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China logra estabilizar su crecimiento

Por Xavier Fontdegloria

El País - 15/07/2015

El gigante asiático crece un 7% interanual entre abril y junio, sin cambios con respecto a los tres primeros meses del año, gracias al estímulo fiscal y monetario.

La economía china experimentó una expansión mayor de lo esperado por los analistas en el segundo trimestre del año al crecer a un ritmo anual del 7%, en línea con el dato de los tres primeros meses del año, según informó ayer la Oficina Nacional de Estadística (NBS, por sus siglas en inglés). Pese a la mejora, la tasa de crecimiento del gigante asiático es una de las más bajas de los últimos 25 años, aunque está en línea con las previsiones del Gobierno. El ritmo de desaceleración de China al comienzo del año se ha moderado y crece también al 7% en el conjunto del primer semestre.

Durante los últimos tres meses la segunda mayor economía mundial se ha enfrentado a numerosos retos. Los datos de abril fueron nefastos, como consecuencia del hundimiento del comercio exterior y unos niveles de producción industrial en mínimos e hicieron saltar las alarmas de una caída más aguda de lo esperado. El Gobierno chino respondió con un aumento del gasto –especialmente en infraestructuras– y el banco central interrumpió sus casi dos años de inacción: realizó dos recortes de los tipos de interés y redujo en dos ocasiones el coeficiente de caja de las entidades financieras del país en solo tres meses. A todo esto se le sumó un sector inmobiliario a la baja y, a finales de trimestre, una de las mayores crisis bursátiles que ha vivido el país en su historia.

Los últimos datos, sin embargo, indican que la actividad económica ha repuntado ligeramente: el crecimiento de la producción industrial aumentó del 5,9% en abril hasta el 6,8% en junio; el de las ventas al por menor del 10% al 10,6% y el comercio exterior pasó de una caída del 10,9% a un aumento del 1,9%.

Más demanda exterior

Los estímulos y la mejora de la demanda de los principales socios comerciales del país, la Unión Europea y Estados Unidos, contribuyeron a evitar que la tasa cayera por debajo de la barrera psicológica del 7%. El PIB chino aumentó un 7,4% en 2014. “El crecimiento se estabilizó, pero debemos ser conscientes de que las condiciones económicas internas y externas siguen siendo complicadas, la recuperación económica mundial es lenta

y tortuosa y las bases para la estabilización de la economía de China tienen que consolidarse”, aseguró un portavoz de la NBS.

Los analistas coinciden en que la economía china seguirá a la baja mientras Pekín profundiza en las reformas para virar hacia un modelo de crecimiento más sostenible que de un mayor protagonismo al consumo y al sector servicios en detrimento de la inversión y la manufactura. “El crecimiento seguirá moderándose a medida que la transición se consolide. Sin embargo, existen instrumentos a corto plazo que se pueden utilizar si el crecimiento se desacelera demasiado. Esto requiere de un equilibrio para que estos estímulos no socaven los esfuerzos de reforma que se han llevado a cabo en el último año y medio”, aseguró recientemente Karlis Smits, economista del Banco Mundial en China, en su último informe de perspectivas.

También habrá que tener en cuenta el efecto del descalabro de las Bolsas en la economía real. En menos de un mes los dos principales parques del país perdieron un tercio de su capitalización bursátil y el pánico se extendió entre los inversores. La intervención del Gobierno frenó la sangría a finales de la semana pasada, pero los mercados siguen siendo muy volátiles. Este miércoles, y a pesar del buen dato del PIB, el parque de Shanghái perdió un 3,3% y Shenzhen un 4,68%. Un informe de Credit Suisse asegura que el impacto del descalabro bursátil en las actividades de producción e inversión “debería ser limitado” porque las Bolsas representan una parte muy pequeña de la financiación agregada, cuya mayor fuente siguen siendo los préstamos bancarios. Un portavoz de la NBS no quiso hacer una predicción al respecto y simplemente se limitó a asegurar que la estabilidad de las Bolsas “es crucial” y que el Gobierno ha tomado “medidas esenciales” que han logrado este objetivo.

China será el banquero-rey en 2023

Según un informe de PricewaterhouseCoopers el sistema bancario chino superará al de Estados Unidos y se convertirá en el primero del mundo en menos de una década. También avanzan los bancos de países emergentes en relación a los bancos de los países centrales afectados por la crisis.

[China to become global banking king by 2023](#)

Reuters - 03/06/2011

China could leapfrog the United States to become the world's largest banking economy by 2023, 20 years earlier than expected, raising pressure on western banks to brush off the effects of the credit crisis and head east.

