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## PRESENTATION


Zhenling Liu<sup>1</sup>

Marcos Antonio Alves<sup>2</sup>

Traditional Chinese philosophy sprouted from the religious thought of the Yin or Zhou Dynasty, and reached its first peak in the Warring States (Zhan Guo) period of ancient China. It is considered to be the contentious period of a hundred schools of thought. Daoism and Confucianism developed during this time of intense warfare. We could say that scholarship was developing from a state of chaos to refinement. Since then, Chinese philosophy has undergone several major changes in the Wei, Jin, Tang, Song, Ming and Qing Dynasties, blending Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism, evolving into many diverse schools of thought such as Song and Ming Neo-Confucianism, especially Zhu Xi's and Wang Yangming's interpretations. Their influence has radiated throughout East Asia and the world.

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Western philosophy has always attached importance of looking at humans and nature as two segments, focusing on speculation, analysis, logical deduction, and exploring the objective world. In contrast, Chinese philosophy pays more attention to the harmony of nature and man, learning that is both sound in theory and practice, ecological protection, and ethical practices. Chinese philosophy seeks spiritual development or transcendence in worldly life, associated with social reality and the practice of interpersonal ethics. As Xun Qing (荀卿) said, the ancients who are good talkers must be conservative in the present, and the good talkers must be conscientious (善言古者必有節於今, 善言天者必有征於人). To learn from the past is to guide today's behavior and to show concern for the present. To follow the course of nature in some sense is the best thing humans can do. At this level, Chinese philosophy shows a strong realistic concern.

This special issue focuses on how contemporary philosophical researchers apply traditional Chinese philosophical wisdom, and how they contribute their views in the realms of morality and ethics, social order, political practice, natural harmony, cognitive technology, environmental ecology, and artistic creation. All the articles use an historical approach to distil a way of life and morality.

Let's lift the curtain on the special issue with a paper by Dong Xu *et al.* entitled "The Confucian Concept of "Governance" and Its Contemporary Value". In China, Confucianism for more than two thousand years has been the cultural core and political foundation of imperial autocracy. The author expounds the origin, connotation, and contemporary value of Confucianism in terms of nature, people-orientation, sovereign-orientation. The interpretation of Confucianism provides important theoretical guidance for current political practice.

"Harmony" is a key concept in Chinese philosophy, which is the theme of the second article by Fuxing Ren, entitled "Confucian Harmony and The Idea of Sustainable Development in Modern Society". The author elaborates the theoretical connotation of Confucian idea that "Harmony is valued". He points out that this idea has experienced the evolution of social practice from "harmony among human beings" to "harmony in political order". It has also undergone the transformation of ecological order from "man is an integral part of nature" to "harmony between man and nature" and the expansion of economic purpose from "continuous reproduction" to "sustainable



development”. Finally, he proposes that the Confucian idea that “Harmony is valued” has value for the sustainable development of modern society.

The third article is entitled “Insights from Zhuxi’s Philosophy of Education for Modern Education”, co-authored by Hanqiao Tang and Lei Shen. This article starts with the philosophical thinking of “the nature of destiny” (天命之性) and “the nature of temperament” (氣質之性). It analyses the educational philosophy of Zhu Xi, a master of Neo-Confucianism, and makes in-depth discussion of Zhu Xi’s “step-by-step progress, familiarity and contemplation”, “self-observation, focusing on the student’s strength” and a method of reading to build a bridge to improve modern education, and provide innovative ideas for the development of contemporary educational theory and the improvement of instruction and student learning.

The fourth article in this special issue focuses on the culture of filial piety, which is one of the core values of Chinese culture. The article is co-authored by Hua Li and Gengxuan Wu and is entitled “Implications of China’s Filial Piety Culture for Its Contemporary Elderly Care”. At present, China is facing an increasingly ageing population and the concerns associated with how to properly care for the nation’s elderly. The author has made an overall review to the history of filial piety and summarized filial culture in two important manifestations, one is support and the other respect. To solve the elderly and aging problems in the contemporary society, the key is not only providing material support for the aged within families and in society, but also caring for their spiritual needs and mental health.

The fifth article by Jirong Yang and Hal Swindall entitled “Study on The Influence of The Thought of Jixia Academy on The Construction of Pre-Qin Social Order” explicates the general situation of the Jixia Academy, the ideological connotation of the Jixia School, the characteristics of the social order in the pre-Qin period, and its construction are discussed in multiple dimensions. It provides an important reference to the deep excavation and widespread dissemination of its cultural connotation.

The sixth paper is written by Joaquín López-Múgica in Spanish entitled “La Contemporaneidad Transcultural De La Pintura De Juan Baños En China”. The purpose of this article is to explore in the context of Shanghai the way in which the differences and similarities between Chinese and Spanish cultures are revealed, defined, and questioned through the pictorial canvases of Juan Antonio Baños. The mere gesture of Baños’ artwork in attempting

to translate the traces of Shanghai by means of a world of dislocations and citations incites a heterogeneous symphony of varied spaces and times that amplify the possibilities of artistic knowledge between East and West. Drawing from the analysis of a postcolonial framework that stretches from baroque hyperrealism to retro-futurist epistemologies of the city, right up to a kitsch pop art, the article claims that this translatable cultural itinerary displaces the ways of understanding contemporary art in China towards a post-paradigmatic period.

The seventh paper comes from Kien Thi Pham and Xuan Dung Bui entitled “Nguyen Trai’s Philosophical Thought of Benevolence and Righteousness and Its Significance in The Cultural Construction and Development of The Vietnamese People Today”. Nguyen Trai lived in the 15th century, whose ideas have become an important example of Vietnamese ethics, culture, soul, and wisdom. The paper studies Nguyen Trai’s philosophy to help develop a prosperous and happy country using the nation’s traditional cultural values. The article uses the methodology of dialectical materialism as a general principle and a specific historical principle to evaluate Nguyen Trai’s theory of benevolence and righteousness in terms of compassion, justice, and management, associated with the interests of the people, the community, and society. The article also uses analytical and synthesis methods to highlight the content of benevolence and righteousness in the cultural tradition of the Vietnamese nation today.

Lizhi Xing’s article “Achieving Perfection with The Buddhist Faith: A Probe into The Matter-of-Fact Attitude in Research on Religious Funerary Documents in China”, in the form of a book review, analyses the research methodology in the book “Research on Religious Funerary Documents in China”. The first point to mention is that the author seeks truth by criticizing and challenging the views of some distinguished scholars. Further, we can see that the author argues rigorously to screen out and distinguish misinformation in archaeology. Most importantly, the paper offers a thorough analysis of the historical materials from an objective point of view standing on the background of the current times.

The last paper contributed by Zhaoli Shi and Tao Kang is entitled “The Educational Philosophy of ‘Learning-Oriented Teaching’ in the Analects and its insights for contemporary times.” This paper focuses on “learning-oriented teaching” in the Analects of Confucius, contrary to the present trend that focuses on a “teaching-oriented” pedagogue, offering enlightening

methodology for contemporary education. On the basis of introduction to the prominence of “learning-oriented teaching” in the Analects, the author deeply analyses the notion in Confucius’ educational system and the reason for its formation. Finally, the author proposes that modern educational pedagogues should pay close attention to a learning-oriented approach instead of the teaching-oriented approach as Confucius did to promote educational reform.

Through the abovementioned nine articles, we have explored the application of Chinese philosophy in modern times to a certain extent. However, this academic project only touches the tip of the iceberg of Chinese philosophy, for Chinese philosophy is extensive and profound with rich content. These articles show the state of the art of funded research in China today. In this special issue, the authors express their arguments modestly and cautiously, opening an occasion for continued debate from various perspectives, whilst contributing to the academy and the world.

This is how it is constituted, which is one of the Dossiers published by *Trans/Form/Ação*. In recent years, we have been celebrating a series of partnerships for the publication of thematic issues like the one we present here. As an example, in agreement with the Center for Philosophy, Politics and Culture, based at the University of Évora, Portugal, we published the “Dossier Philosophy of Technique and Technology”. In partnership with the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA), we published the “Dossier Ernest Sosa”, with an article by the honoree himself. Most of the articles in these dossiers were published by foreign researchers, without disregarding the participation of Brazilians in the issues. In 2021, a series of books by graduates and members of the PPGFil were also published in partnership with the Graduate Program in Philosophy at UNESP, evaluated through an Internal Public Notice.

We are also organizing, in partnership with the Graduate Program in Philosophy at the University of São João Del-Rey, a Dossier on Brazilian authorial philosophy. Around twenty recognized national researchers were invited to write in the first person on topics of their research. We seek, with such an activity, to contribute to the construction and strengthening of a national philosophy, trying to include the meaning of this term or practice. The Dossier in question contains, in its schedule, the publication of pre-prints, an innovative experience in the journal and in the humanities area with the objective of considering the good practices established by the Open Science program.

In all partnerships, we explicitly commit to the quality of the texts, respecting the journal's evaluation criteria, in a double-blind peer review character, even for invited authors.

As Alves (2021, p. 12) recalls: "Following the journal's custom, we seek to consider all methodologies, as well as the different areas of research in philosophy and also areas of philosophical interest." In 2019, to illustrate this point, we had already published a special edition of the magazine exclusively on the thinking of authors from the Northern Hemisphere. It should be noted, however, that works from this hemisphere are common and predominant in philosophy, especially in Western philosophy of Greek origin. We are trying to turn our gaze and also offer opportunity to specialized research that does not have so much exposure and publication facility, democratizing access, production and the socialization of knowledge. This issue and the one on authorial philosophy are proof of that.

In addition to the geographic distribution of publications, the magazine has also been promoting other actions, with to the objective of reducing inequalities and offering opportunities to all. We reconfigured, for example, the Executive Committee, whose representation is now divided equally between the research areas of the Department of Philosophy and the Graduate Program in Philosophy at UNESP, to which the journal is linked, as well as seeking a more equitable gender division and external representation. The committee is mainly responsible for administrative and policy issues for the journal.

We also reconfigured the Editorial Board, seeking a more equal distribution of gender along, geographic, and thematic lines. Currently, female representation is equal to male representation. We intensified the participation of directors established in the Southern Hemisphere, as well as members from all regions of Brazil. The criterion adopted for the selection of national members is the proven activity in their Lattes curriculum, especially considering researchers with a CNPq/Category PQ-1 research productivity grant as a requirement. For foreign members, the choice is made based on their curriculum, in view of their production, impact factor and international reference.

The Editorial Board has an advisory role and can be called upon to suggest decisions on submitted material, in specific situations, to make suggestions on the journal's editorial line, as well as to suggest or organize thematic issues. We also greatly increased the number of reviewers. Currently, we have almost three thousand researchers in our database.

We hope, with these practices, to continue guaranteeing the quality of our publications, promoting the socialization of knowledge in all areas and in all regions of Brazil and the world. We wish you good reading of this issue!!!

## **REFERENCE**

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# THE CONFUCIAN CONCEPT OF "GOVERNANCE" AND ITS CONTEMPORARY VALUE<sup>1</sup>

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*Jun Wang*<sup>3</sup>


*Weidong Zhao*<sup>4</sup>


**Abstract:** Governance means the policy and strategy adopted in the process of running a country. In the long history of more than two thousand years, Confucianism had become the cultural core and political doctrine of the imperial autocracy, and the theory of "governance of the whole country" contained in it had become an important category in traditional Chinese culture. We should dig deep into the rich connotation of Confucian governance thought, and build a national governance system that suits society, the overall situation and future through innovative development and creative transformation, so as to let excellent traditional Chinese culture return to open a new road and make the past serve the present, thus providing important theoretical guidance and historical reference for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.


**Keywords:** The Confucian School. Thought of governance. Contemporary value.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the more than two-thousand-year history of the Chinese nation, Confucianism had become an important part of the various schools of learning in the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period since its founding by Confucius. In the Western Han Dynasty, Emperor Wudi of the Han Dynasty accepted Dong Zhongshu's advice of "banishing all schools of thought and respecting Confucianism only" and established the orthodox position of Confucianism as an official school. For more than two thousand years after that, Confucianism became the cultural core and political doctrine of the feudal autocracy of all dynasties, and the "governance of the country" theory contained in it became an important category of traditional Chinese culture. After the fall of the Qing Dynasty, Confucianism gradually lost its "exclusive" status with the collapse of the feudal rule, but the thought of "governing the country" with a long history and rich connotations in Confucian culture is still shining brilliantly, which has important reference value and historical significance for the construction of China's national governance system and the improvement of governance level.

## 1 THE CONNOTATION OF THE CONFUCIAN THOUGHT OF GOVERNANCE

"Governance" is a combination of "governance" and "Tao", which means the way to govern the country. The pre-Qin scholars had different understandings of "governance". Daoism advocated "governing without doing anything", Mohism advocated "universal love and non-aggression", and Legalism advocated "punishing people without avoiding ministers and appreciating good people without avoiding ordinary people". However, among many schools of thought, "emphasis of governing a country lies in Confucianism, and Confucianism is promoted by people", and the Confucian theory of "governance" is the mainstream and has the most far-reaching influence among all schools. The word "governance" has appeared in Pre-Qin Confucian classics in *the Book of Rites*: "Etiquette, music, law, and government decree all have the same purpose, which is to unite peoples' minds and make the country peaceful." According to the *Sayings of Confucius*: People are divided into five levels, including mediocre people, intellectuals, gentlemen, sage and Saint. If these five categories can be clearly distinguished, then the governing art of long peace will be fully understood. In the Han Dynasty, the concept of "governance" was widely used in documents such as *Biography*



of *Han Poetry*, *Hanshu* and *Shih Chi*. To be specific, the Confucian thought of "governance" mainly consists of Confucius' thought of virtue, Mencius's thought of benevolence and Xunzi's thought of righteousness. Later, Dong Zhongshu and others' expanded the theory and formed the theoretical premise of the harmony of humans and nature (天人合一), based on the deduction of ethics, and they formed the Confucian political theory paradigm of "the monarch's divine right", "the monarch for the people", "the family and the country as one". It is embodied in the following aspects: a nature-orientation is the root of the Confucian thought of "governance", people-orientation is the practical purpose of the Confucian thought of "governance", and the sovereign-orientation is the ultimate foothold of the Confucian thought of "governance".

### **1.1 THE STANDARD THOUGHT OF NATURE IS THE ROOT OF THE CONFUCIAN THOUGHT OF "GOVERNANCE"**

The concept of "nature" is one of the earliest and most far-reaching ideological categories in Chinese history. First of all, nature is the objective source of all things. Confucian thinking about "governance" runs through an inner clue that seeks to solve the problems of nature, society, and life from the perspective of harmony between humans and nature. There is an internal clue to solve the problems of nature, society, and life from the perspective of the relationship between humans and nature in Confucius' thought on "governance". According to Confucian philosophy, "nature" is the external regulation of objective existence, which stipulates the life origin of all things in the world, and everything is generated from nature. "Does nature say anything? The four seasons run as usual, and everything grows as usual. Does nature say anything?" (ZHU, 1983, p. 181). "The movement of the sky is regular, the movement of the earth is regular, the behavior of people is regular. The operation of nature has its own laws, which will not be changed by the tyrannical rule of Yao or Jie." (WANG, 1988, p. 362). Based on the above perspective, Confucianism demonstrates the characteristics, laws, and influences of nature. They believed that the movement and change of nature had its own laws, which were independent of human will. They believed that nature existed objectively and could not be changed. "Nature", as the origin of the universe, formulates and maintains all the order of the universe, and combines the nature and the regular sky.

