**liberty/自由(Zì Yóu)**

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| Final Remarks | BAI Gang, Erik Guignard | 21 Mar 2022 |

The multi-dimensional concept of freedom has a rich history and ancient roots.

First and foremost, since antiquity, it has been related to the collective freedom of a community, whether village, ethnic or national.  It has an outright negative value towards slavery in all its forms and, more recently, towards forced labour and colonialism.

The Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 specified an international principle according to which each country would have exclusive sovereignty over its territory. At the same time, in order to avoid internal conflicts and despite the opinion of Pope Gelasius, who already in the third century wanted a strict separation of church and state, the principle of *cujus regio, ejus religio*, to each country its own religion, was established.  With the emergence of Protestantism, the concept of freedom was again enriched, not without violent conflict, with a value that would henceforth be essential, that of individual freedom of conscience and religion and, therefore, of recognition of a national community that could be diverse in its faith and respected in its different components. In the 18th century, with the Enlightenments, freedom of opinion, enterprise and trade were added. Thus, article 11 of the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen of 1789 states: "The free communication of thoughts and opinions is one of the most precious rights of Man: every Citizen may therefore speak, write, and print freely, except for the abuse of this freedom in the cases determined by the Law". The freedom of enterprise stems from article 4, which stipulates that "freedom consists in being able to do everything that does not harm others".

Since the end of the Second World War, these freedoms have remained at the heart of the concept of freedom, even if new proposals have emerged: in the economic field with the development of Anglo-Saxon neo-liberal doctrines aimed at constraining state intervention, with "laissez faire" being proposed as the best way of ensuring an "optimal" distribution of the wealth desired by individual-consumers, which is contested by the proponents of illiberalism who, on the contrary, wish to strengthen the authority of nation-states and elected majorities; in the social field, with the proliferation of demands from various more or less legitimate minorities, and, last, in the legal field, with the inflation of Human Rights, complaints and courts ... .

Whatever the case, two fundamental rights remain at the heart of the concept of freedom: that of freedom guaranteed collectively by communities of citizens and that of individual freedoms guaranteed, eventually legally, in its fundamental components, those of freedom of expression and belief.

In the ancient traditions of China and India, there are some concepts similar to the freedom in the modern sense, but with subtle differences, such as Xiaoyao（逍遥） in Chinese and īśvara in Sanskrit，which are more related to the individual mind and the realm of spiritual cultivation.

Since ancient Greek times, the concept of freedom has always been associated with a special education，which enables the virtue and mental state matching with freedom. This education, or the ideals of Greek Culture, was called paideia by the Greeks. In our era, the thinking and discussion of the concept of freedom still need the corresponding educations(*paideias*), which should no longer be just a paradigm derived from any single tradition, but root in the depths of various civilizations.