According to a report published by consultants PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) on Friday, India is expected to leapfrog Japan to rank third in terms of domestic banking by 2035 - and could pass China as its population rapidly ages.

PwC's chief economist John Hawksworth urged current banking leaders, whose power has been sapped by the credit crisis, to heed the accelerating shift in global economic power and claim a share of emerging markets' relatively unbanked populations.

"With populations of well over a billion each, access to markets like China and India is critical for growth," he said.

Chinese banks already dominate global rankings by market value, and some lenders have already secured heavy emerging market exposure to tap into booming demand for financial products from young and increasingly wealthy populations.

Banks in the fast-growing emerging markets (E7) of China, India, Brazil, Russia, Mexico, Indonesia and Turkey have been relatively shielded from the financial crisis that brought many western peers to their knees and sent asset values plunging.

With watchdogs determined to rein in institutions that presided over an exuberant era of high-risk expansion that culminated in a rash of taxpayer-funded bailouts, western banks are also contending with tough new regulations, which are curbing lending growth, while domestic populations age.

PwC, which based its report on projections for GDP and domestic credit and used net interest margins as a measure of profit, said E7 growth hinged on state investments in infrastructure, opening markets to fresh competition, reducing bureaucracy and budget deficits and increasing rural education.

It predicts that global banking assets could quadruple to around USD 300 trillion by 2050, with the GDP of the E7 level pegging with the G7 nations of the United States, Japan, Germany, the UK, France, Italy and Canada within the next two decades and well ahead within the next four.

Britain, which it ranks fourth in terms of domestic banking assets, is expected to be pushed into fifth place by India within the next 20 years before fast-growing Brazil is likely to push it down another notch by 2050, PwC predicted. But investing in emerging markets can be an uphill struggle.

Israel y China negocian para convertirse en grandes aliados financieros

Agencia Judía de Noticias - 7/7/2015

El ministro de Economía israelí discutió un Acuerdo de Libre Comercio con el embajador chino, mientras Israel indica que su foco está girando hacia el Este. Los dos lados acordaron que un acuerdo de libre comercio llevaría a los lazos bilaterales a un nuevo nivel. Actualmente, las inversiones chinas en Israel están en \$6 billones de dólares.

Israel ha estado expandiendo lazos con naciones asiáticas líderes, incluso mientras las amenazas de boicot siguen emanando de Europa, y parece ser inminente un gran avance en la presencia israelí en Asia mientras el Estado avanza hacia un Acuerdo de Libre Comercio con China.

Los medios chinos comenzaron a discutir el asunto en diciembre del año pasado y ayer el ministro de Economía de Israel, Aryeh Deri, se encontró en Jerusalem con el embajador chino en Israel, Zhan Yongxin, por primera vez para discutir sobre el establecimiento de una zona de libre comercio.

En el encuentro Deri expresó el fuerte deseo de Israel de establecer el acuerdo con la superpotencia china, que posee el segundo PBI más grande del mundo. Por su parte, Zhan remarcó que China está comprometido con mantener negociaciones sobre tal acuerdo, luego de que el primer ministro chino, Li Keqiang, anunciara en marzo su intención de hacerlo en un informe al Pueblo Nacional del Congreso.

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“El Ministerio de Economía concentra sus esfuerzos en promover y expandir los lazos comerciales entre los dos países y para esto opera con varias herramientas para apoyar a las compañías israelíes que hacen negocios con China, como fondos dedicados a proyectos en el Pueblo de la República de China, apoyar a delegaciones ingresantes y salientes, y, por su puesto, nuestros delegados de comercio que se encuentran en China”, expresó Deri.

Israel ha expresado un destacado cambio en el foco hacia Oriente Medio, que ha florecido desde que el primer ministro israelí, Benjamin Netanyahu, visitó China en mayo del

2013. Se han alcanzado varios acuerdos de cooperación con China, Japón, Taiwán, Corea del Sur e India, informó el medio israelí Arutz Sheva.

La “Belt and Road Initiative” estimula la economía china

El programa de inversión OBOR (One Belt One Road, que agrupa las nuevas Rutas de la Seda Económica y Marítima) está estimulando segmentos de la economía china, incluyendo empresas chicas de e-comercio, y también a exportadores europeos. Un caso de transporte ferroviario desde Alemania.

[News Analysis: Belt and Road Initiative props Chinese economy](#)

English.news.cn - Beijing - 13/07/2015

China's exports and investment along the Belt and Road, a China-proposed trade and infrastructure network, increased steadily in the first half of 2015 as the country strengthened economic ties with the region.