The stars arranged in the sky rotate with each other. The sun and the moon shine alternately. The four seasons control the solar terms in turn. All things are produced by the harmony formed by yin and yang, and each is nourished by wind and rain to grow. Not seeing the working process of yin and yang transforming and generating all things, but only seeing the results of its transforming and generating all things, which is called miraculous. People all know that yin and yang have been formed into all things, but no one knows the invisible process of its formation, which is called heaven. (WANG, 1988, p. 365).

In nature, with the passage of the stars, the alternation of the four seasons, cloud movement and rain, all things have their own birth and nourishment, which are the results of nature's imperceptible effect and the concrete manifestation of "nature's power". Similarly, every man's destiny is predetermined by nature. As a part of the natural world, human beings are also ordered by nature. They are born and act according to the laws of the nature. It can be said that heaven gave birth to mankind, and his survival is inseparable from the natural environment. All of mankind's activities must be based on the prerequisite of following the laws of nature. Humans and nature have a symbiotic and co-prosperity relationship. Heaven and earth continue to create all things harmoniously. The basic value orientation pursued by Confucianism is to follow the natural laws and ecological order of all things, behave appropriately in accordance with the requirements of natural laws, and try to promote the life of all things, and achieve harmony between heaven and humans. The Confucian thought of governance was formed and developed based on the understanding that human beings and the universe have the same root, origin, and integration of human beings with the natural environment in ancient Chinese philosophy. The regularity and dominance of "heaven" provide a logical starting point and a theoretical foundation for the legitimacy of Confucian thoughts on governance.

Secondly, nature is the origin of human nature, morality, rites, and music. Confucianism does not just talk about life, but highlights the origin between nature and human nature, morality, rites, and music in the dialectical relationship of nature is based on destiny, and destiny is verified according to nature. Although Confucius, as the founder of Confucianism, "speaks less about the way of life and nature", which does not mean that Confucius did not attach importance to life and the way of nature. From the perspective of moral supremacy, Confucius believed that nature not only determines the

rise and fall of all things, including human fortunes, but also endows human beings with moral conduct. "There are three kinds of fear for a man with noble character: fear of the destiny, fear of the lords, fear of the words of the sages." (ZHU, 1983, p. 173)." The words of Confucius are full of the ideological characteristics of moral supremacy and natural humanity. Mencius in the Warring States Period inherited and carried forward Confucius' thought of the Mandate of Heaven and took "the theory of good nature" as the ideological foundation. He believed that Heaven treats all people equally, without distinction between high and low, and was full of the strong idea of equality. However, although nature does not have two minds, life circumstances and fortunes are different under the control of destiny. "They did what no one told them to do, that was destiny. They got what no one gave them, that was destiny." (ZHU, 1983, p. 314). On this basis, Mencius put forward that "To give full play to the good heart of man is to know the nature of man. If you know human nature, you know destiny. Maintaining the human nature and maintaining the human nature is the way to serve God." (ZHU, 1983, p. 356). He believed that human beings, as a member of the universe, should actively cultivate nature and morality, and follow the righteousness of life to establish destiny and serve the nature. Zhu Xi, a great Confucian in the Song Dynasty, concluded: "Governance must be based on the right heart and cultivation of one's morality." (ZHU, 2018, p. 2036).

In addition, from the perspective of astronomy and geography, the relationship between "rites" and "the way of nature", an important part of Confucianism, was systematically studied in the perspective of nature as the source of morality. Confucianism believes that the universe and all things are different and diverse, but the universe is smooth and harmonious, which are all because the universe respects a naturally formed hierarchy of high and low. Heaven is high and earth humble. Motion and rest are both regular, so that rigidity and softness can be distinguished. Everything in the four quarters of the earth gathers them together by way of classification (CHEN, 2016, p. 434). All things in the world live in harmony with each other, forming the rhythm and rhythm of continuous movement and mutual reaction in the universe, which provides the basis for the Confucian thought of "rites" and "music". "

Sowing in spring and growing in summer reflect the spirit of benevolence; Autumn harvest and winter storage reflect the spirit of justice. The function of music is to promote harmony, to obey the gods and to belong to nature; The function of the rites is to distinguish differences and belong

to the earth according to the soul. With rites and music, the function can be exerted. [...] Joy comes from Yang and ritual comes from Yin.” (CHEN, 2016, p. 433).

Rituals and music are believed to be produced by heaven and earth respectively. “Music is made by heaven and rites are made by earth.” (CHEN, 2016, p. 431). Ritual teachers have upper, lower, and different, while musicians are harmonious and biochemical. At the same time, the rites and music are endowed with the nature of yin-yang, benevolence and justice, and the conspicuous publicity of rites and music is the external representation of heaven and earth having their place respectively, and the relationship between the two is mutually external and internal. It can be seen that nature is endowed with the status of moral master in the Confucian thought of governance, and is the origin of human nature, morality, rites and music.

In summary, since the founding of Confucius, the Confucian school of thought has been based on humanistic rationality, insisting that The Tao of Heaven is endowed with moral and valued character by Confucians. They firmly believe that the Tao of Heaven is just, fair, perfect, the ultimate significance of human achievement, and its ultimate dominance is irreversible. The culture of rites and music is rooted in heaven and earth. It is an intermediary and bridge for worshipping gods and communicating with heaven and man. When it acts on human society, it is embodied into a patriarchal clan system, political order, and monarchy succession system, so the Tao of Heaven is endowed with a sacred status in Confucianism, and it is the origin of human nature, morality, etiquette, and music.

Finally, nature is the source of regime legitimacy. *The Book of Rites* says: “Of all the measures of public governance, politics is the most important.” “Politics” plays a key role in human organization and social governance. “Gee! Thou Shun! The great fate of nature has fallen upon you. Be honest and keep golden mean! If all the people of the world hide in misery and poverty, the throne given to you by nature will cease forever.” (ZHU, 1983, p. 194). Quoting the dialogue between Yao and Shun, Confucius explained that Shun inherited the mandate of Heaven and succeeded to the throne, but the world was poor and humble, and Emperor Shun’s position was never-ending, emphasizing that nature is the source of legitimate political power, the source of political stability and political governance. In his dialogue with Wan Zhang, Mencius also defined the legitimacy of the regime by saying “Shun

had the world" as an example. He believed that the world is not under the control of a single person, "the Son of Heaven cannot cede the regime to others." (ZHU, 1983, p. 312). Shun was able to have the opportunity to govern the world because of "God's will". However, "God does not speak, but acts and warns." (ZHU, 1983, p. 313). God is a silent supreme ruler, who rewards the good and punishes the evil according to the standard of morality and determines the ownership of earth's regime. "The reason why Yao recommended Shun in the past was that Shun acted in accordance with the order of nature" (ZHU, 1983, p. 313), which emphasized that nature was the source for the monarch to acquire the power of state governance and carry out social governance. In the history of Confucian development, Dong Zhongshu, a Confucian in the Western Han Dynasty, systematically discussed the relationship between heaven and feudal centralized rule and had a great influence on later generations. In his ideological system, nature/Heaven is the most important concept and the concept with the most complex connotations. But in conclusion, the ultimate goal of his theory of the way of nature/Heaven is to serve the feudal centralized rule. "A king must be ordained by Heaven before he can become one." (ZENG, 2009, p. 209). Dong Zhongshu believed that the legitimacy of kingship came not from the inheritance of the past generation and the continuation of the future generation, but from the appointment from Heaven. At the same time, he stressed that to ensure the legitimacy and long-term existence of the political power, the following things should be done under the will of heaven: "The monarchy was granted from heaven; Personality is the result of education; People's desires need institutions to control them. Therefore, the king accepts Heaven's/God's will to educate the people and correct law. By fixing these three, the country will be well governed (BAN, 1962, p. 2515). Here, Dong Zhongshu provided a solid theoretical basis for the unified cultural pattern under the theoretical framework of the unity of man and nature and demonstrated that nature was the source of the legitimacy of feudal rule and the foundation of political power's stability.

In Confucianism, Heaven means the ontological origin of ruling power, and it is the highest ruler with will and morality. It rewards good and punishes evil according to the standard of morality, and determines the ownership of human political power, we call it the ruling of Heaven. According to Mencius, "Heaven is the main object of worship, and all gods enshrine it, that is, Heaven accepts it; let Heaven dominate everything and things can be governed, and the people can be stable, that is, the people accept it." (ZHU, 1983, p. 313). "Heaven accepts it" and "people accept it" have parallel status, which will

result in the twofold standard of the legitimacy of monarchy rule. “Heaven accepts it” is the ultimate standard for the legitimacy of the monarchy with moral dominance, and “the people accept it” is the world standard for the legality of the monarchy with moral practical significance. Both originated in “Heaven” and settled in the “people”, and have inherent ethical connectivity. Together, the two constitute the interoperable “Heaven and the people are the same whole.”

## **1.2 PEOPLE-ORIENTATION IS THE PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONFUCIAN THOUGHT OF “GOVERNANCE”**

The people-oriented thought was conceived in the Shang and Zhou dynasties, formed in the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, and was inherited by the emperors of successive dynasties. It is the theoretical basis and core issue of the Confucian thought of “governance”. People-oriented thought emphasizes the root of the people’s interests, reflects the people’s wishes as the theoretical starting point and practical significance of the ideological characteristics. In the Confucian thought of “governance”, people follow their path, purview, and goal of realizing the Confucian thought of “governance”, and it is entrusted and carries the good expectation of Confucian intellectuals to realize the political desire of great harmony in the world.

First, moral deduction is the theoretical basis of people-oriented thinking. The Confucians thought “governance” is based on the social practice of a people-oriented doctrine, which is the continuous deduction and expansion from moral sensibility to political rationality, and the clear expression of moral politicization. “Someone asked Confucius, why don’t you go into politics? The Master said, “It is said in the Book of History that filial piety is to honor one’s father and mother, and fraternity is to love one’s brother. If I apply the principles of filial piety and fraternity to politics, this is politics. How can I not be seen as involved in politics?” (ZHU, 1983, p. 59). Confucius took filial piety and fraternity as the moral core of benevolence and the starting point of his philosophy of governance and extended the moral character of filial piety and fraternity to the people in power, that is, to engage in politics they too much be humane. This process of theoretical deduction starts from Mencius’ theory of “benevolent government”, which reflects his ideological theory of constructing “benevolent government”. He

said: "Human beings have compassion. The heart of compassion is the end of benevolence. People have four ends as well as four bodies." (ZHU, 1983, p. 239). Compassion is the basic attribute of human beings. Benevolence is the moral potential bred by compassion. Mencius constructed the framework of "benevolent government" using human moral attributes and human emotional consciousness or conscious, and then he created a theory of political ethics, demonstrating the rationality and legitimacy of the existence of "benevolent government" (XU, 2020, p. 32).

Secondly, owning constant production and a law-abiding mind are the core of people-oriented practice. In the Confucian philosophy of "governance", the people are not formed by one thought, and it is a matter that can be settled by a group of people. "The people are the most important, government is second, and the monarch is last." (ZHU, 1983, p. 375). This famous age-old saying has revealed the different participant levels in the Mencius system of benevolent governance. The monarch is the prerequisite and necessary condition for the implementation of benevolent governance. The main body of the benevolent government is the people, the main body of reform is the people, and the main body that benefits is also the people. Therefore, caring for the people has become a sufficient condition for implementing benevolent governance.

In order to put into practice a people-orientation, the importance of "civil affairs cannot be delayed" and must be acknowledged. To this end, Mencius put forward that "[...] the people are the way, and those who have permanent property have perseverance" (ZHU, 1983, p. 257) are the core values of his people-oriented practice. To this end, Mencius proposed that "[...] those who have permanent property have a law-abiding mind" (ZHU, 1983, p. 257) is another the core value of his people-oriented practice. However, in the social background of continuous wars and the huge gap between the rich and the poor at that time, the country's land resources had to be redistributed to make people have permanent property and keep law-abiding minds. Mencius said, "The practice of benevolent governance must begin with the division and determination of land boundaries. The field boundary is not straight, the well (area) is not equal, and the land rent income as a salary is not fair." (ZHU, 1983, p. 259). He advocated the redistribution of land resources according to the three-generation standard "the system of the well-field". In addition, Mencius argued that "The imposition of state taxes should be limited," and he wanted the people to be "[...] taxed less

and pay less.” He advocated that in agriculture “There is no better way of managing land than by helping and there is no worse way than by paying tribute or taxes” (ZHU, 1983, p. 258), and “The tiller should be helped rather than taxed.” (ZHU, 1983, p. 238). In the field of industry and commerce, Mencius advocated a tax management system of protecting and loving the people, such as “[...] metropolis without levying, law without levying”, “[...] checking only, not taxing”, and “[...] people live in places where there are no servitude taxes and no additional local taxes.” (ZHU, 1983, p. 238). In terms of enlightenment, Mencius proposed, “Good government is not as good as good education to win the support of the people. The people revere the good law. Good education is loved by the people. Good government orders win the hearts of the people, good education wins the hearts of the people.” (ZHU, 1983, p. 360). Civilian education is the center of civilian-oriented practice. “Local educational institutions should be set up to teach people about ethical relations”, the moral education and emotional appeal of filial piety, fraternity, and human relations can enhance people’s moral awareness, their level of understanding, promote their sense of moral identity and belonging. In this way, we can enter the world of “benevolent government” within “all the four seas” (ZHU, 1983, p. 273).

In this way, Mencius proposed that,

If these five types of behavior can be achieved, then the people of neighboring countries respect them like their parents. Leading children to attack their parents has never been successful. In this way, you can be invincible. People who are invincible are those who have been entrusted with a heavenly mission. It has never happened before that one cannot be a monarch in this way. (ZHU, 1983, p. 238).

In addition to ensuring “people’s affairs” on the institutional level, Mencius also realized the importance of following the laws of nature and advocated “prudent farming”. He also advocated that “one should not go against the timing of agriculture or else the grains will be eaten up; if the fine fishing nets are not fished in deep ponds, the fish and turtles will not be eaten up; if the trees are cut down in the mountains according to a certain season, the wood will be inexhaustible. Food and fish and turtles and other aquatic products will not be eaten up, and wood will not be used up. This ensures that the people can feed their families and bury the dead without regrets. People have no regrets in the face of life and death. This is the beginning of the kingly



way. It is emphasized that in specific agricultural production activities, as long as the laws of nature are followed and the demand for nature is restrained, this is also the basic principle and the only way to realize benevolent governance and the kingly way.

Finally, being good at teaching is the long-term guarantee of his people-orientation practice. How to make the actual experience of benevolent government (the people) truly understand and consciously practice benevolent government, so that benevolent government changes from the export of unilateral interests of the king to the people to the interaction of bilateral interests between the king and the people. Mencius put forward the view of "good education":

Benevolent words are not as useful as prestige, and good government measures are not as good as good education to win over the people. Good political measures make the people afraid, and good education makes the people love. Good political measures can enrich the people, and a good education can realize the support of the people. Set up schools to nurture the people [...] conscientiously set up school education, and repeatedly teach the people the principles of respecting parents and brothers [...] using these methods to familiarize people with ethics and morality. (ZHU, 1983, p. 360).

On the basis of meeting the material needs of the people, through the intermediary and bridge of "teaching", we can excavate, improve, and optimize people's moral sentiment, and use this as a carrier to enhance their sense of moral identity to the monarch and the country, and construct a community of shared destiny that unites the monarch and the people.

