

An Analysis of Trade Wisdom in China's Excellent Traditional Economic Culture

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Abstract: In the rapid development of economic globalization, international trade has become the most basic carrier of economic exchanges between countries in the world. As a traditional trading country, the Chinese nation has generated valuable cultural thoughts in trade since ancient times, which is not only a good medicine to cure the paradox of modernity, but also the cultural soft power in international economic exchanges. The trade wisdom contained in the excellent traditional Chinese economic culture is the concentrated embodiment of the essence of the excellent traditional Chinese culture in the secular life. In ancient trade, China has always carried out the “distinction between justice and interests” and “harmony and symbiosis” throughout the whole process of economic behavior, endowed economic behavior with moral regulations, realized the unity of secular life and ethical values in the field of human care, and established an excellent ancient economic civilization.

Keywords: Ancient Trade; the Distinction between Righteousness and Benefit; Harmony and Coexistence

The process of economic globalization needs to be shaped by the values of civilization and harmony. The trade wisdom contained in the excellent traditional Chinese economy and culture is the concentrated embodiment of the essence of the excellent traditional Chinese culture in the secular life. Under the historical orientation of the new era, actively excavating the trade wisdom in the excellent traditional Chinese economy and culture can not only “cure” the adverse consequences caused by the paradox of Western modernity, but also provide positive value support for the construction of a community of human destiny.

1. The “difference between righteousness and interests” contains Oriental trade wisdom

In order to ensure the stability of the cooperation between the two sides of the trade, it is necessary to establish an external restriction mechanism, and “Yi” is the concept expression of this restriction mechanism. “Justice” is the trade consensus gradually formed after countless transactions in the long-term social and economic production and life. It is the behavior rule of ancient Chinese with universal significance, and can fully interpret the core value of human relations. The purpose of “justice and profit differentiation” is to identify the harm of extreme egoism and fighting for “profit”, so as to achieve “justice to profit” and promote win-win cooperation through “justice”. Therefore, the ancients advocated the use of “justice” to restrict people’s profit-seeking behavior and promote cooperation between the two sides of trade.

1.1 Ensure “harmony generates wealth” between the two sides of trade

If viewed purely from the standpoint of trade self-interest, one of the countries with trade relations faces a crisis, and the other side helps out in exchange for the economic return of the other side in the next few years with great uncertainty, it is obviously not a profit-maximizing choice. For self-interested individuals, the choice to maximize their interests is not to provide any help to the other side, and take the opportunity to launch a war to annex the other side, but this will inevitably lead to the people’s livelihood, the collapse of all industries, the interruption of trade, and the harm will be all the people of the two countries. It can be seen that “justice” is the core concept of promoting mutual benefit and win-win between the two sides, which not only involves the realization of the interests of both sides of the trade, but also involves promoting the progress of the overall interests of society. The pursuit of only “profit” and the destruction of the most basic cooperative relations in trade activities will undermine the productive base of social development.

1.2 Ensure stable relations between trading partners

The “difference between righteousness and interest” is rooted in the soil of traditional Chinese social life, and the ethics and morals

linked by blood, geography and kinship are used as the basis of “righteousness” in social communication. The group in common life is regarded as an ethical and emotional community with “family” relationship, and the value orientation is to maintain its integrity and stability. From the perspective of cooperative relations, the ancients attributed all social relations to father and son, brothers, husband and wife, old and young, king and minister, and only everyone followed the “righteousness” and maintained a stable cooperative relationship between each other, in order to achieve the interests of a family and a country to maximize. On the contrary, if we fail to abide by “justice”, we will inevitably fail to maintain a long-term and stable cooperative relationship, which may eventually lead to vicious competition and conflict. With the development of commodity economy, trade competition is becoming more and more fierce, and businessmen begin to participate in the competition with the strength of the group, and the group organization of businessmen comes into being, and further develops from the initial kinship organization to the geographical organization and the business organization. Because of this, businessmen choose business partners very carefully, do not casually establish alliances, to “justice” intersection, partnership management, help each other in times of trouble.

2. The idea of “harmony and co-existence” led to the prosperity of ancient trade

The ancient Chinese trade road was not driven by pure commercial interests, but generated a channel of economic cooperation in the exchange of political alliances. The way of trade and commerce not only supported the economic prosperity of China’s ancient society, but also brought about the mutual exchange, learning and integration of different cultures and Chinese culture. The most famous ancient trade road is the Silk Road. It is a peaceful road connecting the East and the West and enhancing mutual understanding among countries. It is a civilized road to spread Chinese culture and absorb the essence of world culture. It is a green road that promotes the sustainable economic development of all countries along the way.