China's foreign trade posted a lackluster performance in the first half (H1) of the year, with total foreign trade dropping 6.9 percent year on year to 11.53 trillion yuan (1.89 trillion U.S. dollars) in the first six months of 2015, according to data released by the Central Administration of Customs (CAC) on Monday.

During the Jan.-June period, exports rose slightly by 0.9 percent from a year ago to 6.57 trillion yuan as trade with emerging markets along the Belt and Road Initiative appeared robust.

Bilateral trade with countries along the Belt and Road initiative reached close to three trillion yuan, about one fourth of the total trade volume.

Exports to ASEAN and Africa rose 9.5 percent and 12.9 percent respectively year on year, and exports to Bangladesh, Pakistan and Egypt all rose by more than 17 percent year on year.

The China-initiated Belt and Road Initiative, more than one hundred days after its official release, helped reinvigorate the slowing domestic economy by further opening up the less developed western regions.

A cargo ship with one hundred thousand German-made water purifying bottles took 14 days to travel from Germany to the western Chinese Chongqing Municipality, crossing Poland, Belarus,

Russia, Kazakhstan and Xinjiang along the Eurasia International Railway last month, a key transportation project of the Belt and Road Initiative.

It was the first time domestic cross-border e-commerce vendors transported goods back to China via an international railway.

“It saves us both time and money,” said Liu Rong, an e-commerce vendor.

He saved almost one month in shipping time, with only one fourth of the price of air freight, he said.

Thanks to the better connectivity via the Belt and Road Initiative, Chongqing’s GDP growth in the first quarter topped other provincial regions by reaching 10.7 percent and fixed assets investment growth in the first five months reached 17.5 percent.

Guizhou, another western province, outperformed other regions in fixed assets investment growth in the first five months, reaching 23 percent due to an increase of infrastructure development projects.

In addition to rapid growth of infrastructure and trade, the Belt and Road Initiative also pushed western regions to upgrade their industries and products to cater to the specific demands of overseas markets.

“The Belt and Road Initiative will help Chinese enterprises move up the global industrial value chain by producing and exporting more high-end products, capital and technologies,” said Li Tong, CEO of BOC International, a securities trader.

China will further cooperate with counterparts along the initiative to promote regional infrastructure and trade connectivity to boost regional economy, according to Huang Songping, CAC spokesperson.

The Belt and Road initiative refers to the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road and was proposed in 2013 with the goal of reviving ancient trade routes between Asia and Europe. The network passes through more than 60 countries and regions, with a total population of 4.4 billion.

La Política de la Integración Asiática

La integración asiática aumentó en los últimos años en temas económicos y más allá, en una situación de interdependencia asimétrica. La situación de los países más chicos puede variar con el cambio de política exterior china hacia una más agresiva.

[The politics of Asian integration](#)

By Seungjoo Lee

East Asia Forum - 11/07/2015

Economic integration has steadily increased in East Asia. But the region still suffers from what South Korean President Park Geun-hye calls 'Asia's paradox', the disconnect between economic interdependence and backward political and security cooperation. Any further economic integration will likely reflect political power shifts in the region.

Between 1990 and 2012, intra-regional trade among the ASEAN+3 nations increased from US\$562 billion to US\$4,436 billion. This represented 38 per cent of the region's total trade in 2010, up from 28.6 per cent in 1990. In 2011, the share of trade in intermediate goods in East Asia was 56.9 per cent, while only 28.2 per cent of trade was in final goods.

Economic integration in East Asia is also gradually expanding to include India, Australia and New Zealand. In 1990, intra-regional trade in ASEAN+6 accounted for only 31.3 per cent of East Asian trade. By 2012, it had increased to 41.2 per cent. East Asian countries are more robust than in the past.

Economic integration among East Asian countries goes beyond trade to include investment and production. They are deepening economic integration by creating a virtuous circle of investment, production and trade.

At the same time, it is said that intra-regional trade does not properly reflect trade integration in East Asia. The intra-regional trade index tends to increase as the number of participating countries increases or when a large trading nation without a regional bias in trade is included. But it may be more precise to use alternative indices such as the intra-regional trade intensity or the regional trade introversion index. Intra-regional trade intensity in East Asia has been largely constant – not increasing – for the last three decades. It is still lower than that of the North American Free Trade Agreement and of the European Union.

So how much further can the scope of economic integration expand? The United States is in the middle of negotiating the Trans-Pacific Partnership and China is floating ideas for the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific. This shows that economic integration and regionalism are not just purely economic phenomena. They are also political constructs.