In addition to emphasizing the importance of the people's "good education", Mencius also went on from the perspective of maintaining the ruling order, "Assuming that the rulers do not pay attention to etiquette and the lower classes are not educated, thieves will rise, and the country will soon perish." (ZHU, 1983, p. 281). It is emphasized that the ruling class should also continuously improve their moral standards and awareness of loyalty through learning. As the ruling class of the vassal states, the "gentleman" should learn from the example of the ancient sages Yao, Shun, Confucius, Zilu, and so on, "Look for reasons from your own side or make demands on yourself", "learn from the sage", be good at facing up to the shortcomings of their own, learn from the sage diligently, and be willing to be kind to others, so as to improve

moral cultivation the “inner-gentleman”. As a special group in various social strata, the aristocratic family has the iconic, creative, role model and leading role. “The whole country will admire what the aristocratic family admires; what a country admires is admired by the whole world.” (ZHU, 1983, p. 283). Confucianists can govern, engage in moral education and teach good people from all corners of the world. Give full play to the moral appeal and role model driving force of the aristocratic families, the lower-class people will follow the example of the upper-class people, and realize the promotion, downward movement and widespread dissemination of the upper-class enlightenment consciousness. In the end, “[...] people all over the country are convinced that the moral education we have implemented can spread to every corner.” (ZHU, 1983, p. 283).

### **1.3 SOVEREIGN-ORIENTATION IS THE ULTIMATE FOOTHOLD OF THE CONFUCIAN PHILOSOPHY OF “GOVERNANCE”**

“China’s political system is the world’s first almost unbreakable feudal autocracy,” according to Fan Wenlan. The cultural core of the autocratic centralized system in Chinese feudal society is supported by the Confucian philosophy of “governance”. After being enacted and reformed, Confucianism evolved to help support “moderate despotism” and its political moral values.

First, the Confucian philosophy of “governance” takes the “three cardines and eight objectives” as the ethical logic framework and takes filial piety and fraternity as the core. Through the expansion and contribution of kinship, benevolence to the people and love of things, Confucianism connects the family and the country, unifying everything. To be specific, the theoretical starting point of the Confucian philosophy of “governance” is “[...] rectifying the position of each class.” According to the basic requirements of “[...] let the king be a king, the minister (be) a minister, the father a father and the son a son.” (ZHU, 1983, p. 137). In this way Confucianism constructed the supremacy of the royal power and the father’s power in the national political governance and the moral education of human ethics. In the perspective of talking with the monarch about the practical needs of governing the country, Mencius based his thinking on the “great desire of the king” to satisfy the monarch’s “[...] desire to acquire land, go to Qin and Chu, reach China and appease the four barbarians”. By means of examples, reasoning and analogy, it is shown that the monarch’s benevolent administration is as simple as “breaking

branches for the elders" and "turning back his hand". If the emperor imitates the principle of the three generations of sages, "[s]ets an example for his wife, extend it to his brothers, and then govern a good family"; ... "[e]xtend your kindness to others", and "[...] be good at promoting their good practices." (ZHU, 1983, p. 209), he can achieve the ideal state of national governance of "The benevolent is invincible" (仁者無敵). It can be said that the philosophy of "governance" of traditional Chinese Confucianism is constructed around the desire and direction of the king. This kind of thought nurtured and cultivated the thinking habit of ancient Chinese people to place politics in the field of morality and created the cultural pattern of ancient China that attached more importance to "governance" than "politics". On the one hand, the Confucian philosophy of "governance" emphasizes "benevolence", which has an obvious humanitarianism tendency. On the other hand, it emphasizes the hierarchical system and centralized autocracy, takes the monarch as the ultimate foothold, and embodies the ideological characteristics of a "mild autocracy".

The other school is represented by Xunzi, who developed the rule of rites after Confucius and put forward the strategy of combining the rule of rites with the rule of Kings. Although the *Xunzi* is the first to put forward the famous thesis of "following the Tao and not following the emperor", through ideological debate and creation, it has carried out in-depth thinking on the relationship between power and Tao. However, his serious thinking about the monarchy and ministerial doctrine is a direct response to political reality, emphasizing the internal distinction between Confucianists, and proposing the theory of "great Confucianists in the government", believing that great Confucianists can "[...] formulate good policies; in the civil society, promote good customs." (WANG, 1988, p. 142). According to the standard of "Imitate ancestors, unify etiquette and justice, and formulate a unified system" (WANG, 1988, p. 166), he believes that Confucianism can present a clear political and philosophical orientation for the emperor and ministers. Xunzi emphasized that the monarch is the most powerful, and his country management strategy, system, and power constraints are all discussed around the monarch's unification of the world. Xunzi not only adhered to the basic spirit of a Confucian philosophy of monarchy, but also reflected the basic trend of historical development. The ideal and reality were better integrated in Xunzi's thought. Xunzi's thinking on the monarchy became an important link in the transition from pre-Qin Confucianism to Qin and Han Confucianism, and the transition from private Confucianism to official Confucianism. The Legalist school founded by his disciples Li Si and Hanfeizi, to a certain

extent, can be said to be a product of the alienation of Xunzi's philosophy of the monarchy. Confucianism and Legalism together laid the ideological foundation of China's feudal monarchy system.

The second is the internal motivation of Confucian philosophy of the monarchy. Fundamentally speaking, the evolution process of pre-Qin Confucian philosophy of the monarchy developed from an ideal to be integrated with reality is a process in which philosophy of the monarchy gradually unifies with the requirements of the actual monarchy. During the Spring and Autumn Period, the royal power system was shaken. Afterwards the Western Zhou Dynasty authority, that is the authority of the Zhou dynasty Emperor declined, and the enfeoffed feudal kings no longer respected the Zhou Emperor. In the process of changes in the social power system, the patriarchal system of enfeoffment was gradually replaced by the emerging bureaucracy. The patriarchal enfeoffment system is based on the patriarchal blood lines and blood ties, and the bureaucracy is mainly closely integrated with the geographical and employment relationships. In this era, the monarchs of the various vassal states in the Warring States period were courteous and corporal, reformed, and strengthened the monarch's power. Confucian monarchy philosophy adapts to the requirements of the time and seeks measures to strengthen the rule of the monarch, whether it is Confucius, Zisi, or Mencius, constantly pushing the ideal of Confucian monarchy to a new level. During the Warring States period, bureaucratic politics continued to mature, and Confucian philosophy of the monarchy had idealist characteristics. The desire of the princes' monarchs to strengthen the monarchy is contrary to the historical reality, and the Confucian monarchy is in a predicament. The predicament announced the end of the over-idealized situation of Confucian monarchy, and at the same time, it also announced that a new situation of Confucian monarchy was about to begin. At the end of the Warring States period, world unification was unstoppable. Xunzi fully grasped the trend of historical development, centered on the principle of the monarch to unify the world, and put forward the idea of monarchy with centralized unification as the core. At this point, the Confucian ideal of monarchy and the requirements of real rule finally achieved a preliminary unity. In the process of combining the ideal of Confucian monarchy with the actual monarchy, the pursuit of morality and justice is constantly undergoing profound changes. The general trend of change is that moral supremacy is decreasing, and moral instrumentality is strengthening, which has produced effects for future generations. It has a deep impact.

## **2 THE CONTEMPORARY VALUE OF THE CONFUCIAN PHILOSOPHY OF GOVERNANCE**

In the course of more than two thousand years' development, Chinese traditional culture has rich connotations. In the new era, we should adhere to the cultural confidence, excavate the cultural essence of the Confucian philosophy of "governance", let excellent traditional Chinese culture return based on opening a new road and make the past serve the present under the idea of innovative development and creative transformation, thus providing important theoretical guidance and historical reference for the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

### **2.1 CONFUCIAN PHILOSOPHY OF GOVERNANCE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN ECOLOGICAL CIVILIZATION**

With the continuous development of China's economy and society, the conflict between development and environmental resources has become a problem that we must face up to and pay attention to. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the Communist Party of China has put forward the theory of building an ecological civilization with Chinese characteristics. Faced with major theoretical and practical issues such as how to build an ecological civilization, what kind of ecological civilization to build, and how to build an ecological civilization. The Confucian philosophy of "governance" holds the theoretical banner of "the unity of humans and nature" high in traditional Chinese culture and emphasizes harmonious coexistence between humans and nature on the basis of following the way of nature and adhering to the will of heaven, which is the spiritual core and meaning of the ecological protection theory emphasized and practiced by China at present.

In 2018, at the National Conference on Ecological and Environmental Protection, General Secretary Xi Jinping quoted the famous saying from Xunzi, "All things are born with harmony, and all things are raised with nourishing", which is an interpretation of the Zhuangzian Daoist view of nature. In the ideological system of Confucianism, great importance is attached to the concept of "harmony". Confucianism is against abandoning harmony, and it is seeking common ground. They believe that although things have different attributes, they can form unity between things with different attributes and show their harmonious relationship, on this basis, new things can often be produced. Therefore, under the concept of "harmony", "[...] when neutralization is achieved, heaven and earth will return to their place and all things will grow

and develop.” (ZHU, 1983, p. 18). The concept of harmony is closely related to the Confucian thought of “the doctrine of the mean or centrality”, which proposes that “excessive” and “lacking” are the manifestation of two extreme phenomena, both of which are undesirable. Confucianism advocates the idea of “holding both ends” and regards the idea of “neutralization or centralization” as the golden rule for the harmonious coexistence of all things without harm. Over the past 70 years since the founding of New China, especially since the reform and opening up, China’s economic and social development have made remarkable achievements. However, with the rapid economic development, environmental resource issues have also become a hot topic that we have to pay attention to. General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets. He profoundly explained the relationship between economic and social development and the protection of the natural environment, and clearly embodied the Confucian ideas of “harmony” and “modern mean”. This concept requires us to develop and utilize natural resources from the perspective of harmonious coexistence, adhere to the principle of moderation, and resolutely put an end to the phenomenon of indiscriminate logging, disorderly exploitation, draining water, overfishing, and cutting off the development path of future generations for the sake of immediate interests. We should strengthen green awareness, firmly establish green marketing, and green consumption concepts, and consciously follow the laws of nature and social development. By referring to the concept of “the unity of nature and humans” in the Confucian philosophy of “governance” and putting it into concrete social practice. Economic development, human life, and the natural environment must be used to promote and coordinate with each other, which achieves a harmonious state of “[...] harmony with the heaven and earth, harmony with the sun and moon, harmony with the order of the four seasons.” (ZHOU, 1991, p. 9).

It is fair to say that China is in a new stage of development. The transformation of new and old drivers of growth and supply-side reform all point to the issue of how to adjust the relationship between economic society and the natural environment and achieve harmonious development. We should continue to follow the Confucian idea of uniting humans and nature, seeking a way to live in peace with nature, based on respecting and protecting it. At the same time, it is necessary to understand and practice the Confucian concepts of “harmony” and “center” from a practical point of view, and make clear water and green mountains the theoretical concept of invaluable assets for the benefit of present and future generations (YU, 2018, p. 192).

## **2.2 CONFUCIAN PHILOSOPHY OF GOVERNANCE AND ADHERENCE TO A PEOPLE-ORIENTATION**

“People are the foundation of the country. The foundation is solid, and the country is peaceful.” In the Confucian philosophy of “governance”, people are the core, key and important focus for the government to pay attention to. The Confucian philosophy of “governing the country” emphasizes the theoretical core of “the ruler serves the people”. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, General Secretary Xi Jinping has attached great importance to the importance of the people, “The people are our party’s strongest confidence, the solid foundation of our republic, and the foundation of our party’s strong alliance to revitalize the country. Our party comes from the people, is born for the people, and thrives for the people.” This is the innovative analysis and dialectical inheritance of Confucianism’s philosophy of “governance” from the perspective of Marxism.

In the long history of thousands of years, the Confucian though philosophy of a “people-orientation”, as the governing program and political declaration of the feudal dynasty, has been continuously enriched and perfected in the modern reform. In the new era, to make the political system more in line with the public opinion and conform to the people’s heart, it is necessary to adjust and reform the “people-oriented” of Confucianism in the traditional Chinese culture according to the needs, so as to play its role in appeasing the people and stabilizing the society. Confucianist “people-oriented” philosophy is the essence of Chinese traditional culture. To make philosophy work better, it is necessary to inject “modern” elements into thinking, and to inject reform momentum into thinking. In the new era, in order to better inherit and carry forward the Confucian concept of “people-oriented” and “governance”, the following tasks need to be done well.

First, no matter what we do, we must put the people’s interests first. This is the key to win the trust of the people and a necessary condition for doing any work well. The interests of the people are above all else. Only by putting people’s interests first can we avoid detours and win their trust and support. Otherwise, nothing can be achieved. Second, we need to be deeply involved in the grass-roots community, be sensitive to people’s conditions, understand public opinion and get along well with them. Party and government cadres go deep into the grassroots and integrate into the lives of ordinary people. Only by empathy and putting themselves in others’ shoes and can they truly understand the difficulties and sufferings of the common people, and truly

govern the country for the people. Third, win the trust and recognition of the people through practical actions for them. In recent years, governments at all levels, from the central to the local governments, have gradually shifted their focus to improving people's livelihood, and introduced a series of policies to benefit the people in an effort to solve some difficulties and practical problems for the people. For example, the livelihood issues concerning people's production and life such as elderly care, medical care, housing, employment and education, have been effectively solved, winning the hearts of the people and giving full play to their enthusiasm.

In the new era, we are faced with new tasks and greater challenges. We should deeply absorb the spiritual nutrients of the Confucian thought of "governance" and "putting people first", and follow the public servant consciousness of "being the first to worry about the affairs of the state and the last to enjoy oneself". We must stand on the people's standpoint, never forget our original aspirations, keep our mission firmly in mind, and always stand on the people's standpoint when thinking about problems, doing things, and making decisions. Only in this way can the people live and work in peace and contentment, and the country can enjoy long-term stability.

### **2.3 THE CONFUCIAN THOUGHT OF "GOVERNANCE" AND SEEING PARTY SELF-GOVERNANCE EXERCISED FULLY AND WITH RIGOR**

The Confucian thought of "governance" emphasizes the way of "correcting ourselves before correcting others" in politics. It puts forward governance requirements to the rulers that "If we conduct ourselves properly, even if we don't issue orders, the people will carry them out. If we do not behave ourselves, even if we issue orders, the people will not obey them." (ZHU, 1983, p. 144). Only when the ruler behaves properly can he have the qualification and ability to govern the country and the people. Correcting ourselves and being a role model are the important means and basic premise of governing a country by a royal ruler. The development history of Chinese politics in more than two thousand years shows that the essential reason for the dishonesty of the folk customs in history lies in the impropriety of the people, while the fundamental reason for the impropriety of the people lies in the impropriety of the officials. Therefore, only when officials are virtuous, upright, and clean in their work can they comply with the will of the people and win the hearts of the people. Officials can only do this if



they can move people with virtue, convince people with virtue, and manage people with virtue. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the CPC has attached great importance to the Party's self-revolution, adhered to the principle of comprehensively governing the Party with strict discipline, and strengthened constraints and oversight on the exercise of power. In the new development stage, we can draw lessons from the Confucian concept of "governance" and continue to promote the "seeing Party self-governance exercised fully and with rigor", which can be started from the following aspects:

First of all, to be a role model, "self-cultivation" is necessary. Virtue runs through a person from beginning to end and it is reflected in a person's words and deeds. A man of bad virtue can never be trusted. Our party is built on the foundation of the broad working class of China, and the trust of the masses is the foundation of our party's governance and the criterion of our party's century-old history. As there is a saying that "when the above behave wrongly the below will do the same", in order to gain the trust of the masses, we must establish and adhere to the concept of "revising personal virtues". We must focus on the "key minority", and in particular, leading officials at all levels must firmly establish the concept of serving the people wholeheartedly. We must be strict with ourselves, guard against small problems, and build up barriers of thought and awareness. We must eliminate corruption once and for all, not only let people being afraid of corruption, but also being unable to do so and not wanting to do so.

