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TENGRI ON MARS **

TENGRI EN MARTE

Abstract

What would happen if every individual knew what to do, and did, without prompting or expecting a reward? Is that not what the authors of Republic and Utopia had in mind? Is that not the primary justification of theocracies? The immediate objection to that postulate is that human nature is not suitable for team activities at all times. There is such a conception as individualism and that is the quality abetting creativity that marks humanism. Besides, the definition of human rights guarantees freedom of choice not to cooperate if one chooses against it.

Keywords: Religion, Tengri, governance, Republic, Utopia, Mars.

Resumen

¿Qué pasaría si cada individuo supiera qué hacer y lo hiciera, sin provocar, ni esperar recompensa? ¿No es eso lo que los autores de República y Utopía tenían en mente? ¿No es la justificación primaria de las teocracias? La objeción inmediata a este postulado es que la naturaleza humana no es apta para actividades de equipo todas las veces. Ahí hay una concepción como de individualismo y de que es la creatividad que ampara la calidad lo que marca el humanismo. Además, la definición de derechos humanos garantiza la libertad de elección para no cooperar si uno elige en contra de ello.

Palabras clave: Religión, Tengri, gobernanza, república, Utopía, Marte.

JEL: B19, N33, N35, P19, P59.

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** Tengri is one of the names for the primary one god in the old Turkestan. It is analogous with the early Chinese concept of Tianli, later Daoist coinage and derived Confucian concept of Tianli. The four direction symbols in Chinese cosmology is also analogous with the four direction symbol used in Tengriism (*Wikipedia*)

Some of the questions raised in the paper “Governance on Mars”¹ are perhaps ripe for a solution by mutual consent. And that mutual consent may be found in the Tengri belief system. After all, Tengri is the creator of the universe, as preserved for all creatures.

Tengri is a monotheistic belief system. It is one of the oldest, if not the oldest religion in the experience of humans. It was first observed in the heart of Asia. Tengri resides in the blue sky, making that Turquoise color a symbol of worship and constant reminder of the grace of the creator. Grace is the heart of the belief; when Tengri chooses to withdraw Grace, result is downfall. When bestowed, the Grace of Tengri is the source of all benefaction. It is very ecologically sensitive from the very start. One who defiles water is immediately and physically condemned, because, water in this parched portion of the earth is one of the Graces granted by Tengri. Both, for example, the crops as well as the reign of a monarch are entirely dependent on that Grace. The good behavior of the adherents and the presence of Grace are thus linked.

The various neighbors of Tengri followers chose different paths to salvation and happiness. For example, the eastern neighbors of Tengri concentrated on proper etiquette as a part of their system, due to population pressures and order of society. In contrast, the followers of Tengri have been concerned with staying alive in harmony with nature. It is the original Green culture. Apart from being ancient, Tengri believers live in the literal crossroads of eschatological battleground fought over by later religious arrivals.

Belief systems are perhaps the most powerful impellents of human behavior. A few developed “user manuals (doctrine codified in writing),” yet there are others that have survived and flourished without directed indoctrination. All, belief systems compete among themselves via human agents.

One of the premier competition fields for this drama is Eurasia. All major belief systems emanated from this vast landmass, but the cross-pollinations have not been adequately examined. Even less so in the case of Tengri, a belief system flourishing in Eurasia from time immemorial, and thus a witness to most of those arguments.

Even though Tengri has no known written user manual, elements of this belief system survived, albeit in fragmentary literary tradition; both written and oral. A portion of the oral forms were at some point committed to paper, and published. The rest remain in manuscript. The first step, therefore, if one is intent on learning the foundations, is to cull the extant corpus of this tradition to extract the essence. Over the past quarter of a century, while pursuing other historical, cultural and anthropological objectives, evidence of this sort has been encountered time and again. A portion of this material is publicly available, and a reading of this corpus to fully extract the Tengri references in contrast to the belief systems of the adherents’ neighbors is also likely to yield some surprises. This would also help identify interactions among competing belief systems in the ‘neighborhood.’