Economic integration in East Asia is not just regional – it has a global context. Intra-regional trade intensity has not increased because the region maintains a triangular trade structure: production occurs within the region but final goods are then exported out of the region. Even after the East Asian economies supposedly decoupled from the Western countries following the global finance crisis, the triangular trade structure has not changed.

What is changing is that East Asian countries are beginning to depend more on China for trade. China has been South Korea's top trading partner since 2004. South Korean trade with China increased from 22.1 per cent in 2007 to 24.2 per cent in 2011. In the same period, its trade with the US and Japan declined. South Korea's dependence on China for trade continued to increase even during the global financial crisis.

Asymmetric interdependence – the situation where the less dependent country can use its power to influence outcomes – with China is a reality for many East Asian countries. While the rise of China is obviously an economic opportunity, these countries may encounter significant risks in coming years. In particular, China's stance toward neighbouring countries has changed from a charm offensive to more aggressive foreign policy.

East Asia has so far been unable to turn its ever-increasing economic interdependence into institutionalised cooperation, giving East Asian regionalism the nickname 'soft regionalism'. But the rise of China may give more context to East Asia's current wave of economic integration. The next question is how and why East Asian countries will engage with or hedge against China in economic terms.

BRICS acuerdan coordinar acciones para proteger a sus economías

Ámbito Financiero - 09/07/2015

Las economías emergentes del grupo BRICS afirmaron el jueves que están preocupadas por la volatilidad de los mercados financieros globales y los precios del petróleo, por lo que acordaron coordinar esfuerzos para mantener estables a sus economías.

Los líderes de Brasil, Rusia, India, China y Sudáfrica lanzaron finalmente las mayores iniciativas del grupo hasta la fecha -un banco de desarrollo y una reserva monetaria de emergencia- y pidieron en una cumbre un rápido acuerdo sobre el programa nuclear de Irán.

Para el presidente ruso, Vladimir Putin -anfitrión de la cumbre en la ciudad de Ufa-, la puesta en marcha del banco y la reserva eran una prioridad clave, al igual que mejorar la capacidad del grupo de sonar más unido que en ocasiones anteriores.

“Estamos preocupados por la inestabilidad de los mercados, la alta volatilidad de los precios de la energía y las materias primas, y la acumulación de deuda soberana por varios países”, afirmó Putin.

“Estos desequilibrios afectan a la tasa de crecimiento y a nuestras economías. En estas circunstancias, los estados BRICS pretenden usar activamente sus propios recursos para el desarrollo”, agregó, sin aportar detalles.

Los frenéticos esfuerzos de Pekín para frenar el hundimiento de sus bolsas contribuyó al repunte de las acciones chinas el jueves, tras más de una semana a la baja, pero es probable que los costos de la fuerte intervención estatal afecten al mercado durante un largo tiempo.

El presidente chino, Xi Jinping, declinó referirse a la caída, indicando solamente que hay “dificultades” en la economía global, pero instó a los BRICS a aumentar la coordinación. “Vayamos de la mano para construir una gran sociedad de los BRICS”, dijo al grupo.

Las naciones BRICS responden por una quinta parte de la producción económica mundial y un 40 por ciento de su población.

No obstante el diverso grupo, que se reúne con regularidad desde 2009, ha tenido problemas para generar acciones unificadas y, en su lugar, se ha enfocado a menudo en criticar a Occidente.

El establecimiento del Nuevo Banco de Desarrollo del grupo tardó más de tres años, con duras negociaciones sobre financiación, sede y asuntos de personal.

La entidad, que debería empezar a prestar dinero a partir del año próximo, tendrá un capital inicial de 50.000 millones de dólares, que será duplicado en los próximos años, y se centrará sobre todo en emitir deuda para proyectos de infraestructura.

“El Nuevo Banco ayudará a financiar proyectos conjuntos a gran escala en infraestructura de transporte y energía, y en desarrollo industrial”, dijo Putin.

Asimismo, el grupo pidió en una declaración un acuerdo rápido y permanente para reducir el programa nuclear iraní a cambio del alivio de las sanciones económicas.

Venezuela y China discuten un plan de cooperación de 10 años

Los gobiernos de ambos países programan un acuerdo (que se sumará a los 400) ya firmados que incluye inversiones chinas en educación e industrias y el tendido de cables submarinos para conectar Venezuela con otros países del Caribe.

[Venezuela and China discuss 10-year cooperation plan](#)

Xinhua - 01/07/2015

Venezuela and China on Monday assessed progress in bilateral projects and drafted a 10-year cooperation plan as part of their comprehensive strategic partnership.