Secondly, to be a role model, "correcting speech" is necessary. In *The Analects of Confucius*, it is said, "A word can rejuvenate a nation or ruin a nation." Good words may bring prosperity to a nation, but deceitful words may bring ruin to a nation. Therefore, leading cadres must listen to people's opinions and communicate with them. Politicians should improve their ideological, cultural and language levels. If the speech style of Party members and cadres is not good, it is easy to cause people to lose trust in them, which will damage their affinity and charisma. General Secretary Xi Jinping has stressed on many occasions that Party members and cadres must develop a good language style. The speech should be concise, honest and frank, spoken affectively, used in a way people can understand. It should also establish a good image, go deep and communicate with the masses, and listen to the most authentic opinions of the masses.

Further, to be a role model, “correcting conduct” is necessary. Confucianism stresses the unity of knowledge, action and word use. Party members and cadres should set a good image and example, to lead by example. If the party members and cadres themselves are not upright, it is easy to cause “Superiors acting and inferiors imitating” and play a bad social role model. Leading cadres should always bear in mind their role. In addition, Party members and cadres are Party spokespersons among the masses. If the masses lose confidence in Party members and cadres, they will lose confidence in the party, which will affect the party’s status as the ruling party. That is why this party member cadre should monitor his own behavior at all times. Leading officials at all levels should change their work style, practice their own actions, foster the “leading effect”, resolutely correct the problems of the “four styles of conduct”, and oppose formalism and bureaucratism. “Looking in the mirror, dressing properly, taking a bath, and treating diseases” should be incorporated into the whole process of the Party’s educational and practical activities, and the Confucian “governance” concept of “correcting ourselves before correcting others” should be put into practice. (KONG, 2016, p. 40).

It can be said that the Confucian thought of “governance” has a strong historical reference value for the current implementation of “seeing Party self-governance exercised fully and with rigor” in China. Drawing on the quintessence and usefulness of Confucian “governance” thought, through “cultivating morality”, “changing words” and “changing conduct”, which is of great benefit to strengthen the work style and discipline construction of the Communist Party of China.

## CONCLUSION

To sum up, in the long history of China’s political development, we have accumulated rich experience in national governance, formed a systematic Confucian thought of “governance”, and constructed a theoretical system with the “nature-orientation” as the theoretical source, the “people-orientation” as the practical path, and the “sovereign-orientation” as the ideological base. This system has gained and lost for thousands of years and has played an important role in maintaining the stability of the government and safeguarding the interests of the people. In the new era, China is faced with dual challenges in the new stage of development, both at home and abroad. Under the thinking of innovative development and creative transformation, we should

dig deeply, inherit, carry forward the historical significance of Confucian "governance", and give play to the dual challenges of its significant role in the construction of ecologically balanced civilization, governing for the people, and comprehensively enforcing strict party governance. We should let excellent aspects of traditional Chinese culture return to the basics to open a new road and make the past serve the present and continue to modernize China's national governance system and capacity.

XU, D.; WANG, J.; ZHAO, W. O conceito confucionista de "Governança" e seu valor contemporâneo. *Transformação*, Marília, v. 45, p. 15-36, 2022. Edição Especial 2.

**Resumo:** Governança significa a política e a estratégia adotadas no processo de gestão de um país. Na longa história de mais de dois mil anos, o confucionismo tornou-se o núcleo cultural e a doutrina política da autocracia imperial, e a teoria da "governança de todo o país" contida nele tornou-se uma categoria importante na cultura tradicional chinesa. Deve-se aprofundar na rica conotação do pensamento de governança confucionista e construir um sistema de governança nacional que se adapte à sociedade, à situação geral e ao futuro, por meio de desenvolvimento inovador e transformação criativa, de modo a permitir que a excelente cultura tradicional chinesa retorne à base, para abrir um novo caminho e fazer o passado servir ao presente, fornecendo, assim, importante orientação teórica e referência histórica para o grande rejuvenescimento da nação chinesa.

**Palavras -Chave:** A Escola Confucionista. Pensamento de governança. Valor contemporâneo.

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## CONFUCIAN HARMONY AND THE IDEA OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN MODERN SOCIETY<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** Youzi, Confucius' disciple, proposed the thought of "Harmony is Valued", which was also the value pursuit of Confucius. They interpreted the implication of "Harmony" from practicing the rules of propriety. "He" means "harmony". Mencius called the harmony between people "Support of the People", and he discussed the harmonious coexistence between the revolutionaries and the public from the perspective of "Benevolent Policy" and "Good Nature". Xunzi explained the institution, normalization and impartiality necessary for society from the aspect of "Harmony", which expanded the theoretical implication of "Harmony". Confucian thought of "Harmony is Valued" is also the embodiment of the ideology of "Advocating Fairness" and "Harmony Between Man and Nature", which contained the thought of the harmonious relationship between people and nature. Confucian thought of "Harmony is Valued" has achieved an innovative development in modern society, which complies with the idea of sustainable development. It is of great referential significance for rethinking the relation between people, the relation between human and nature, and the relation between economic development and natural environment etc.

**Keywords:** Confucian. "Harmony is Valued". Sustainable development.

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## INTRODUCTION

“Harmony” is the most important link in Chinese ideology, and the Confucian interpretation of “harmony” is the best comprehension. Confucius and Youzi proposed that “Harmony is Valued”, while Mencius and Xunzi extended its meaning from the perspective of “Support of the People” and “Harmony Rite”, respectively. Confucianism’s exposition of “Harmony is Valued” embodies the importance of harmonious coexistence between people, and between people and everything. Academic researchers are mainly involved in the harmony view in traditional Chinese culture (WANG, 2019, p. 104), such as Confucianism and Sustainable Development (WANG, 2000, p. 65), Basic Features and Contemporary Values of the Traditional Confucian View of Harmony (XING, 2014, p. 30), Confucian Culture and Sustainable Development (YANG, 2006, p. 6), Ecological Ethical Implications of Confucian thought of Harmony of Heaven and Man (WANG, 2005, p. 26), Confucian Reflections on Sustainable Development Approaches (CUI, 2002, p. 89), Ecological Ethics and Sustainable Development in Traditional Chinese Culture (QU, 2008, p. 341), the connotation and practical significance of the Confucian thought “Harmony is Valued” (WANG, 2021, p. 1), climate governance and the sustainable development (FANG, 2021, p. 86), etc. There are few studies on the relationship between the Confucian thought “Harmony is Valued” and the concept of sustainable social development in academic circles. Therefore, the author writes this paper with the superficial piecemeal knowledge to explore the Confucian thought “Harmony is Valued” and the concept of sustainable development in modern society, in order to illustrate the internal logics and harmony between “Harmony is Valued” and sustainable development in modern society.

## 1 THE THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS OF CONFUCIAN THOUGHT OF “HARMONY IS VALUED”

“He” in Confucianism can be interpreted as “harmony.” It is the basic development goal between people and between people and everything, also the perfect development state of human society. Confucius and Youzi defined the meaning and framework of “Harmony”, while Mencius and Xunzi discussed the meaning of “Harmony” from the perspectives of “Benevolent Policy”, “Division” and “Righteousness”, which further deepens the idea of “Harmony is Valued”. In addition, “Harmony is Valued” is also the embodiment of the

Confucian theory “The Golden Mean” and “Neutrality”, which demonstrates the Confucian pursuit of “Harmony Between Man and Nature”.

## 2 “HARMONY” IS THE IMPORTANT PURPORT OF “HARMONY IS VALUED”

Youzi, Confucius’ disciple, once put forward the theoretical proposition that “Harmony is Valued” when discussing “the rules of propriety”.

Youzi said, “In practicing the rules of propriety, it is harmony that is valued. [...] This is where the ancient monarch’s method of governing the country is valuable. However, even if you do big or small things harmoniously, it won’t work sometimes. For the purpose of harmony, it is not feasible to control rite without rite.” (CONFUCIO, 2001, p. 5)

Therefore, how do we understand “Harmony”? In *Book of Rites by Ru Xing*, there is an argument that “[...] it is harmony that is valued in the rules of propriety.” As said in the Kong Yingda “[...] it is harmony that is valued in the rules of propriety”, propriety is based on the articles and people who use it. They are afraid of suffering from the difference between the noble and the humble, and people cannot be “harmonious” with no gap between them. If the Confucian scholars use it, the noble and courteous are polite and there is no gap, so “[...] it is harmony that is valued’.” (ZHENGXUAN, 2004, p. 1730). Kong expressed that the application of “rites” is to make people “harmonious” with no gap between them. Therefore, Kong Yingda understood that it is harmony that is valued in the rules of propriety” as the “Harmony” among the people (LE, 2020, p. 203).

In *Confucian Analects*, “Harmony” also exists (harmony, which means “no distinction between noble and inferior, and the respect and inferiority are dear to each other”). Confucius said, “Ran You! Gentlemen hate those who refuse to say that they would like to implement it, but make excuses.” Whether they are the feudal princes with a country or the senior officials with fiefs, they do not worry about not having much wealth, but just concerned about the uneven distribution of wealth; they do not worry about few people, but instability in the territory. If wealth is distributed even, poverty does not matter; if the territory is peaceful and united, you won’t feel that there are few people; if the territory is peaceful, the country will not be in danger. If these are completed, people from far away will not be convinced, so they will be entertained by penalties and civilized intercourses with kindheartedness

and justice, harmony and music. When coming, they must be relieved. Now, Ran You and Ji Lu, you two are helping the Ji Sun clan. People far away do not submit, but Ran You and Ji Lu can't make them submit; the country is divided but cannot maintain its stability and unity. Instead, it is planning to start fighting within the territory. "I am afraid that Ji Sun clan's worries are not in Zhuanyu, but in the interior of Lu State." (CONFUCIO, p. 143). Confucius' understanding of "Harmony" means that even if there is no difference between the rich and the poor, everyone will live in harmony and be "safe", which is the same as that in *Book of Rites · Ru Xing*. Youzi established the moral foundation with the filial piety and fraternal duty, "[...] which is similar with those of Confucius." Mencius commented that Youzi was as wise as Confucius. Therefore, Youzi's statement in practicing the rules of propriety can also be understood as Confucius' proposition.

"Harmony" refers to not only the symbiotic relationship between people and society, but also an ideal state where everything is coordinated and coexisted in harmony. Youzi discussed about "Rite" and "Harmony". "Rite" is an objective criterion for maintaining social order, which shows the code of conduction that should be observed between people in the society. It is a method of harmonious coexistence between monarchs and ministers, between people and among neighbours. Confucius said, "The monarch shall respond to the subordinates with rite, and the subordinates shall serve the monarch with loyalty." (CONFUCIO, 2001, p. 20). Confucius said,

Government decrees are applied to govern the folks and criminal laws to rectify them. The folks only seek to be free from crimes and punishments, but they have no sense of shame. Guiding the folks with morality and assimilating them with the rite system, the folks will not only feel ashamed, but also have consciousness of obedience. (CONFUCIO, 2001, p. 7).

Furthermore, the "Rite" shall be applied throughout people's life. Confucius said, "When your parents are alive, you shall serve them with rite. After your parents die, you shall bury them and worship them with rite." (CONFUCIO, 2001, p. 8). More importantly, "Rite" can motivate people's inner moral character. Confucius said, "Restraining yourself, and doing everything in accordance with the requirements of rite, this is the benevolence. Once it is completed, everything in the world will be attributed to benevolence." (CONFUCIO, 2001, p. 99). From the above discussion, it can be observed that "Rite" is embodied between people, and "The Function of Rite" lies



in “precious harmony”. Here, “Harmony” means that people should live in harmony with each other. In addition, “Benevolence” is the inner support of “Rite”, that is, the inner morality is the basis for the reasonable application of “Rite”. Confucius said, “How can a person practice rite without benevolence? How can a person play music without benevolence?” (CONFUCIO, 2001, p. 15). Therefore, “Harmony is Valued” is not only manifested as the external confusion and peace, but everyone in the society recognizes and accepts others.

### **3 “SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE” IS THE SOCIAL PURSUIT OF “HARMONY IS VALUED”**

Mencius inherited Confucius and Youzi’s concepts of “Harmony” in interpersonal relationship with the internal identity. Compared with Confucius and Youzi, he paid more attention to the relationship between the rulers (monarchs) and the people, and made Confucius’ abstract exposition more concrete. Mencius discussed “Harmony” from politics and interpreted “Harmony” from the aspect of “Benevolent Policy”. Rulers shall improve their moral qualities, so as to manage society rationally and achieve social harmony, which is what Mencius called “Support of the People”.

Mencius said, the weather and season conducive to combat are not comparable to the geographical situation. The geographical situation is not comparable to the aspirations of the people and internal unity. The wall is not low, the moat is not shallow, the weapons and equipment are not inadequate, and the food supply is not insufficient. They abandoned the city and fled, which shows that the favourable terrain is not as good as the concerted efforts of people. With that being said, To make people settle down and not move to other places cannot rely on the boundary of territory, to consolidate national defense cannot rely on big mountains and rivers, and to awe the world cannot rely on the sharp weapons. The monarch who can implement the “Benevolent Policy” will have more people to help and support him. Otherwise, they will lose the support. If few people are loyal to him, the relatives will be traitors. If most of people support him, the whole world will obey him. On the condition that everyone in the world submits to him, he will assail the monarch whose relatives are opposed to betrayal. Therefore, the monarch will win all wars (MENCIUS, 1999, p. 65).

Only “Support of the People” can lead to “Benevolent Policy”. “At this time, a powerful country implements a benevolent policy, and the people are

happy as if they are rescued.” (MENCIUS, 1999, p. 46). The foundation of “Benevolent Policy” is “Good Nature”.

Mencius said,

As far as the temperament is concerned, you can be kind-hearted, which is what I call the goodness of human nature. As for some people who are unkind, it cannot be imputed to natural endowments. Everyone has the sense of sympathy, the sense of shame, devotion, and that of right and wrong. The sense of sympathy belongs to benevolence; the sense of shame belongs to righteousness; the sense of devotion belongs to rite; and the sense of right and wrong belong to wisdom. The benevolence, righteousness, rite and wisdom are not imposed on me by external factors, but inherent to me. I would not think about it at times, so there is no feeling. (MENCIUS, 1999, p. 171).

Mencius believes that “Goodness” is the inherent nature of human beings, that is, “Kindness” means “Good Nature”. On the basis of the theory of “Good Nature”, Mencius advocates the people-oriented concept, “for a nation, the people are the most important thing. The state comes second. The ruler is least important” (MENCIUS, 1999, p. 203). The ruler shall have inner goodness, restrain his own desires and ambitions, have his state and people in mind, and be committed to the well-being of the people. The people will also respect the ruler’s governance, achieving “Support of the People”. In the interaction between the ruling party and the people, the ruling party can guarantee the validity and authority of its power, thus protecting the rights of the people. People will fulfil their due obligations, which is the unity of “Support of the People” and “Benevolent Policy”.

#### 4 “HARMONY RITE” IS THE SOCIAL NORM OF “HARMONY IS VALUED”

Same as Confucius and Mencius, Xunzi also regarded “Harmony” as a reasonable form of social development, but paid more attention to the role of “Rite” in “Harmony”, advocated “Harmony Etiquette” and acted in accordance with the “Rite” system.

