastern knowledge background, what and how to talk about culture all depends on their own wish, imagination, and their topic intention.

Therefore, this book, as invited, aims to give a description of the nature and common state of culture on the perspective of philosophy and in the way of Chinese traditional thinking. It also attempts to confront the history and reality and applies them to the reflection and critique of Chinese traditional culture and the development and exploration of Chinese culture modernization.

In the author’s opinion, the nature of culture rests with “humanization” including humanizing human himself, that is, “civilization.” So in the analysis and discussion of culture, we lay importance on human’s lifestyle and thinking method and finally combine culture with human’s own living and growing right and duty. While in the reflection and prospect of Chinese culture, we follow the ideas such as (in culture) “What do we have?”, “What are we lack of?”, “What do we want?”, and “How should we do?.” Obviously, these ideas help to surpass the controversy over pure concept of culture and make the related theories and research methods broaden, profound, and complex, which produce more and sharper discussion- and debate-worthy issues about culture than other works.

As a set of “Chinese-styled” culture theories, we concern whether it will attract some attention in international academic dialogues and then become a new comment target and a new conversation platform and whether it will bring further mutual understanding and greater mutual consolidation to humanity thinking under different contexts. This calls for more cultural communication bridges and composes the original purpose of presenting this book to English readers.

This book was initially published in 2000 and ten years later revised into its second edition in 2010. Now, further necessary changes and adjustments have been made by the authors for translation and publishing abroad.

A statement must be made here that two of my students and close partners have participated in the whole process of writing this book from the initial manuscript to revisions; they are as follows:

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They have been cooperating with me for a long time in team research, deep discussion, individual writing, and cowriting. Although I am the person in charge of the whole book writing and organization, their contribution has inseparably gone through many details of this book. So I must take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Weiping Sun and Dr. Meitang Sun, and declare that they both own the same right as me to this book.

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