The plan was drafted during the 4th technical meeting of the China-Venezuela High-Level Joint Commission that opened on Monday.

Addressing the opening session of the three-day meeting, Venezuelan vice president for Planning Ricardo Menendez said the goal of the meeting was to agree on projects that will help spur development in both nations.

“We are going to be working on the topic of telecommunications” to provide computer tablets for university and primary school students, install related factories and build undersea cables to connect with other parts, such as the Caribbean, Menendez said.

Also on the agenda are plans to boost Venezuelan industry by expanding cement plants, and iron, aluminum and paper manufacturing, and by bolstering infrastructure at ports and airports.

“Later, we are going to be discussing oil cooperation and aspects related to strategic topics, such as housing,” Menendez said.

The government of President Nicolas Maduro is “very pleased” with the wide degree of complementarity between the two countries and will continue working to strengthen economic and trade ties between China and Latin America, said the official.

Wang Jianjun, secretary of the China-Venezuela joint commission said the meeting provides an opportunity to “exchange ideas about priority development projects,” adding that “we believe

with mutual efforts we will achieve very successful results.”

Venezuela has signed nearly 400 cooperation agreements with China in the energy, oil, education, health, technology, trade, housing, agriculture, infrastructure, industry, culture and sports sectors, among others.

The South American country supplies China with nearly 600,000 barrels of oil a day as part of a strategy to diversify its market.

In July 2014, the two nations raised ties to the level of a comprehensive strategic partnership during a visit to Caracas by President Xi Jinping of China.

China podría superar su compromiso sobre la cuota del carbón

China se compromete a reducir su utilización de carbón, lo que implica acelerar el paso de industrias intensivas en combustibles hacia otras de menor consumo. Beneficiará al país y al resto del mundo.

[China could outperform its carbon pledge](#)

By Frank Jotzo

East Asia Forum - 16/07/2015

China has submitted its formal pledge to the UN climate negotiations. China's target is a 60–65 per cent reduction in the emissions intensity of its economy compared to 2005 levels by 2030, with carbon dioxide emissions peaking around 2030, and 'best efforts' made to peak earlier. China's pledge will require a sustained policy effort, and it tallies with underlying trends in the economy and with overarching national policy priorities.

China has also pledged to increase the share of non-fossil fuels to 20 per cent of total energy use and an increase in forest carbon stocks. A raft of existing and planned policies and measures is listed, including: higher efficiency in coal fired electricity; fast development of solar, wind, hydro, nuclear and gas for power generation; energy efficient and low-carbon industrial systems; and cutting emissions from buildings and transport. There is also a commitment to national emissions trading and support for research and development.

The pledge means that China aims to reduce the ratio of carbon dioxide emissions to GDP by around 4 per cent annually, from 2005 all the way to 2030. By comparison, the United States

has decreased its economy-wide emissions intensity by about 3 per cent annually since its emissions peak in 2007, with the help of an unprecedented boom in cheap gas. European Union carbon dioxide emissions peaked in 2002, and its collective emissions intensity has declined by about 2 per cent per year since then.

Yet China could do better still. China is set to outperform its existing 2020 target of a 40–45 per cent improvement in emissions intensity compared to 2005. Average annual reductions from 2005 to 2014 were 4.5 per cent as reported by Beijing, while only 3.9 per cent per year is required on average to meet the ambitious end of the target range. If the 2020 target is outperformed, as now seems entirely possible, then the 2030 target becomes commensurately easier and could equally be outperformed.

China's energy productivity lags that of advanced economies. Enormous gains can be made by further improving technical efficiency and by accelerating the shift in economic structure from energy-intensive industries to light manufacturing and services. These improvements in energy intensity are likely to remain the largest contribution to lower emissions intensity for some time to come. In addition, reductions in the amount of emissions per unit of energy are being achieved through a gradual shift in the energy mix away from coal and towards nuclear, gas and renewables. This could dominate in the long term.

Improvements have been happening and can continue for a long time to come, at significant rates. Industrial output such as steel has levelled off, heralding a 'new normal' of Chinese economic growth. The era of extremely rapid expansion of infrastructure is coming to an end and the sources of economic growth are shifting to less resource-intensive activities. As Ross Garnaut explained, the shift in China's growth model still has quite a way to go.

Annual carbon dioxide emissions grew by an average 7 per cent per year from 2006 to 2011, but by only around 2 per cent per year from 2012 to 2014. Total coal use in China is reported to have fallen in 2014 compared to 2013, although this is against the backdrop of statistics for China's overall coal use in all years being revised upwards. When reliable data for carbon dioxide emissions in 2014 become available, they might show close to zero growth compared to 2013, or even a small fall.