With that being said,

If you are proficient in one of the principles, you can be proficient in the second; if you master the principles, you can use them for a long time; if you apply them in a broad way, you can comprehend

them by analogy; you can be at ease if you often think about them; you can prefer them if you follow and figure out them repeatedly; you can get benefits if you apply them to regulate the erotic feeling; you can apply them to achieve fame and glory; you can be in peace and harmony if you apply them to get along with everyone; and if you apply them to be alone, you can be happy. Nobleness can be the emperor and have the wealth of the whole world, which is people's common pursuit. But if you obey people's desires, then it is not allowable from the perspective of power and influence. It cannot be satisfied by materials. Therefore, the wise ancient emperors formulated rite and righteousness to distinguish them, so they have noble hierarchies, the difference between old and young, between cleverness and stupidity, ability and disability. Each of them bears their responsibility in his proper position, and they get salaries which match their status and work. This is the way to make people live in groups and in a coordinated way. (XUNKUANG, 1997, p. 13).

Xunzi advocated the thought of “Clarifying the Distinction between Gentle and Simple, Rich and Poor, Men and Women, Old and Young to Form Social Groups”.

If you leave a group to stay alone without relying on each other, you will be poor. If you live together without a position difference, you will compete. Poverty and fight are both disasters. To save and avoid disasters, there is nothing like clarifying the partition between gentle and simple, rich and poor, men and women, old and young to form social groups.” (XUNKUANG, 1997, p. 39).

“Division” refers to the social hierarchy, such as gentle and simple, old and young, rich and poor. Human beings form groups due to the social hierarchy, and it reflects the difference between humans and poultry, and highlights the particularity of human beings. The class distinctions of the society still need to be adjusted by “Rite”. It is no more important to distinguish the boundaries of various things than to determine a person's status. There is no more importance to determine a person's status than to follow the law and discipline rite, which is no more important than to follow the example of the wise emperor. (XUNKUANG, 1997, p. 16). Only with the adjustment of “Rite” can “people carry out their own affairs, and everyone has its own suit.” Through the role of “Rite and Righteousness”, the “Group” of “dividing” can be “harmonious”.

Fire and water have breath without life, vegetation has a life without perception, and animals have perception without morality and justice, why can people combine themselves into the social group? There are hierarchies and status due to morality and justice. Therefore, if a person's status is determined in accordance with morality and justice, people can be harmonious and coordinated; if they are harmonious and coordinated, they can be united; if they are united, the strength will be great; if the strength is great, they will be strong; if they are strong, and they can be defeat foreign powers. In this way, it is possible to live in the house securely. People can successively arrange the four seasons and manage everything well, so that the world can get benefits. It is derived from status and morality. People can't live without social groups, but when they are integrated into a social group without the restriction of hierarchies and status, they are compete. Once the competition occurs, turmoil will take place and people will have different hearts, which will weaken the strength. If the strength is weak, the foreign objects will not be defeated. Hence, people cannot live in the house securely, which indicates that people cannot abandon the rite and righteousness for a moment. If the principles for organizing the social group are proper, all things on earth can get the proper arrangements that it requires, the six domestic animals can grow well, and all living organisms can live well. If the feeding is proper, the six domestic animals can be prosperous; if felling and planting the trees are proper, vegetation can breed abundantly; if policies and decrees are proper, ordinary people can be unified and the people with virtue and talent can perform their abilities (XUNKUANG, 1997, p. 35).

Compared with Confucius and Mencius, Xunzi emphasized the role of "Rite" to "Harmony". "Righteousness" is the basis of "Rite", the righteousness is pursued in accordance with the rite, and then the righteousness is gained. (XUNKUANG, 1997, p. 127). "Rite" is to punish behaviours that violate the system and words that do not comply with people's duties. "From the higher authorities to the lower subordinates, [...] everyone is introspective, and handles their status carefully." They "establish and seek the common interests of the people to get rid of the common scourge of the people". "Rite" is institutional and normative. Only through the impartiality of the "Rite" system can the state machinery be able to govern and the society develop in a harmonious way. Only by taking "Rite" as the ruler's policy of governing the country can the virtuous and talented people perform and populace can live and work in peace and contentment to remedy the shortcomings of "Running

the Country according to Law”. “Harmony with ethics” is established with the social norm of “Harmony is Valued”.

## 5 “HARMONY BETWEEN MAN AND NATURE” IS AN IMPORTANT WAY TO ACHIEVE “HARMONY”

Chengzi said:

Position is the proper allocation. Everything in the world has its proper position, and it can be settled steadily if the proper solution is found. Everything in the world must have its place. Everything be settled appropriately otherwise confusion can be caused if it is inappropriate. The reason why saints stabilize the world is not to make rules for things, but to allow them to develop in its own way. The first step is to “find the proper position,” and finally reach the realm of “[...] the country is prosperous and the people are at peace”. Only when each party plays its role and finds the correct position, can they finally develop an integral accord (CHENG, 2003, p. 96).

How to achieve “Harmony”? Confucianism proposed the concept of “Neutrality”, that is, “as long as we strive to achieve “Neutrality” and make them in their places, everything will develop in an orderly way. (KONGYU, 1992, p. 22). There is a special explanation of “Fairness” and “Harmony” in the “Doctrine of the Mean” that people are always in a rational and fair state, which is called “Fairness”. They perform harmony with “Fairness” and rite. “Neutrality” is the essence of “the Golden Mean” advocated by Confucius, which embodies the Confucian idea of “Harmony between man and nature”.

The “nature” in the Confucian “Harmony between man and nature” is the natural world, the origin of all livings on earth. “Man” is a part of the natural world. “Water vapor rises and falls to the heavens and the earth, the breeding and nurturing of all things are pure, men and women are intermingled, and many human beings are born”. The premise of “harmony between man and nature” is to revere nature, that is, people must observe and follow the laws of nature during their life and production. In *Yizhuan Xiang*, “[...] people should learn the principles of nature and earth, and apply practical and appropriate principles to guide their lives.” It is also said that the regular patterns of nature are objective and not shifted by human will. There should be a sense of reverence for nature, and people should follow the law of nature and protect nature. The method of “harmony between man and

nature” is to apply nature’s power in a scientific and reasonable way. Mencius (1999, p. 35) said that,

[...] if military corvee does not hinder the season of agricultural production, the food will not be eaten; if the fine fishing nets are not allowed to fish in deep ponds, the fish and turtles will not be eaten; if the trees are cut down in the mountains according to a certain season, the wood will be inexhaustible.

Xunzi stated in Tianlun, the laws of nature will never change. It does not exist for Yao or perish for Jie. It is auspicious to adapt with measures leading to stability, and it is dangerous to adapt to it with measures that lead to confusion. As Mencius and Xunzi said, although the laws of nature are constant, people can take advantage of nature with correct methods and measures based on the regular patterns to bring the development of society and the improvement of people’s living standards. In addition, the Confucianism of the Song Dynasty also put forward that “all people are my brothers and sisters, and all things are my companions”. We shall treat nature as the compatriots. This is another important judgment of Confucianism on protecting the environment and Harmony Between Man and Nature.

“Harmony between man and nature” is an ideal state where everything is coordinated and harmonious coexistence. It is the polybasic unity and the path to achieve “Harmony”. The idea of “harmony between man and nature” embodies the eco-environment protection consciousness of following the regular patterns, protecting the environment, saving resources, and keeping the Harmony Between Man and Nature, which is of great significance and value to establish a harmonious and stable relationship between man and nature in modern society.

## **6 THE INNOVATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF CONFUCIAN THOUGHT OF “HARMONY IS VALUED” IN MODERN SOCIETY**

The Confucian thought of “Harmony is Valued” has gradually applied from family and society to nature. The continuous prevalence of “Harmony” complies with the law of development in modern society. In general, the evolution of social practice from the “Support of the People” to “Harmonious Order”, the transformation of ecological order from “Harmony Between Man and Nature” to “Harmony Between Man and Nature”, and the

economic purpose extension from “Everlasting Development” to “Sustainable Development” are the continuation and innovative development of Confucian thought of “Harmony is Valued” in modern society.

## **7 THE EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL PRACTICE FROM “SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE” TO “HARMONIOUS ORDER”**

The Confucian thought of “Support of the People” tends to emphasize the group including family, clan and industry, etc. It emphasizes the individual contribution to the group welfare. When personal interests conflict with group interests, the former shall obey the group. However, the group is composed of individuals and the benefit of all members comes before that of the individual, which forms a sharp contrast to the west that highlights the individual and values personality. Simultaneously, Confucian culture emphasizes coordination and stability. If conflicts occur among the members or groups, they would coordinate and solve the problems by themselves. The Confucian culture tries to suppress confrontation and conflicts in a certain range, and strives to solve the problems peacefully, which forms the harmonious social relations in contemporary Chinese society.

It can be seen from “opportunities vouchsafed by heaven are less important than terrestrial advantages, which in turn are less important than the unity among people” that, Confucianism highlights the interpersonal relationship. Generally, the core of Confucian culture is to adjust relationships with embodiment of benevolence, righteousness, courtesy, wisdom and trust. The Confucian thought of “Harmony is Valued”, which has been inherited to now, indicates the strong contribution spirit, the self-identity to the country and internal sense of responsibilities. Confucian culture has aided China’s efficiency and growth rate, as well as its modernity. Undoubtedly, there are many factors that affect China’s development including excellent management, relatively peaceful international environment and advanced technical conditions, etc. However, the social harmony and stability are the decisive factors. From the aspect of historical inheritance, “Harmonious Order” is the continuation of Confucian thought of “Support of the People”. If there is no inheritance, it is likely that China will embark on another path of development.

## **8 TRANSITION OF THE ECOLOGICAL ORDER FROM “HARMONY BETWEEN MAN AND NATURE” TO “HARMONY BETWEEN MAN AND NATURE”**

“Harmony Between Man and Nature” of the Confucianism is proposed under the background of agricultural civilization. It stresses that the nature is the foundation for humans, and human and nature shall be harmoniously unified. With the development of science and technology, the agricultural civilization gradually loses its original glory and is replaced by the industrial civilization. Unlike the agricultural civilization’s submission to nature, the ability of humans to understand and transform nature has been greatly improved, and the ecological order in the traditional agricultural civilization era has also been transformed during the industrial civilization.

The ecological order is the combination of natural order and social order. Natural order plays a critical role in the agriculture civilization and determines human production and living. In the industrial civilization, with the sharp increase of population and rapid development of science and technology, the ability of humans to understand and transform nature has been enhanced significantly. Regarding the ecological order, the proportion of natural order and social order has also changed and the former one has lost its leading role. There is more interaction between humans and nature, and the social order has an increasing impact on the development of ecological order. Under such a transitional process, the productivity level is improved with the development of science and technology and the change of social demand, thoughts and ideas. In particular, with the constant development of the nature, humans put forward the slogan that “People Will Conquer Nature”. The admiration and awe of humans regarding nature have been weakened, and environmental damage and resource waste are becoming more and more serious.

During the change, in terms of ecological order, president Xi Jinping draws wisdom from Chinese Confucianism. He applies the thought of “Harmony Between Man and Nature” in the modern society according to China’s actual conditions. He creatively puts forward the concept of “Harmony Between Man and Nature”, according to the characteristics of Chinese modern society. Based on traditional agriculture civilization, the thought of “Harmony Between Man and Nature” explores the relationship between man and nature and it describes that man and nature are united. It reflects the simple worship of humans on nature. On the basis of fully affirming that man and nature are in an organic whole, the concept introduces the new mode between man and nature which is harmonious coexistence and development.



## 9 ECONOMIC PURPOSE EXTENSION FROM “EVERLASTING DEVELOPMENT” TO “SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT”

The reason that Confucian “Harmony” is consistent with the concept of “Sustainable Development” is that “Harmony” can reach “Sustainable Development”.

Harmony can generate everything, but the identity cannot be sustainable. The coordination and balance for different items lead to the harmony so it can be developed to unify everything. If the items in the same category are added, it remains nothing after using it up, so the deceased emperor mixes metal, wood, water and fire to generate everything. (ZUOQIUMING, 1997, p. 119).

It means that “Harmony” is the mechanism to create all things, and “Identity” has no sustainable development. Xunzi explains the connection between the resources and development with “Ceaseless” and “Surplus Grain”.

In view of the system of governance,

[...] when plants are flourishing, axes are not allowed in the forest to protect those new lives and enable them further growth. When the fishes are reproducing, fishnets are not allowed in the lake to protect their new lives and enable them further growth. Humans shall seize the appropriate opportunities, i.e., plow in spring, plant in summer, harvest in autumn and store in winter, for a golden harvest. Fishing shall be forbidden during a specific period for abundant aquatic products and the realization of common prosperity. Lumbering shall be allowed during a appropriate period for a wild profusion of vegetation and adequate wood. (XUNKUANG, 1997, p. 36).

In the above contents, Xunzi put forward the unique ecological protection values in *Xunzi: Governor System*. The first aspect is the protective measures in accordance with material conditions. “The growth of all creatures depended on harmony.” (XUNKUANG, 1997, p. 78). That is to say, all things follow natural laws, so ecology shall be protected “[...] in accordance with material conditions.” The second aspect is the close connection of sustainability between resource and economic development. The purpose for natural resource protection is to “[...] protect their new lives and enable them further growth” and “[...] a wild profusion of vegetation and adequate wood.” The ecological sustainability is the premise of the sustainable development of economy. It

contributes to the continuance development of human beings. In terms of protecting the ecological sustainability, Xunzi discusses the establishment of a sustainable system, i.e., The “System of the Divine Governor”.

In modern times, humans have gradually realized that the main problems for sustainable economic development is human beings cannot surpass the capacity of resources and environment for economic advancement. Confucianism realizes the irreversibility of natural resources earlier and put forward a series of measures to protect environment. The scholars continually pay more attention on environmental protection in order to produce economic welfare.

In 2015, President Xi mentioned in the annual meeting of Boao Forum for Asia that, China should adhere to the concept of green development and adopt the green development mode, making resource saving and environment friendliness the mainstream way of production and life, as well as placing the same emphasis on environment protection and economic and social development. In the past, China’s economic development has been characterized by high consumption and high pollution. President Xi proposes the concept of “economic new normal”. He points out that economic development could be slowed down appropriately, and the development mode shall be transferred to guarantee the development quality. China shall implement the green development for economic benefit. President Xi stresses that “lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets”, “the environmental protection and economic income shall be organically combined” and “we shall pay more emphasis on the lucid waters and lush mountains”. It reflects that in the development of modern society, China has succeeded and developed the traditional idea of “Everlasting Development” – the “Sustainable Development”, which emphasizes the “Harmony Between Man and Nature”.

## **10 REFERENCE VALUE OF “HARMONY IS VALUED” ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN SOCIETY**

In 1987, the world commission on environment and development led by Norwegian Prime Minister Mrs. Brundtland officially released the report with the title of *Our Common Future*. The report defines sustainable development as “the concept that meets the needs of common men, and does not damage the development of future generations”. It is the core idea of sustainable development agreed by the international community that “the

economic development shall be established on ecological sustainability, social justice and people's active participation in their own development decisions". It pursues the realization of environmental conservation with satisfaction of various human needs and individual development which shall not damage the survival and development of the further generations. It pays special attention to the ecological rationality of human activities, and emphasizes that economic activities are beneficial to resources and environment. In other words, the sustainable and stable development of economy-environment-society system shall be the common pursuit of human beings. The Confucian thought of "Harmony is Valued" is reflected in "Support of the People", "Harmony Rite" and "Harmony Between Man and Nature", which emphasizes the harmony between man and man, and between man and nature, contributing to the constant development of the society. The core is similar with "sustainable development" in modern society. It has the profound significance in establishing the universal ethics of human beings, improving the living environment, solving conflicts between social groups and realizing the sustainable development of economy, society and environment.

