

Interviewee: Wenshan Jia, Ph. D., Professor, Department of Communication Studies, Chapman University, USA

Interviewer: Simone Pieranni, Reporter of Il Manifesto, a national newspaper in Italy

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Simone Pieranni: In which way Hong Kong's protests will affect, or not, the Plenum?

Wenshan Jia: The only way Hong Kong's protests will affect the Plenum would be more tightening of the security, I think. It would also make the leadership more united and believe more strongly in Xi's vision of the Chinese dream of the Chinese civilization renaissance. Xi keeps a low profile in dealing with the Hong Kong's protests because he must have been busy preparing the Plenum and does not want Hong Kong protests to take over the spotlight from the upcoming Plenum. Hong Kong protests, if managed well (so far they have been so), would help consolidate his power at the Plenum rather than weaken it.

Simone Pieranni: Will HK could affect other Chinese regions (i.e., Tibet, Xinjiang)?

Wenshan Jia: No. Tibet and Xinjiang had their share of incidents earlier this year. Xi'-Li style mechanism has been in place to prevent such occurrences in both Tibet and Xinjiang.

Simone Pieranni: In which way China is going to approach the rule of law during the plenum

Wenshan Jia: I think that the rule of law will have the following achievements: 1) Legal corruption will be uprooted; 2) Legal practice will be made more professional. This means that laws will be followed and applied unlike in the past many laws have been passed but never practiced. This also means that while the CCP will provide the leadership in the field of law, law will be given more independence and autonomy.

Simone Pieranni: How can we define, today, Xi's leadership?

Wenshan Jia: Xi's leadership could be defined as re-concentration of power for a stronger unity in CCP and the Chinese nation and a more unified vision to achieve the dream of the Chinese renaissance. So far, he has been quite successful.

Simone Pieranni: What do you think about today's Chinese identity?

Wenshan Jia: Today's Chinese identity is being reconstructed with a strategic shift towards embracing the Chinese tradition which is part of Xi's Chinese dream. In the past 140 years including the period of Chinese Communist Revolution, Chinese cultural identity has been shattered with the slogan "Down with the Confucian Temple". During the past 30 years, with the implementation of market economy, the Chinese cultural tradition has been squeezed to the corner again by the economic revolution. It seems to be the new Chinese cultural identity would be of three major sources: Chinese cultural tradition will be the social foundation, the Marxist-Maoist ideology will remain the main source of political leadership, unity, organization, and

social mobilization, and market economy will remain the major source of economic strength and a bridge to other cultures, particularly nation-states of free-markets.

Simone Pieranni: In which way do you think Chinese image has changed, or not, in Western countries during Xi's leadership?

Wenshan Jia: Western countries, particularly the US, instead of praising Xi's leadership for its stellar record of anti-corruption, feel surprised and even disappointed that under Xi's leadership, China appears to become more assertive (such as in the case of Diaoyu Islands), that China is going back to embrace its past such as restore Confucianism as part of the efforts for Chinese renaissance) instead of becoming more like the Western countries in politics. In my opinion, China will definitely embrace democracy in the Chinese way given the fact that several million Chinese youths have studied or are studying in the Western countries and about half have returned to China. However, the current priority is to create an environment so that Chinese will become Chinese again in that they will have basic literacy about Chinese civilization amidst the two opposing ideologies-Marxism-Maoism and Capitalism which both have taken roots in the Chinese politics and society. The synergy among Marxism-Confucianism-capitalism will most probably make China very resourceful and strong. My advice to the Western countries is to abandon the cultural superiority and cultural homogeneity and learn as much as possible about the Chinese cultural tradition and study the emerging synergy among the three ideologies which China is experimenting.

Simone Pieranni: I'd like to give you another question about confucianism. I mean, in which way there's a reprise of confucianism issues, in your opinion, in chinese society and in chinese politicians. It's something I'm very interested and there's a second question: is it possible confucianism bring China to change something in its political organization?

Wenshan Jia: To answer your first question, Xi and Li have already created a legal requirement based on Confucianism that children, by law, are required to visit their parents annually and give their necessary psychological and financial support. The Confucian type of moral and ritual education will be implemented across the country at all levels of education. Politicians will be likely selected on the basis of a synergistic mix of Marxist, Confucian and market economic competence which form the basis of meritocracy. For example, government officials who do not act Confucian ways in family life and social life may get demoted or removed from office. To answer your second question, while I do not foresee any political restructuring in CCP and Government based on Confucianism, I think a lot of Confucian symbolism will increase in places such as Tan An Men Square. At one time a couple of years ago, a Confucian temple was erected in front of National Museum, but later it was removed and put it on the side corner of National Museum. Perhaps, this statue will be put back in front of the National Museum. Perhaps, lots of Confucian type of civil organizations such as Confucian academies in various parts of the country will either recovered or created.