Where does this leave the 2030 peaking pledge? China's emissions could peak well before the target date of 2030, as argued recently by Nick Stern as well as Ross Garnaut. At a recent climate change conference in Paris, Jiang Kejun of China's Energy Research Institute argued that China could see peak energy-related emissions during 2020–22 if a strong policy effort is sustained.

But the precise time of the peak may not matter too much. The experience in developed countries is that emissions trajectories flatten out, forming a plateau rather than a sharp peak. Emissions stop growing when annual rate of reduction in carbon intensity of GDP is equal to the

GDP growth rate. If decarbonisation rates of 4–5 per cent per year are maintained in a slowing Chinese economy then emissions levels will grow only slowly.

That means China's highest future emissions levels may not be dramatically higher than today's. If so then this would be a much better outcome than in many of the projections that are produced of China's emissions, which are typically predicated on future economic growth rates of around 7 per cent.

Yet a low emissions scenario presumes that decarbonisation policies are pursued just as vigorously while the economy slows. With confidence in Chinese share markets dented in recent weeks, financing for many low-emissions investments such as renewable power plants could become harder to secure. If China's government were to once again use large fiscal stimulus measures, it would need to avoid over-investment in infrastructure and thereby heavy industries.

A lower carbon trajectory has tangible benefits for China, including less air pollution, greater energy security and the chance of a competitive edge in growth industries, as explained in a recent paper with my colleague Teng Fei from Tsinghua University. These benefits are attractive no matter how fast the economy grows. In fact, these benefits are probably the main proximate drivers of policies to curb the use of coal. National self-interest underpins China's climate policy.

If China persists and succeeds in its stated ambition to changing its development path, innovation and a sustainable, low-carbon pathway then that will be good news for the planet.

El matrimonio gay según Confucio

Un juez asociado a la Corte Suprema de EE.UU. citó a Confucio para defender el matrimonio gay, generando una polémica en jurídica y gran repercusión en las redes chinas. En 2001 China despenalizó la homosexualidad y hay más tolerancia hacia los homosexuales.

[Confucius on Gay Marriage](#)

The U.S. Supreme Court invokes the Chinese philosopher, with decidedly mixed results.

By Bryan W. Van Norden

The Diplomat - 13/07/2015

Americans have expressed either joy or outrage over the Supreme Court's recent decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges* that the Fourteenth Amendment requires every state to allow marriage between two people of the same sex. However, one issue has received little attention in the U.S., while igniting a storm of discussion in China: Justice Anthony Kennedy's citation of Confucius in his majority decision. Add almost no one has remarked on Justice Antonin Scalia's inflammatory response to Kennedy's use of Confucius. Let's examine what Kennedy said, how the Chinese have reacted to it, whether Kennedy got Confucius right, and what Scalia's rebuttal to Confucius represents.

Kennedy v. Scalia

In his majority decision, Kennedy wrote, "The centrality of marriage to the human condition makes it unsurprising that the institution has existed for millennia and across civilizations. ... Confucius taught that marriage lies at the foundation of government. 2 Li Chi: Book of Rites 266 (C. Chai & W. Chai eds., J. Legge transl. 1967). This wisdom was echoed centuries later and half a world away by Cicero, who wrote, 'The first bond of society is marriage; next, children; and then the family.' See *De Officiis* 57 (W. Miller transl. 1913)." Scalia wrote an impassioned dissenting opinion, which includes the following comment (in note 22): "The Supreme Court of the United States has descended from the disciplined legal reasoning of John Marshall and Joseph Story to the mystical aphorisms of the fortune cookie." Later, Scalia states that "the world does not expect logic and precision in poetry or inspirational pop-philosophy; it demands them in the law."

Chinese Reaction

Kennedy's citation of Confucius immediately attracted the interest of Chinese netizens and stoked the fire of an ongoing debate in China over gay rights. The situation for gays and lesbians in China is complex. It has been argued that traditional Chinese culture was comparatively tolerant of homosexuality, and that the tendency to treat homosexuality as a perversion only developed as part of Chinese efforts to emulate the West and modernize after the Opium Wars. There are indications that the majority of Chinese are now returning to traditional tolerance: Homosexuality has been decriminalized since 1997, and was removed from the official list of mental illnesses in 2001. Moreover, a 2014 poll by the Chinese Journal of Human Sexuality suggests that 85 percent of Chinese support same-sex marriage, with only 2 percent opposing it, and 13 percent undecided. Ironically, "comrade," long a term for a loyal fellow Communist, is now slang for a gay person. Consequently, when Justice John Roberts cited the supposed views of "Han Chinese" against same-sex marriage in his own dissent, he was dealing with a much more complex topic than he realized.