One of the attributes of a great civilization is the members’ ability and desire to enjoy the fruits of past generations’ labors without substantially making contributions in kind. This is akin to withdrawing from the family joint checking account without making deposits. It can be argued that this leaning also may lead to decadence, and eventual downfall of a culture. A particular attribute of Tengri belief is the “do not waste” attitude. The related qualities and

1 HB Paksoy, “Governance on Mars”. *Entelequia. Revista Interdisciplinar*, n° 9, primavera 2009.
<http://www.eumed.net/entelequia/pdf/2009/e09a05.pdf>

attention to the rejuvenation of nature serve well against any tendency toward cultural decay or opulence.

Arguably, Tengri constitutes the basic value system of humans, apart from being, perhaps, the original belief system, as well as the benchmark for what was to follow. One of the fascinating dimensions of Tengri is its influence on other cultures and loci. For example, traces can well be found in Europe, carried by literature recorded through narratives. In rare cases, some of these texts are published. These interactions of belief systems, well beyond their points of origins, wearing totally new clothes, but retaining the initial heart, will have ramifications we are yet to discover.

How does one measure the influence of a belief system on the world? By the wars waged in its name? Number of adherents? Deeds of rulers in its name? The number of other belief systems it subsumes? Or, the way it regulates societies?

Tengri certainly is a way of life. During its emergence, it was as necessary to co-exist with nature as it is today. No wars were waged in its name. Nor did it seek converts like the others. It did not even create a centralized clerical structure, or, indeed, a clerical class. In some localities, a few individuals offer their services to the adherents as “one way” messengers. These seers undergo trances to explore the reasons why a certain event does or does not take place. These messengers cannot intercede or change the results, whatever they may be. Depending on the specific location in this vast landscape, these messengers are found under different designations; they are also skilled in oral verse composition, having mastered the arts of music and visual performance. They deliver the results of their trip to the unknown in a combination of visual arts.

When competing belief systems made their appearance in Eurasia, Tengri was there. It did not fight the emergent systems with weapons, for it already had deep roots. Whichever belief system was layered upon it, spiritual or political, Tengri beliefs and practices continued unabated; not necessarily as a mosaic or amalgam, but as a bedrock. This was so even at the height of rather repressive regimes over time. Even the Soviet dissidents from the region identified themselves with Tengri –in whatever language– in addition to everything else: “Tengri, communist, Atheist” was the self description of a prominent spokesperson of a movement in the 1970s and 1980s.

Tengri did not lose its identity when surrounded by various forms of Buddhism, when the latter arrived. This may be because both shared similar objectives (e.g. peace, self betterment) – to a point. Tengri proved much more practical and pragmatic in its practices, and equally spiritual. When Islam arrived, in the company of invading armies, the ensuing fight was not about the belief system; but about distribution of wealth. Tengri not only stood its ground, but also began transforming and Tengrifying clerical Islam. Later, when Islamized polities and groups began moving West, into Europe, Tengrified Islam was there, still exerting influence through literature. As in today’s settings, Tengri is not openly articulated due to nationalist or other doctrinaire pressures.

Between Eastern Europe and Asia, over time, Tengri gave birth to a series of new Islamic polities; that are more Tengri than Abraham or Mohammed. Again, the political tug of war surrounding these communities prevented the open articulation of even the name Tengri. On the other hand, local court registers that survived various forms of opposition or repression are a testament to what the polities and populations believed and practiced under the designation

‘local custom.’ To the credit of the prevailing juridical systems of the time, courts allowed these beliefs to be the ultimate arbiter of proper behavior, hence underpinning justice. And, as of late, this continuing evolution of Tengri has been migrating into Western Europe, to spawn yet another wave of Tengrification. It is unlikely to stop there, and thus merits further study.

Thus, it can safely be stated that Tengri has been the impellent force in many a polity since their first entry into human endeavor. May we acquire wisdom.

Governance without structure is, at best, chaos. Governance is necessary to collect taxes, spend the proceedings on security, adjudicating disputes, apportioning punishments, rewarding the model citizens with a serene environment. In short, governance regulates the relations of the individual with other humans, as well as the state that levies governance.

What would happen if every individual knew what to do, and did, without prompting or expecting a reward? Is that not what the authors of Republic and Utopia had in mind? Is that not the primary justification of theocracies? The immediate objection to that postulate is that human nature is not suitable for team activities at all times. There is such a conception as individualism and that is the quality abetting creativity that marks humanism. Besides, the definition of human rights guarantees freedom of choice not to cooperate if one chooses against it.