## **11 "LOVE FOR FAMILY MEMBERS" AND "SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE"**

The Confucian ideal of "Harmony" is based on the continuous improvement of personal moral cultivation, so the Confucianism attaches great importance to the harmony of human body and mind. Based on the law of human nature theoretically, the harmony of human body and mind emphasizes the perfection of human morality. This concept advocates that morality should be internalized through self-cultivation. Meanwhile, moral rationality should be used to restrict perceptual desires of humans, so as to realize the harmony of human body and mind. Further, it associates self-development with the future and destiny of state. On such basis, those relevant theories are formed. For example, "self cultivation leads to happiness". At modern times, a number problems in social morality are emerging. Materialism and indulgence have cause moral bankrupt. Such impact on individuals is directly reflected on the distorted values, unsound personality, and deviate concept. Confucian concept of "Harmony is Valued" pays attention on the physical and mental harmony, emphasizes the spiritual pursuit of "self-cultivation as the foundation" and transcends material limitations. It adheres the philosophies of "[...] not changing one's happiness in a predicament" (CONFUCIO, 2001, p. 44), "[...] seeing gains and thinking righteousness (CONFUCIO, 2001,

p. 168)", and "cultivating the noble spirit." (MENCIUS, 1999, p. 49). It is of great significance to solve modern mental problems including selfishness, befuddlement, exhaustion, and depersonalization.

The key for a harmonious society and socially sustainable development is to coordinate the relationship between man and society. In terms of interpersonal relationships, Confucianism stresses the true morality and puts forward some valuable principles. For instance, the concept of "love for family members and others" emphasizes that interpersonal relationships shall be built on the basis of natural affection. Confucianism also attaches importance to the principle of "honesty". There will be no harmonious exchanges and communications among humans without integrity and honesty.

In terms of the relationship between human and society, the concept of "Harmony is Valued" advocates that "[...] were it to benefit my country, I would lay down my life." (ZUOQIUMING, 2006, p. 245) with the value orientation of holism. According to this, the whole interest comes first. Although the "harmony" at that time is associated with autocratic monarch, it is still of great significance for reference in promoting social cohesion and ethnic unity, and inheriting the traditional culture of overall consciousness, service awareness and dedication spirit. Meanwhile, "Harmony" and "Rite" are inseparable. "Harmony is Valued thee most in practicing the rules of propriety." (CONFUCIO, 2001, p. 5). "Rite" advocates the harmonious coexistence for mutual peace between different classes. It is the guiding principle of "[...] making the country stable in the long-term for all men and benefiting future generations." (ZUOQIUMING, 2006, p. 11). The concept contributes to adjusting the social relation, enhancing social morality, alleviating social contradictions, and maintaining social order.

## **12 "SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE" AND "LOVE FOR THINGS" PROTECT THE NATURAL RESOURCES AND MAINTAIN THE SUSTAINABLE USE**

The Confucian idea of "Harmony" is based on cognitive philosophies including origins of all things, unity of life essence, and integration of human beings and living environment. The ultimate aim of harmony between man and nature is to achieve love for all things. Its benevolent care for lives is of great guiding significance on abandoning the human centrism, maintaining biodiversity, eliminating the ecological crisis, building an ecological civilization, and promoting sustainable economic and social development.

According to the Confucian thought of “Love of Common Men and All Things”, men are closely connected to nature. “Love for People” and “cherishing of things” are unified. Exploitation of natural resources must ensure the fairness and sustainability of utilization and development for a long-term prosperity. “If martial war does not hinder agricultural production, the crops will not be affected. If the fine fishing nets are not allowed in deep ponds, the fisheries will not be affected. If lumbering is time-bounded to a certain season, the woods will be inexhaustible.” (MENCIUS, 1999, p. 4). It is a matter of knowing when to take the chance. Humans shall obey the law of nature with limited access to resources (“not to miss the farming season”, “access to the forest”). Spring is the season for all things to grow. It is stated in ancient times that no haunting nor lumbering is allowed in spring. The second aspect is to “acquire it in order” and “acquire it in moderation”. The land is the source of everything, and shall be protected. “Land is bionergy for all.” (XUNKUANG, 1997, p. 79). There are laws of seasonal rotation on different lands which may vary in the fertility. Thus, different farming ways and categories shall be considered for sustainable uses of natural resources. In addition, non-discretionary implementation in obtaining the resources should not be allowed. It is of great importance to ensure the sustainable production of resources.

In general, the sustainable development of economy and society must be supported by environment sustainability. With the rapid development of productive forces and advancements of science and technology, humans exploit nature, resources, environment, and ecology. When exploring the new mode of the “Harmony Between Man and Nature”, it is urgent to promote the ideas including “Love of Ordinary People and All Things” and “Reverence for lives” advocated by the Confucian school. Such philosophy may play a long-term guiding role in the protection of natural environment and the conservation of endangered species.

### **13 STRIVE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT BASED ON “HARMONY BETWEEN MAN AND NATURE”**

Confucianism focuses on the sustainable development from all aspects of mutual connection and interaction between human and nature. According to *Doctrine of the Mean*, “[...] the law from heaven is called nature and following nature is called Tao.” Mencius suggests that “[...] following nature,

humans will know their own instincts, so as to understand the heavenly principle.” It is the method to understand human and nature from the aspect of “Harmony Between Man and Nature”. From the aspect of Confucian school, human, nature, society, and universe are fitted in with nature law. The thinking of the Confucian school on the sustainable development is based on the understanding of human, nature, society and universe. Its essence is to emphasize the holistic and comprehensive thinking of the coordinated development. Meanwhile, the Confucian school seeks for overall harmony and unity from various differences. It is stated in *Doctrine of the Mean* that “Mean is the most important fundamental in the universe while harmony is the universal laws for all things. Once the golden mean is achieved, heaven and earth will be in correct positions and all things will be in the right order.” All things should follow the principle of “Mean” to achieve the harmony of the whole system.

The traditional view of development starts from human self-interest and takes the rule of humans dominating nature as its basic demand. There is an obvious tendency of anthropocentrism. While “Harmony Between Man and Nature” neither comes from the utilitarianism nor associates with anthropocentrism. It equates man with nature and does not simply regard nature as the resource for social survival and development of human beings. This idea stresses benevolent love and moral duties to nature. From the aspect of “Harmony Between Man and Nature”, economic recession and ecological disaster shall be avoided in seeking comprehensive and sustainable development under modern society. Human needs for nature shall be controlled in the lowest limit.

On this basis, the legislative work on resource and environment shall be further improved, and the protection efforts for ecology and resources shall be strengthened. At the national ecological environment protection conference, President Xi stresses that the strictest system and laws shall be adopted to protect the ecological environment. Institutional innovations and implementations are highly needed in promoting the ecological civilization construction in the new era, and a strict legal system would be the untouchable bottom line. Besides, it is imperative to popularize the social education consistent with the environmental protection law, to advocate the values of moderate consumption and economy, and to guarantee the reasonable utilization of natural resources.

## CONCLUSION

The Confucian thought of “Harmony is Valued” is rich in contents and plays an important role in the formation of Chinese values, lifestyle, national psychology and spirit. It contains the thought on the harmonious relationship between man and all things, and is closely connected to the sustainable development in modern society. According to the traditional view of development, the economic growth is the only indicator of development, which has caused a series of ecological and environmental problems. President Xi Jinping states that the peace deficit, development deficit and governance deficit are serious challenges for all mankind. Development is the key to solve all problems, and the foundation to eliminate the three major deficits. “Sustainable development meets the maximum interests and becomes the best entry point of cooperation”, which is the “golden key” to solve the global issues. It is essential to combine both economic development and natural environment protection in the new development mode. Life wisdom is contained in the thoughts of the Confucian sages. The premise of scientific and reasonable relationship between men, society, and nature is to understand and master those Confucian philosophies including moral principle of “Love for Family Members and Support of the People” in the “Harmony is Valued”, development idea of “Sustainable Development”, and ecological thought of “Harmony Between Man and Nature”. This is the only route to realize the harmonious and sustainable development of human society.

REN, F.; WANG, J.; LV, W. Harmonia confuciana e a ideia de desenvolvimento sustentável na sociedade moderna. *Trans/Form/Ação*, Marília, v. 45, p. 37-58, 2022. Edição Especial 2.

**Resumo:** Youzi, discípulo de Confúcio, propôs o pensamento de “harmonia tem preço”, que também era a busca de valor de Confúcio. Eles interpretaram a implicação de “Harmonia” de praticar as regras de propriedade. “Ele” significa “harmonia”. Mencius chamou a harmonia entre as pessoas de “Apoio do Povo” e discutiu a convivência harmoniosa entre os revolucionários e o público na perspectiva da “Política Benevolente” e da “Boa Natureza”. Xunzi explicou a instituição, normalização e imparcialidade necessária para a sociedade, sob o aspecto da “Harmonia”, que ampliou a implicação teórica da “Harmonia”. O pensamento confucionista de “harmonia tem preço” é também a personificação da ideologia de “Defender o Justo” e “Unidade do Céu e do Homem”, que continha o pensamento da relação harmoniosa entre as pessoas e o universo. O pensamento confucionista de “A harmonia tem um preço” alcançou um desenvolvimento inovador, na sociedade moderna, que está de acordo com

a ideia de desenvolvimento sustentável. É de grande significado referencial para repensar a relação interpessoal, a relação entre o homem e a natureza, a relação entre o desenvolvimento econômico e o ambiente natural etc.

**Palavras-chave:** Confucionista. “A harmonia tem um preço”. Desenvolvimento sustentável.

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# INSIGHTS FROM ZHU XI'S PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION FOR MODERN EDUCATION

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**Abstract:** As a master of Neo-Confucianism, Zhu Xi's unique educational philosophy plays a certain role in promoting the development of contemporary education and teaching. Based on the situation of requiring talents in feudal society, Zhu Xi took Confucian orthodoxy as the starting point to make innovative attempts on educational methods and teaching content. He believed learning from things to know. By learning from the ideological resources of ancient and modern Chinese and non-Chinese educational philosophy, and integrating ancient philosophical ideas with modern teaching methods, this paper offers some important innovative ideas for contemporary models of education.

**Keywords:** Zhu Xi. Educational Philosophy. Modern Education. Enlightenment.

## INTRODUCTION

Based on the saint ideal of Confucianism, Zhu Xi absorbed and integrated various ideological resources, and put forward a set of extensive and profound Neo-Confucianism systems. As a master of Neo-Confucianism, Zhu Xi also put forward a series of educational thoughts, including educational philosophy at the level of principle and specific educational methods. Exploring the connotation of Zhu Xi's educational thought and revealing its significance for contemporary education can not only promote

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the innovation and development of China's excellent traditional culture, but also enhance the integration and development of ancient educational thought and contemporary educational practice.

## **1 THE PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION OF ZHU XI'S EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT**

Zhu Xi, who lived in the Zhao and Song dynasties of Chinese culture, was one more great educator after Confucius. He not only achieved success in educational practice, such as the establishment of schools and the reconstruction of academies, but also made great theoretical innovations in educational thought, charting a new development direction of the educational cause of later generations. This paper focuses on the latter aspect, that is, through in-depth discussion of Zhu Xi's educational philosophy to dig out the modern enlightenment of his thought. This section will start from the philosophical foundation of Zhu Xi's educational thought and reveal his educational thought from his philosophical proposition.

## **2 THE IDEA OF “UNITY IN DIVERSITY”**

In the whole philosophical system of Zhu Xi, “Li” and “Qi” are the basic categories for him to understand the world and human nature - “Li” and “Qi” are interdependent for everything in the world. In Zhu Xi's view, the basic idea of the existence of the world is demonstrated by means of li rationality. He has his own unique opinion on the origins and realities of the world, saying that the normative nature of the world is the premise of the existence of rationality and that the authenticity of reality is the basis for the existence of Qi, which is separate and echo each other. Under this premise, Zhu Xi put forward the idea of “unity in diversity”. “Unity” means that there is one principle between heaven and earth, and “diversity” means that everything has its own principle. As a creature in the universe, man also has one principle, and that is human nature. According to Zhu Xi, human nature is also the composition of qi. Qi can be pure and impure, so human nature is divided into “nature of destiny” and “nature of temperament”. The “nature of heaven” can only be achieved by the most pure and perfect saints, while ordinary people have the “nature of temperament”. Moreover, Zhu Xi believes that human beings are not perfect individuals when they are born, and most of “destiny's nature” can only be achieved through learning after birth. He also

believes that the biggest difference between people and things is that people have rational thinking and can break the limitations of the body to think about things outside the body. Although there are great differences between individuals, and different individuals have different thinking patterns, these differences can be remedied through the efforts of the day after tomorrow. This means that human nature is educable, and “make no social distinctions in teaching” is an acknowledgment of this nature that is shared by all.

### **3 THE FUSION OF “UNITY IN DIVERSITY” AND THE THEORY OF HUMAN NATURE**

Zhu Xi thinks that “Tai Chi is in everything”. Here Tai Chi means the existence of “the reason”. “Everything has its own reason” means all things have the reality of their existence. “The existence of all things has a way, the same Li and different Qi”, “Same Li” means all the original form of expression of everything is the same, while “Different Qi” indicates the specific existence of the subject is different. In the process of formation, individuals will be shaped into various forms, specifically to the individual’s different environment and different effects. Zhu Xi believes that the purpose of education is not only the acquisition of knowledge, but also the cultivation and shaping of individual morality. From the perspective of the theory of “unity in diversity”, the most important enlightenment of Zhu Xi’s educational philosophy to contemporary education is that teachers and students should form effective interaction, and grow into talents through edutainment. On one hand, for teachers, each student is an independent individual with certain differences. Teaching should be based on the characteristics of each student, regardless of their strengths or weaknesses. On the other hand, Zhu Xi firmly believes that everyone has the potential of self-education and self-development. For the excessive optimism of human nature, he holds a negative attitude. Zhu believes that the foundation of the existence of human nature lies in its self-confidence for the masses. At the same time, the existence of dignity is also the most important difference between animals and humans. Based on this, teachers should also pay more attention to the advantages and disadvantages of each student, and do not ignore the nature of education because of the students’ personalized characteristics.

#### 4 METHODS AND PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING

Zhu Xi is good at drawing lessons from the Confucian tradition in history to construct his own educational theory. In the course of teaching, he uses “[...] erudite, interrogation, careful thinking, discernment, and practice” as the theoretical basis of teaching, and advocated that learning should focus on the use of thinking and arguing. Based on this, during the course of teaching, he lays stress on the teaching principles and methods. It promotes the progress and development of educational philosophy (LIU, 2015, p. 30).

#### 5 INITIATIVE AND TIMELY INSPIRATION

Zhu Xi pays special attention to the initiative of learning. He believes that learning is the irreplaceable and fundamental issue of cultivating one's morality. In his view, learning and reading are private affairs, and have no connections with outsiders, even if they want to help. Furthermore, initiative is spontaneous. It is the result of the active participation of the subject, not something to be bought. Zhu Xi believes that although teachers play a guiding role in the learning process, they cannot learn for students. That is to say, students should experience and comprehend everything by themselves, and improve their educational awareness and emotional cultivation through personal learning. Teachers are problem solvers in the learning process. Facing difficult problems cannot be solved on their own, students can ask their teachers for solutions and ideas, but learning is always their own thing. In Zhu's philosophy of education, he believes that teachers are the inspirators and educators of thought formation; when finishing studies, they judge achievements in order to achieve the best (YU, 2017).