However, Chinese parents and society as a whole put intense pressure on young people to marry and produce offspring. According to one estimate, 90 percent of gay men in China marry

women, often without telling them their actual sexual orientation. Understandably, this can lead to frustration, adultery, and unhappiness. This emphasis on producing children can be traced in part to the Confucian tradition. Mencius, one of the most influential Confucian philosophers of all time, argued that to fail to have children is the most unfilial of all acts. Consequently, the online edition of *The People's Daily*, a source with close ties to the Chinese government, claimed that Chinese were “baffled” by Kennedy’s use of Confucius. Professor Zeng Yi of the Philosophy Department of Tongji University was blunter, stating that Kennedy had “distorted” Confucius, and opining that any Confucian should view homosexuality as “a crime against humanity.” Critics like Zeng point out that the *Classic of Changes*, a seminal Confucian treatise of divination and cosmology, claims that traditional gender identities are an immutable reflection of cosmic principles. Several Chinese commentators have also argued that the translation Kennedy relied on was simply mistaken. Was it?

Did Kennedy Get Confucius Right?

Kennedy’s majority opinion paraphrases an English translation of the *Book of Rites* by James Legge, a Victorian-era Scottish missionary and Sinologist. The *Book of Rites* has been treated as canonical by Confucians for millennia, and the particular phrase Kennedy refers to is from a long dialogue between Confucius and Duke Ai of Lu. On p. 266 of Legge’s translation we find: “Yes, (this) ceremony (of marriage) lies at the foundation of government!” If we translate the original Chinese as literally as possible, we get, “Ceremonies, are they not the root of government?!” We can see that Legge has interpolated some words. In fairness, he uses parentheses to warn us that he has done this, and the Chinese news magazine *The Paper* defended Legge’s translation. Confucius and Ai have been discussing the marriage ceremony for several pages, so it is plausible that “ceremony” here is short for “marriage ceremony.” On the other hand, the well-known Chinese blogger Fang Zhouzi argued that in fact Confucius is discussing in this passage the ceremonies appropriate to the wedding of the ruler of a state, not the institution of marriage in general, and certainly not the marriage of common people.

While the particular phrase that Kennedy relies on may or may not be correctly translated, his general point about the centrality of marriage as a social institution is absolutely Confucian. Earlier in the same chapter from the *Book of Rites*, Confucius explains that ceremonies, including marriage ceremonies, are central to all of human life. Moreover, government has its basis in love and respect, and “great marriage” is so important because it is the ultimate expression of both. This is consistent with Kennedy’s argument that gays and lesbians cannot legitimately be excluded from the social institution of marriage, because it is a unique expression of love and respect.

Kennedy’s citation of Confucius has been noted both in the West and, to a greater extent, in China. However, Scalia’s response to Kennedy’s invocation of Confucius has received surprisingly little attention, despite its inflammatory nature.

Did Scalia's Rebuttal Cross the Line?

There is something undeniably unsettling about Scalia's dismissal of Kennedy's argument as "mystical aphorisms of the fortune cookie." It is difficult to believe that, in saying this, Scalia does not have Kennedy's reference to Confucius in mind. Fortune cookies are not authentic Chinese cuisine, and I have heard it suggested that this was Scalia's point: to criticize Kennedy for his inauthentic appropriation of Confucius. However, this requires a positively Straussian level of esoteric interpretation. We would have to assume that Scalia knows the provenance of fortune cookies, and that he has an opinion about the accuracy of Legge's translation of Classical Chinese, and that he wanted readers of his dissent to discover the connection between these points without his stating it explicitly. No, there is no plausible reason for him to refer to fortune cookies other than to dismiss the teachings of Confucius as the sort of nonsense only a "hippie" would appeal to (to use another of his terms of reproach). And notice that Scalia does not say anything that might be interpreted as an aspersion on the great Roman philosopher Cicero, even though Kennedy also cites him. (Imagine the response, though, if Scalia had complained that Kennedy was lowering the intellectual standards of the Court by introducing "Chianti-soaked rants more appropriate over a dish of pasta.")

If you are offended when someone says you are wrong, you have no business claiming to be any kind of intellectual. But there is a great difference between a sincerely reasoned argument and a sneering dismissal. As English clergyman William Paley (1743–1805) lamented, "Who can refute a sneer?" After all, "such attacks do their execution without inquiry." As someone who has spent decades teaching Chinese philosophy and fighting for greater acceptance of it in the West, I seldom encounter genuine arguments for why Confucianism, or Daoism, or Buddhism is unworthy of study. When I do, I welcome them, because I can address them directly and definitively. What is much more common is the insidious effect of a mocking dismissal.