Moreover, while cooperating, there will be complaints. Some will claim they put into the effort more than others into the enterprise. They may well have done so. Cooperation does not mean equal effort. That discrepancy will inevitably cause charges of corruption to be levied. And, corruption equals obtaining some benefit not available to everyone at the time.

Proceeding with the proposition that nothing is free, than it is necessary to define how much work is required to earn what one is due. This is the point where we can expect further objections. Children do not wish to agree with their parents as to the worth of their labors in moving the lawn, shoveling the snow. Why should adults? When Marx suggested that everyone was entitled to everything they needed, he neglected to consider the cost. Not only the economic cost, but also the societal and individual. As one result, for example, when the Bolsheviks took over the governance, they imposed their own value judgments on what constitutes cooperation. That caused ninety percent of the Soviet population to be working for the remaining ten percent, who proved to be the Communist Party membership. And, who was the governance strata?

The Confucian Chinese still adhere to the principle of Four Identities. These roughly constitute the relations between: the individual and the emperor; spouses; offspring and the parents; siblings with each other. Suitably those relationships are meant to regulate the ‘civil’ side of society, as well as the economic outcomes. The emperor required rice cultivation and service in the army. Parents needed food, shelter after a certain age. Offspring needed to cooperate to fulfill all promises. To a certain extent, it was the origins of the Social Compact. Except, of course, the governance system did not allow for a legitimate escape valve, protestation and opposition. There were no appeals either.

Does Tengri allow for all of the foregoing? The answer is unequivocal yes. The survival of the human species was the goal, given the *bozkir*² conditions prevalent in Eurasia, at the origination point. What we now call ‘economic activity’ was undertaken to sustain life under

2 “dun-meadow;” dry, vast, flat expanses of space with little vegetation.

very unfavorable circumstances. Waterless, baking during summer, freezing in winter, and a geography without borders. Cooperation of all family members was the de-rigueur.

What Tengri did not define, as far as we are aware, is the position of the third groupers; those who disregarded all requirements for the lives of others.

Just as in any other activity on earth with pre-arranged and agreed upon rules, when rules are violated, it is no longer the same game. Much of the governance mechanisms will revert to muscle power solutions and the beneficiary will not be the two main players. Both sides will lose heavily to small parties “in the middle” that will emerge in the form of arbitrators unintended by either. This middle group will establish new rules that will only suit itself, filling the ensuing vacuum, untouched by any other dogma than self interest. This third group (in the middle) will ignore the principle of equity and the inherent balance of power. A distinguishing feature of the in-between groups is simply that they will exist between the main players and between law and lawlessness. As nature abhors a void, for every such in-between group, there will be counterbalancing ones opposing it. All will be vying for the top spot to rule over the unintentionally created ‘system’ of checks and balances.

Once established, the in-between groups will immediately begin feeding on both main parties, changing the principle values and those of key personnel. This will create corruption, devoted solely for the purpose of jumping the queue, subverting the essential balance-of-power rules formed over time at great cost to humanity. The objective of the in-between groups is acquiring wealth without competition, and an endless income stream without inventories, production or standard (capital, labor, resource) investment. As more elements from the two primary parties are co-opted into the in-between groups, the legitimate organizations will also become corrupt. The return to the original functions and balance can never be possible afterward –even if the in-between groups are declared extinct. The only defense, therefore, is the prevention of the formation of the in-between groups. Unfortunately, Governance Stratas, especially operating in the international venues, either establish their own in-between groups to circumvent rivals, or provide aid and comfort to those who can.³

Perhaps the reason for Tengri to disregard this Third Groupers is that, without the gemeinschaft aspect, if we may attribute that quality to Tengri, there cannot be a third group alive. For that matter, nothing may remain alive on Mars. Tengri, as creator, has no quarrels with anyone. Tengri demands respect for water; indeed, for all creation. Tengri does not desire offerings. Tengri is the immovable mover; bestows grace. Tengri is heavenly and divine, is the universe, in which we find Mars.

There are no conversion ceremonies; anyone can join Tengri. To remain in the favor of Tengri, one must follow the laws of the universe. Tengri is supra national and one does not have to give up one’s previous belief system.

3 HB Paksoy, *Identities: How Governed, Who Pays?* (Malaga: Entelequia, 2006) “Five Years on,” Pp.3.
<http://www.eumed.net/entelequia/pdf/b002.pdf>



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