For example, in the *Analects* Zhu Xi said diligent reading is an approach to gain knowledge, which is of great significance for man's development. He believes that learning is affected by many internal and external factors, such as the right time, the right place, and the right man. For instance, the first is students' own initiative in learning, which is the main motivation, the second is the teaching method and pattern, which is the catalyst promoting students learning to a certain degree, and the third is the external environment of learning, which, as an objective condition of learning, affects the process of learning to a certain extent. While stressing the initiative of students in learning, Zhu Xi also advocated paying attention to the guiding role of teachers to students. As the main character of teaching, the teachers' mode

of ideal education inspires and influences the students' learning-ability to a certain extent. While paying attention to the innovation of teaching methods and teaching content, teachers should also improve the quality of teaching, mobilize students' enthusiasm and initiative to learn, and enhance students' interest in the course content. The so-called initiative to improve students' own learning is not to weaken the position of teachers, but to guide the teachers about each student's individual differences. Teachers need to actively enlighten students, but not just to wait doing nothing for students to learn spontaneously (PHYLLIS, 2017). The effective combination of students' learning initiative and teachers' teaching guidance is Zhu Xi's beneficial innovation to the teaching mode.

## **6 STUDYING HARD AND GAINING NEW INSIGHTS THROUGH REVIEWING OLD MATERIAL**

The so-called "studying hard" proposed by Zhu Xi implies concentration, determination, refrain from arrogance and irritability, and soldierlike fearless spirit. Zhu Xi believes that learning is a process. In the process of acquiring knowledge, students should pay attention to effective methods and do not waste time to harvest fruitless. On one hand, he advocates that students should have perseverance and determination, and do not give up half-way while learning. It is necessary to forge ahead with determination during the process of learning. On the other hand, he associates learning with the cart and the alchemy: it needs stronger strength to push the cart at the beginning. When the cart began to move, little strength is enough; Learning is the same reason: at the beginning, students concentrate all their energy to learn, which may be more difficult, but when the theory and methods of learning are prepared, they will find learning easy and pleasant (ROBIN, 2015). In addition, Zhu also believes that learning is to review the old and know the new. With the help of Confucian classical teaching ideas, Zhu's such learning thought is applied to inspire and guide students. Learning is a step-by-step process. In the process, students should pay attention to the use of learning methods. Only in this way, can knowledge play a greater role.

For example, Zhu believes that the world is amazing and profound. If humans do not take the initiative to learn, they will not know the truth contained in learning. Besides, if they cannot keep a long-term study, knowledge will not be applied for life. Zhu also said, learning is to acquire

knowledge at any time and everywhere. He believes that the premise and guarantee of knowledge are continuous study and scrutiny, in order to obtain knowledge on the basis of new discoveries (JOSEPH, 2016). “By reviewing the old and learning the new, you can be a teacher”. The process of learning is to review, at the same time, to obtain new knowledge. Therefore, learning is not only to forge ahead with perseverance, but also to learn and integrate new knowledge flexibly. Zhu Xi’s innovative teaching thought lays the foundation for the development of modern education, and has a certain enlightening effect on the innovation of modern education teaching mode.

## **7 ZHU XI’S PRINCIPLES FOR READING**

Confucian educational thoughts on learning and teaching revolve around reading, and Zhu Xi had his own unique views regarding this. It is known that Zhu Xi devoted his whole life to education. He had his own practice and understanding of reading. His method of reading and learning can be summarized into a set of education reference materials for future generations. Zhu Xi believes that Four Books and Five Classics are the great embodiment of human knowledge at that time, which is the basis and paradigm for future education and has directly become teaching materials, especially for the Civil Service Exam. As a thinker and educator, Zhu Xi’s unique educational theory and methods expound the impetus for the development of contemporary education. According to Zhu Xi, reading should be in an orderly way and get familiar with the book. Knowledge can be memorized in mind. But for the theoretical knowledge, they can only be obtained by the application in actual life. The theoretical knowledge and actual practice are the characteristics of Zhu Xi’s reading principle (NIGEL, 2017).

## **8 STUDYING EARNESTLY AND THINKING CAREFULLY IN AN ORDERLY WAY**

Zhu Xi believes that “[...] the limit must be set for reading”, which means that a plan is required before reading. Superstitious learning is unacceptable. We should pay attention to the pertinence and effectiveness of learning. The saying that “[...] study should not be hasty, otherwise it is a waste of effort” emphasizes on the use of correct learning methods. Students must not be careless, otherwise learning would be a waste of time and energy. Learning is a phased process. Learning should proceed from difficult to easy.



Make clear the difficult problems first and learn the simpler second. Following this order can make learning easy and natural, and also promote learning and understanding progress. Regarding learning, Zhu Xi advocates “knowing and doing”, which implies, in the process of learning, students should pay attention to the study of human affairs, and then integrate the knowledge of natural laws to meet practical needs. In short, students should not aim too high in study, but be practical and diligent. Knowledge can only be firmly grasped by steps. As the founder of educational philosophy, Zhu Xi advocates that sages teach people from school, step by step, reviewing the old and learning the new, which have been continuously inherited and developed by later generations.

Reading frequently refers to reading the book over and over again in order to achieve the effect of memorizing it by heart. In Zhu's view, there are three kinds of reading, that is, the heart, the eyes, and the mouth. That is to think with your heart, look carefully with your eyes, read more with your mouth, and do all three in place is the real reading. He said, “[...] reading a book a hundred times, its meaning is self-seeing”, meaning the book should be read more and repeatedly. Readers need to be familiar with the book and get the effect of reciting in order to truly obtain the original intention of the author. Books can be recited on the basis of repeated reading. That is to say, reading a hundred times is for sure better than reading fifty times. The effects of reading two hundred times and reading one hundred times are very different. If the knowledge learned cannot be familiar with the heart, the initial feelings and national conditions of the author cannot be appreciated. Students need to have a hard-working attitude and strong interest in knowledge, in order to achieve the desired results.

## **9 PERSONAL EXPERIENCE AND MAKE GREAT EFFORT**

According to Zhu, reading needs to be self-checking, which means that students must integrate the theoretical knowledge in the books with their own personal life experience. In Zhu's view, if the theoretical knowledge learned is separated from reality, it would be useless with no practical significance. As a great educator, Zhu proposes that scholars should thoroughly read books and strive for excellence. He believes that reading requires engagement and commitment. Students must bring their personal experience to understand the different meanings and emotions in books. Only in this way could the theoretical knowledge from books be applied to

solve real-life practical problems and achieve the effect of learning. Reading requires to learn with emotions, and to enjoy life in books. While reading, readers must check their own words and manners, so that they can fit their deeds to their words. This is the true meaning of self-examination. In order to make continuous progress and improve cultural literacy, a positive learning attitude should be maintained.

Besides personal experience, hard work is also needed in learning. That is to persevere in determination and diligence. Zhu Xi says that students should read deeply with an attitude of analysis. Extensive reading is ineffective. Scholars should have the perseverance to understand the profound traditional cultural essence of reading. The application and influence of Zhu Xi's educational philosophy have continued to modern times. It has become an indispensable classic thought in learning. Moreover, Zhu thinks, besides personal experience, a good student must also practice reading. It should be noted that working hard does not mean being eager for quick success and instant benefits, but refers to reading with a positive and diligent attitude for the pursuit of quality and the improvement of efficiency.

## CONCLUSION

Zhu Xi's educational philosophy involves all aspects of education and teaching with the characteristics of diversity and uniqueness. For instance, it emphasizes the initiative and spontaneity of learning, the combination of learning and thinking, the application of theoretical knowledge, and the integration of theory and practice. In addition, it also covers many aspects including teaching purpose, pluralism, practicality and reflection. He combines the ancient educational teaching theory with his own teaching experience, and integrates a complete and systematic set of educational teaching materials. According to Zhu, reading is an important way to learn. Only by combining the theoretical knowledge in the books with hands-on practice in everyday life can we better understand the essence and connotation of education. Zhu Xi's theories can advance with the times and play an important role in the development of contemporary educational teaching methods.

TANG, H.; SHEN, L. *Insights da filosofia de educação de Zhu Xi para a educação moderna. Trans/Form/Ação*, Marília, v. 45, p. 59-68, 2022. Edição Especial 2.

**Resumo:** A filosofia educacional única de Zhu Xi, enquanto mestre do neoconfucionismo, desempenha um certo papel na promoção do desenvolvimento da educação e do ensino contemporâneos. Com base na situação de exigência de talentos na sociedade feudal, Zhu Xi tomou a ortodoxia confucionista como ponto de partida para fazer tentativas inovadoras em métodos educacionais e conteúdos de ensino. Ele acreditava que o conhecimento de objetos é uma maneira importante de adquirir conhecimento. Ao aprender com os recursos ideológicos da filosofia educacional chinesa e não chinesa antiga e moderna, integrando ideias filosóficas antigas com o método de ensino moderno, este artigo oferece algumas ideias inovadoras importantes para os modelos contemporâneos de educação.

**Palavras-chave:** Zhu Xi. Filosofia Educacional. Educação Moderna. Iluminação.

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# IMPLICATIONS OF CHINA'S FILIAL PIETY CULTURE FOR CONTEMPORARY ELDERLY CARE<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** Filial piety is a core value in ancient Chinese culture, and it still exerts significant influence on the attitudes, behavior and daily life of Chinese people today. At present, China is facing an increasingly aging population and the concern how to properly care for the elderly. Through the vertical review of filial piety in China's history, two constant elements, namely support and respect, stands out among China's traditions. There is an argument that addressing the contemporary elderly care problem requires the adequate support from two perspectives, material support from families and societies for the aged and spiritual caring for them. It is further argued that any approaches aimed at addressing contemporary elderly care issue should take into consideration the actual social and culture conditions in China, including the cultural traditions of filial piety.


**Keywords:** Filial piety. Chinese culture. Aging society.

## INTRODUCTION

Filial piety has become a core value and consensus in Chinese society and even the entire Asia. At present, the aging society in China results a predicament for the caring for elderly which is based on filial piety (FU, 2020,

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p. 176). In the face of these problems, we should not only draw on successful experiences from other countries, but also turn our attention back to the Chinese cultural traditions of filial piety, fully appreciate its value, and seek solutions to elderly caring for China's increasingly aging society.

## 1 EARLY FILIAL PIETY IN CHINA ESTABLISHED BY CONFUCIANISM

Filial piety has a long history in China. The concept of filial piety emerges as early as the Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties and plays a significant role in society that followed. Indeed, Binglin Zhang (1868-1936) wrote *The Book of Filial Piety Ben Xia Fa Shuo*, discussing the origins of filial piety. There are also descriptions about filial piety in *The Classic of Yao of The Book of History*, the earliest extant classical literature work. In that book, Emperor Yao is praised for his efforts that unite the relatives and let them live in harmony. The successor Shun is beloved by the people as he formulates five regulations that should be practiced in families, that is, father should be fair, mother kind, brothers and sisters respectful, as well as sons and daughters filial. Regarding filial piety, Yao stresses the harmony among relatives including children's filial piety to parents, while Shun puts forward different requirements for children, sisters, brothers, and parents respectively, which both demonstrate the close connection between filial piety and patriarchal system based on blood ties. The above works claim that filial piety has a lot of significance in early Chinese traditional culture.

In the spring and autumn periods, Confucius stresses the great importance of filial piety in *The Classic of Filial Piety*, effectively promoting the spread of piety. He claims that filial piety is the moral source of all human beings, and the permanent law between heaven and earth that should be obeyed in daily lives. In his opinion, filial piety can inspire people's loyalty to the monarch and monarch's goodwill to people, thus promoting social harmony.

It is said that Confucius' greatest contribution to Chinese society is to define the concept of filial piety. As a social construct, it is associated with support and respect, emphasizing both material support and spiritual caring for parents. In *The Analects of Confucius*, Confucius talks to his student Ziyou that nowadays filial piety just means being able to feed parents. But if you do not have respect for them, what's the difference with animals? This conversation shows how Confucius is dissatisfied with the early understanding

of filial piety in ancient dynasties. Support is regarded as the most basic requirement for being filial, but it is also an instinct possessed by animals. Therefore, for Confucius, filial piety of human beings should comprise both support and respect as it is the latter that distinguishes filial piety of human from that of animals.

Support in the filial piety means providing material needs for parents, whereas respect refers to spiritual caring for parents. Zixia, another student of Confucius, asks what filial piety is, and Confucius reiterates that the major sticking point is being respectful and courteous. For example, the young tackle some troublesome affairs for their elders, and prepare wine and food before elders. Is that to be considered filial piety? The answer is no.

As the conversation shows, while acknowledging the needful element of material support, Confucius once again emphasizes that support alone is not enough and that respect is necessary. Regarding the spiritual care, Confucius constantly stresses that children should always care for parents with genuine heart and kind face, which may go beyond material support and bring true spiritual caring for parents.

For example, Confucius believes that children should be gentle when trying to dissuade their parents from doing something wrong, as well as respect and worry about them instead of resenting even if the elderly do not listen. In addition, according to *The Analects of Confucius*, children should also continuously focus on parents' age and physical condition. As Confucius said, children should not ignore the age of parents, as it may be a source of joy or anxiety sometimes. As part of fulfilling filial duties, Confucius deems it imperative for children to connect with their parents as much as possible. In Confucius's perspective, Children should not travel far from their parents who are alive and must give parents the precise destination if they do need to travel far away. A child in the distance may not able to offer parents material support, but informing parents his or her specific destination indicates true respect and relieves their parental worries.

Respect reflects spiritual caring for parents, which is closely related to morality in Confucianism. A person's life should be a process of constant pursuit of moral perfection, logically speaking, the old age is the peak of a person's morality (NIE, 2021, p. 316). In that sense, respect refers to spiritual caring for parents, also the continuing recognition of the moral standards of the elderly.

Confucius also thought that parents are responsible for building children's character and passing moral spirits to their children through family education. Therefore, a person's behavior is seen as the reflection of parents' moral standards, which is why *The Classic of Filial Piety* emphasizes that the lifelong goal of filial piety is to treat parents with filial respect by spreading good virtues. Some chapters in *The Book of Songs* emphasizes that people should inherit and spread parents' good morality, which is the embodiment of respect for parents. These works demonstrate that filial piety, respect and morality are intertwined throughout Chinese history.

With theoretical constructions by early Confucian scholars, filial piety has already become a standard for people to judge during the middle and late Warring States periods. Confucian scholars often mention King Wen of Zhou, a sagacious ruler who is known for advocating the caring for elderly. Although the Mohist school preached indiscriminate love, it does not deny love for parents. *The Book of Mencius* also records the story about Duke Wen of Teng, an aristocrat who consulted Mencius about how to exercise filial piety at his parents' funerals. The story shows that filial piety is a social consensus at that time.

Despite the intense debate between Daoist scholars including Chuang Tzu and Confucian scholars about counter-advocacy of filial piety, the debate itself reflects that filial piety has already become a broadly accepted social consensus and a judgement standard after a few hundred years. It is part of a constant effort to counter universal social values that Chuang Tzu regularly engages in arguing with Confucian scholars. Filial piety has become such a broadly accepted standard that even Mencius, a representative figure among Confucian scholars, is deemed unfilial when he chooses different funeral rites for his parents, which causes him to lose the opportunity to meet the king of the Lu State. All these suggest that the long-time theoretical construction by early Confucian scholars forms a basis for filial piety to become a social norm and a reflection of one's values.

Later, Confucianism is officially recognized as the leading ideology in the Han Dynasty, further consolidating the filial piety cultural tradition that emphasizes both support and respect. This is best illustrated by the consistency of the normativity of filial piety between Confucius and *The Book of Rites* by Dai Sheng, a scholar of the Western Han Dynasty. For example, in *The Book of Rites*, it is explicitly stated in *The Meaning of Sacrifices* that filial piety can be manifested in different degrees. At the highest level, parents and elders feel



proud of their children. At the bottom, children just provide clothing, food and other material support to meet parents' basic needs.