The sad reality is that Scalia's comment is an manifestation of what Edward Said labeled "Orientalism": the view that everything from Egypt to Japan is essentially the same, and is the polar opposite of the West. Westerners are rational, scientific, and philosophical; "Orientals" are motivated only by passions, superstitions, and folk sayings. Those under the influence of Orientalism do not need to really read Chinese texts or take their arguments seriously, because they come pre-interpreted. And their interpretation guarantees that what Chinese, Indian, Middle Eastern or other non-Western thinkers have to say is at best quaint, at worst fatuous.

The great philosophers of the East deserve better.

Los jóvenes chinos dedican esfuerzos al intercambio trans-cultural

Los programas de intercambio juvenil alcanzaron un récord. Se realizan con numerosos países y sobre variados temas, incrementando la relación de los jóvenes chinos con el resto del mundo.

[Young Chinese devote efforts to cross-culture exchange](#)

By Xiong Zhengyan

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A record number of exchange programs between young Chinese and foreign youth were unfolded in 2004, marking youngsters' bigger role in non-governmental diplomacy.

"There were more than 100 exchange programs in 2004, involving about 3,000 foreign youngsters visiting China and 1,000 young Chinese going out to countries throughout the world," according to a figure from the Central Committee of Communist Youth League of China (CYLC), one of China's major mass organization of youth.

The Chinese young people's exchange with foreign youngsters is a major way for them to participate in world affairs, said China's youth leader Zhou Qiang, the first secretary of the Central Committee of the CYLC.

In 2004, some youth exchange programs were conducted to celebrate the important anniversaries between China and other nations.

As the year 2004 marked the 55th forging anniversary of China- Russia diplomatic relations, presidents of the two nations set the year as "Friendship Year for Chinese-Russian Youth". The young people from the two countries held 15 celebration activities throughout the year, including knowledge contest on Russia, youth leader forum and exchange of visits.

The Chinese and Russian youth leaders even signed a letter of intent, blueprinting the future cooperative initiatives between the young people.

Chinese youth also pushed their ties with Romanian counterparts on the occasion of marking 55 years of China-Romania diplomatic ties. A Romanian delegation of 58 young people was invited to China, warmly hosted even by Chinese President Hu Jintao.

"China-Romania friendly relations can be traced back to the time when I was a kid," said Yang Huaijing, a Chinese entrepreneur attending China-Romania Youth Festival. "Now it is time for us young people to build and pass on this friendship."

Some youth exchange programs were initiated to discuss the issues of common concerns of both Chinese and foreign youngsters.

In June 2004, nearly 100 young people from 25 member nations of Asia-Europe Conference gathered in China to embark on “a journey of aquatic civilization”. By traveling along and conducting researches on “China’s mother river”-- the Yangtze River, the longest in China and the third longest in the world, the young people reached consensus on protecting rivers and voiced their shared determination to join environmental protection initiatives.

Chinese youth also discussed with foreign youngsters on HIV/ AIDS control and prevention, starting business, employment, health care and globalization.

“These initiatives broaden the horizons of young people and deepen their mutual understanding,” Jiang Guangping, who is in charge of international affairs with the CYLC. “This has also laid a solid foundation for the long-term trust and amity between China and other countries.”

In year 2004, some youth exchange programs were even turned into long-standing mechanisms. Among them were China-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Youth, China-Africa Youth Forum, China-US Youth Leader Dialogue and China-Vietnam Youth Gathering etc.

As a figure from the CYLC revealed, about eighty percent of youth exchange programs in 2004 featured interaction with China’s neighboring countries.

The “Great Wall Program” designed for promoting the ties between Chinese and Japanese young statesmen was resumed in 2004 after three years’ suspension.

“This program is a well-known one among the ongoing non- governmental exchanges between China and Japan,” said Chen Yongchang, vice-president of China-Japan Friendship Association.

Also in 2004, a total of 500 young Chinese, Chinese youth’s largest-ever group visit abroad, set their feet on the soil of the Republic of Korea (ROK). This program will continue in 2005 and 2006 with 500 young Chinese touring ROK annually.

More than 100 Pakistani students also paid a visit to China in fall 2004.

The exchange programs targeting neighboring countries were too many to be exhausted here.

Reviewing China’s youth exchange initiatives in 2004, Zhou called on Chinese young people to “take a more active attitude and play a bigger role in the global youth affairs.”