2.1 The road to civilization of “harmony without diversity”

“Harmony without diversity” is the core thought of the traditional Chinese culture of “harmony” and the most basic value concept of the ancient Chinese people in governing the country and dealing with the world. The world exists as a unity composed of different living beings, and this unity is the unity in the best state of “harmony” but not “identical”. “Harmony without diversity” is the wisdom of dealing with the differences and contradictions between countries in ancient trade, respecting the cultural diversity of various countries, accepting the uniqueness of different cultures, eliminating the estrangement and conflicts between different civilizations through cultural exchanges and mutual learning, allowing various civilizations to coexist in harmony, and jointly resisting the concept flaws that are determined to transform or even replace other civilizations. This will promote mutual understanding, mutual respect, mutual trust and mutual humility among countries and maintain the harmonious development of world relations. “Exchanges and mutual learning are essential requirements for the development of civilizations. Only through exchanges and mutual learning with other civilizations can we maintain the vitality of life.”^[1] In the process of promoting the interaction of world civilizations, the ancient trade road has also led to new challenges, that is, to promote mutual understanding, mutual respect and mutual trust through the communication and exchange of cultures of different countries, so as to contribute to the harmonious progress of world culture with a more positive and open concept of coexistence and common prosperity.

2.2 The road to peace of “unity among all nations”

“Concorde” comes from “Keming Junde, to pro nine. The nine ethnic groups are harmonious, and the people are peaceful. The people are clear, the harmony is universal, and the people are in change.”^[2] It is a concentrated embodiment of the traditional Chinese culture of “harmony”, and contains the Chinese nation’s clear sense of responsibility and spirit of “governing the world with benevolence and justice” and “taking the world as its own responsibility”. “China has a tradition, that is, to maintain the independence of its own nation, but not to expand outward, and its ideal mode of ethnic relations is to eliminate the” harmony of all countries “through moral education. This is China’s fine tradition of loving peace.”^[3] The idea of “harmony among nations” played a very important role in the ancient trade exchanges. When participating in commercial and trade activities, China abides by the principle of harmonious and friendly relations with neighboring countries, dedicates itself to promoting harmonious relations, security, stability and economic prosperity of neighboring countries, and implements an economic and foreign policy of amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness. The time-honored Silk Road is not only a channel for

the exchange of goods, but also a road to connect people's hearts and deepen friendship. Generations of people committed to the Silk Road have built a bridge of cooperation and a bond of peace between China and the rest of the world through their unremitting efforts. China has brought Chinese goods, Chinese culture, the goodwill of the Chinese people and the image of China as a friendly big country to the countries along the route on the principle of equality and reciprocity. Thus won the trust of all trading countries along the line. The Silk Road gradually became a model of mutual benefit and win-win cooperation between countries, which promoted the positive interaction of the world at that time.

2.3 A sustainable development path of “harmony between nature and man”

“Harmony between man and nature” is the destination of traditional Chinese culture of harmony. As a vivid expression and identification category of the most basic world outlook of Chinese philosophy, it contains simple materialism and simple dialectics. Qian Mu believes: “The ancient Chinese people believed that the most noble and greatest thing about ‘life’ and ‘destiny’ is that they can merge them into one.”^[4] Here, Qian Mu interprets the traditional Chinese philosophical category of “harmony between nature and man” and dialectically finds the relationship between man and nature. The basic idea of “unity of heaven and man” regards man and nature as an interlinked and coupled unity of life, pursues the form of co-prosperity and integration of “one” body, so as to achieve the harmonious development of man and nature as the highest ideal state, and reflects a highly conscious holistic view. Throughout the history of the development of traditional Chinese economy and culture, although it has experienced the change of dynasties, the change of times and the collision of various ideological trends, the concept of “unity of nature and man” has been running through the whole historical process. The ancient trade road well absorbed the idea of “harmony between nature and man”. Natural resources should be protected and the principles of rational use, control of desire and moderate demand for natural resources should be upheld, so that the sustainable development of trade is possible and feasible. Not contrary to the time, timely action is the prosperity of trade, wealth, economic development and even the country's prosperity and strength of the people.

3. Conclusion

Practice in different nation states will have distinct national characteristics, which are significantly reflected in the economic consciousness of the nation.^[5] To sum up, the above is not only the specific expression of the important issues of “the debate of justice and interests” and “harmony and co-existence” in business exchanges, but also the trade wisdom contained in the excellent traditional Chinese economic culture.

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