Dai Sheng even goes further and contrasts filial piety and support, arguing that merely providing parents and elders with abundant food is not being filial at all but only support. Contrarily, he believes that if a child follows the guidance in *The Pattern of the Family* to care parents and elders, it is important to ensure their inner pleasantness and not to disobey their intents. By doing so, the child is showing an important manifestation of being filial even in the absence of material support. As such, by the time of the Han Dynasty, considerable attention is being paid to the element of respect besides mere support in people's understanding of filial piety. Not only do Confucian scholars in the Han Dynasty confirm Confucius' proposal of both support and respect, they further develop the concept to attach more importance to respect, in contrast with Confucius' equal emphasis on both material support and spiritual respect.

## 2 GOVERNING BY FILIAL PIETY: OFFICIAL PROMOTION OF THE FILIAL PIETY CULTURAL TRADITIONS IN THE HAN DYNASTY

There are immanent causes of emphasis on filial piety in cultural traditions of the Han Dynasty. After achieving the Great Unification in the Qin and Han dynasties, the Chinese empire adopts a series of policies to consolidate social recognition and support for filial piety. Emperors of the Han Dynasty not only create the position of erudite for the Classic of Filial Piety but also build the first empire governed by filial piety. Indeed, as mentioned above, both support and respect in the concept of filial piety are stressed in policies formulated by Han Dynasty and respect is more emphasized.

As part of the emphasis on respect, the emperors of Han are significant role models for being filial. In fact, to highlight the importance of filial piety in the official ideology of Han Dynasty, record keepers begin adding a posthumous honorific to the names of emperors as another manifestation of the official effort to promote a culture of filial piety across the entire society. Specifically, in *Annals of Emperor Hui of The Book of Han*, Yan Shigu writes that those filial children are good at carrying forward the good virtues of their parents and elders. Thus, starting with Emperor Hui of Han, the posthumous titles of subsequent emperors are all preceded with a character of Xiao, namely filial. Adding Xiao to the names of deceased emperors echoes

the specific requirements of respect set in *The Analects of Confucius*, where one of the manifestations of being filial is children carrying forward their deceased parents' good virtues. Adding Xiao to posthumous titles has its theoretical origin in *The Analects of Confucius*. This is yet another piece of evidence for the significant position of filial piety in Han society, and for the great importance by Han emperors to its respective element. In fact, emperors of Han themselves are models of filial behavior for citizens to follow and emulate. *The Records of the Grand Historian Biographies of Yuan Ang and Chao Cuo* both include the story of Emperor Wen of Han in which he attends to his sick mother at her bedside, and dresses in his formal clothes even as he sleeps, for 3 years.

The Han Dynasty also enacts policies to highlight the identity and status of elders, which also constitutes part of the respective element of filial piety. For example, the laws of Han Dynasty decrees that the elderly over age 70 will receive an emperor stick, a walking stick the government conferred on the elderly as an identity symbol to demonstrate respect. Excavated bamboo slips and silk-cloth documents from the Han also include records about the emperor stick. In the bamboo slips of *The Han Statutes and Ordinance of The Second Year Statutes on Registration from Zhangjiashan*, any man, whether aristocrat or commoner, is entitled to receive an emperor stick as long as he reaches 70.

The physical configuration of an emperor stick also demonstrates respect. There is a special turtledove symbol on the stick that is distinctly visible from afar, and this distinct appearance emphasizes the respect element of filial piety at the spiritual level. In addition, elders who possess an emperor stick enjoys a number of privileges, including the same 600-dan income as government officials and the exemption from the requirement to walk quickly with small steps to show respect to officials. This policy is implemented at least through the Eastern Han Dynasty. *The Book of the Later Han* records the story that Emperor Zhang confers the emperor stick on the elders at that time.

In the Han Dynasty, respect for elders is also manifested in specific requirements for government officials. The Ceremonial of Han Offices requires that the position of erudite be assumed only by someone aged over 50: Rather than being a detriment, being old is a favourable condition for the position, reflecting that the leaders during the Han Dynasty recognizes and highly values the vast knowledge and experience that one acquires with age rather than indiscriminately viewing the old and sick as vulnerable and no longer able to contribute.

As discussed above, older citizens are valued not only considering their actual needs but also for their wisdom, which offer inner care in the form of their feeling needed. Across the society, this value and care are manifestations of officially recognize respect, and another position that has similar age restrictions is that of a Thrice Venerable in civilian society. During the early Han Dynasty, Liu Bang issues an imperial edict that commoners aged over 50 who have good virtues and are worthy exemplars could be appointed as Thrice Venerable. This edict reflects that Han society and leadership admire and value age-related experience, knowledge, morality and prestige. Notably, however, although the government rewards qualified older citizens with wine and meat every October in the early Han Dynasty, these rewards are insufficient to satisfy their material needs, making them more symbolic gestures than gestures of material support. The actual burdens of caring for the elderly still fall to their families.

Although in the early Han Dynasty, national policies fail to directly support the elderly, it is not the case that the government simply disregards the issue. For example, one policy exempts those who dutifully care for their parents from taxes and corvees. Under Emperor Xuan, the policy is extended to persons who are caring for their parents or who need to fulfil filial mourning duties. Confucianism holds that caring for parents when they are alive and holding funerals when they die are both critical to properly the fulfillment of one's filial duties. By exempting people who are caring for their parents from taxes and conscript labor, the Han empire frees them to devote necessary energy and time to their filial duties. Indirectly providing caregivers with this material support enables them to show their respect and care for their spiritual needs with their companionship.

Furthermore, the Han government supports older citizens who have lost family support. On taking the throne, Emperor Wen promulgates the Relief Edict for the poor, which mandates support for older adults who have lost spouses or children and can no longer support themselves. Han emperors give these disadvantaged older citizens actual material support to show respect.

The Han Dynasty rulers respect older citizens in a widely practiced norm. The most typical tangible evidence from Han artefacts is a large number of stone-carving portraits with the filial piety theme. For example, many portraits of well-known filial figures in Chinese history, including Zeng Can, Min Zijian and Dong Yong, are discovered in the stone chamber of the Wuliang Shrine, located in Jiexiang County, Shandong Province. These

are also preserved records of the crucial position of filial piety in Han's social norms and everyday life.

### 3 RESPECT AND SUPPORT FOR THE ELDERLY ACROSS CHINESE DYNASTIES

After the Han Dynasty, national policies based on the Confucian school of thought constantly promote respect and support for the elderly rather than fading in importance under the vicissitudes of new dynasties and changes in dominant ideologies. Indeed, whether Wei, Jin, Tang, Song or the Six dynasties, respect and support for the elderly, including through government policies, are stable components of societies.

During the Late Han Wei and Jin dynasties and the Six Dynasties, metaphysics overtakes Confucianism to become the dominant ideology. However, the ruling class not only refuses to discard the filial piety tradition but also comes to attach more importance to the respective element. First, the Han Dynasty recommendation becomes an important tool for powerful aristocratic families to use to manipulate political situations. Under this system, an important criterion for the selection of official positions is whether a person is sufficiently filial toward his parents. Then, relevant laws and decrees issued during this period further ensure material and spiritual support for the elders. For example, in *The Book of Song*, the *Biography of He Chengtian* records that if a parent accuses his or her child of being unfilial, especially being disrespectful, then the parent have the right to punish the child including his or her death.

Scholars in this period are often recognized as being completely unconventional and unrestrained in their attitudes and behavior. However, even scholars who are least accepted by the public exhibited striking consistencies in filial piety. Prominent scholars during the Late Han, Wei and Jin dynasties are often widely known for being filial, and in *The Book of Later Han*, filial piety is an important criterion for whether a person is prestigious. For example, many people at the time admire Cai Yong, who takes care of his mother day in and day out for years, and the *Biography of Kong Rong* includes ample depictions of his severe grief after his father died.

In *A New Account of the Tales of the World*, a record of the words and deeds of prominent figures during the Wei and Jin dynasties also includes lengthy accounts of filial actions of famous figures. For example, Ji Kang

suffers severe inner pain after his mother's death to the extent of spitting blood despite his pretense that everything is normal, and to follow the norms of funeral rites, He Jian strictly limits the amount of rice he can have during meals. Wang Rong also falls into excessive sorrow after his mother's death to the extent that he cannot stand upright without the support of a cane.

All of these behaviors related to parents' deaths are also manifestations of being filial to parents. The respect these venerated figures have shown to their parents have far exceeded the implications of official doctrines and substantially existed in their hearts. Their efforts reflect the success of promoting respect for the elderly since the Han Dynasty.

Policies promoting respect and support for the elderly during the Tang Dynasty generally extend those from the Han Dynasty. Filial piety also receives great attention during the Tang Dynasty, publicized in *The Classic of Filial Piety*. Filial piety is an important criterion for selecting officials. Behaviors consistent with filial piety norms are officially commended. All these measures and policies that emphasize respect have their precedents as early as the Han Dynasty.

In the early Han Dynasty, the position of erudite is established to study *The Classic of Filial Piety*, an official school textbook. Officials in the Eastern Han Dynasty are required to read it, and *The Classic of Filial Piety* is still being emphasized in the Tang Dynasty. For example, Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang writes a preface to *The Classic of Filial Piety* by himself. At the national level, the support in filial piety is also quite similar during both the Han and Tang dynasties. Material support is directly provided for the older citizens. Compared with Liu Bang's reign, *The Imperial Edict for Supporting the Elderly* issued by Emperor Wen of Han provides significantly more material support. The edict provides that special care should be given to older people. Specifically, people aged over 80 are entitled to receive 1-dan rice, 20 jin of meat and 5 dou of wine, and those aged over 90 can also additionally receive 2 rolls of silk and 3 jin of cotton wadding for clothing. *The Collection of Tang Dynasty Imperial Edicts and Orders* provided that the state provide persons aged over 100 with 5 dan of millet and 5 sections of brocade per month, those over 90 with 3 dan of millet and 3 sections of brocade per month and those over 80 with 2 dan of rice and 2 dan of brocade per month. A comparison of *The Collection of Tang Dynasty Imperial Edicts and Orders* and *The Imperial Edict for Supporting the Elderly* shows that in terms of the element of support for the elderly, the only difference lies in age division and specific amounts

of clothing and food rewards, essentially, both edicts highlight the stability and pragmatic implications of material support provided by the state. All the examples provided above demonstrate the fact that the elderly care policies of the Tang Dynasty are largely an extension of those of the Han Dynasty.

The Song Dynasty reaches a new height in terms of its emphasis on filial piety. The related cultural traditions hold significant importance for scholars of the time. For example, Su Shi, a scholar of the Northern Song Dynasty, deems filial piety as the root and foundation of all qualities of self-cultivation. Li Ding, a politically gifted official, is considered misbehaving for failing to fulfill filial piety after his mother's death, which even affects his promotion. Wen Tianxiang, a historical figure of the Southern Song Dynasty, explicitly proposes that the filial piety for parents and the loyalty to the monarch are more important than life and death. As an integrative element to scholars' emphasis on filial piety, the government efforts to construct an elderly caring and respect system during the Song Dynasty are even more sophisticated. The government guarantees and provides all-around support for the elderly.

Although filial piety has been fulfilled mainly in families and complemented since ancient times, the positions and scopes of responsibility have never been static. Consistently over time, though, the state gradually increases its focus on obeying filial piety more as laws than just as cultural norms. First, compared with the previous dynasties, *The Criminal Law* of the Song Dynasty includes many more records of punishments imposed for violations of filial piety, and relevant provisions particularly emphasized the protection of the property of the elderly. For example, *The Criminal Law* includes statutes that prevents any material damage to parents caused by property division. Emperor Taizu of the Song Dynasty explicitly stresses in an edict as follows.

Even animals take care of their parents. As human beings, how could we fail to provide our parents with material and spiritual support just because of the division of property or living separately?

The emperor highlights the prohibition on dividing property or living separately with parents with a view of protecting the living standards of elderly persons in need of care.

Second, under the leading effect of some elite officials, the main providers of filial piety expanded from the previous small families to larger clans. For example, Fan Zhongyan establishes filial houses, villages and

farmland to accommodate and provide for the elderly and poor in his clan, and these measures affect the broader elderly care and welfare institutions during the late Northern Song period. Third, state-level elderly care and social relief institutions start to emerge in the Northern Song Dynasty.

In the late Northern Song, Cai Jing draws on the clan-based elderly care system to establish charity houses, nursing homes and public cemeteries. A charity house is an official institution to provide food and shelter for widows and widowers. A nursing home is a medical facility for the poor, and the public cemetery is a place to provide humanistic burial services for poor or unidentified decedents. Furthermore, these institutions are maintained and carried forward throughout numerous dynasties.

According to the History of Song, the policy has been carried forward in the Southern Song despite the turmoil caused by the fall of the Northern Song. During the Southern Song Dynasty, people who become homeless and poor in the war could receive state and government support in terms of food, clothing and medical and burial services. Compared with the Han policy supporting widows and widowers, the elderly care policy in the Song Dynasty represents major progress, reflected by the state's establishment of sophisticated welfare institutions with a clear division of functions that help to support aged populations. Although families and clans are still the core providers of filial piety and elder support, the state starts to play a more significant role in addressing the elderly care problem.

#### **4 DUAL ATTENTION TO MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL SUPPORT: CHARACTERISTICS OF CHINESE CULTURAL TRADITIONS OF FILIAL PIETY**

Tracking the Chinese cultural traditions of filial piety to ancient times reveals a number of long-standing characteristics. First, the high attention paid by successive dynasties to filial piety is consistent with what is emphasized in early Confucian classics, that is, both support and respect are important. Ever since the early Confucian, scholars define the specific implementation route of filial piety as material and spiritual support, namely support and respect, which are followed by subsequent cultural traditions of filial piety and relevant measures. Although different dynasties emphasize different aspects, the core value centered on respect and support as components of Chinese traditional filial piety culture has remained unchanged.

Second, in the practice of filial piety, support and respect have formed a mutually distinct yet connected relationship. On the one hand, support is often regarded as a material basis, whereas respect is considered a spiritual elevation. On the other hand, support behavior at the material level helps with the emotional cultivation of spiritual respect, conversely, the requirement for respect further generates emotional and moral restrictions on support.

Third, the elderly caring model provided primarily by families and complemented by states is also constant throughout different dynasties. Family is the basic unit for providing filial piety, which never changes even during the most chaotic times in Chinese history. Over more than a thousand years, Chinese cultural traditions of filial piety is always centered on the familial provision of elderly care, whereas the state plays an important leading and complementary role in advancing filial piety.

## **5 IMPLICATIONS OF THE CHINESE CULTURAL TRADITIONS OF FILIAL PIETY FOR CONTEMPORARY ELDERLY CARE**

Support and respect are always the core of the ancient Chinese cultural traditions of filial piety, and both elements have significant reference value to address current concerns on caring the elderly care. Although China is ushered in a new era of development, the tradition to support and to respect the elders should never be discarded as they are essential characteristics of traditional Chinese culture.

The rapid aging of Chinese population has caused an increasingly severe conundrum (SLTY, 2016, p. 1235). For example, with modern economic development and social mobility, the ancient norm of never travelling far away when your parents are alive became unsupportable. Children often live far away from their parents for study and work, which increases the number of “empty nesters”. Although children might continue their material support for their parents, they cannot guarantee this support, and they cannot fulfil the respect component of filial piety by remaining companions for their parents and caring for them. Thus, the increase in empty nesters, in fact, highlights a lack of support and respect in the traditional filial piety culture.

Moreover, rapid technological development does not necessarily bring real benefits for the elderly, who might have been left behind by the emerging technologies and new rules that benefit the younger generation. Many older



adults are never trained in how to make use of new technologies, and this failure of bringing technological convenience to the elderly represents a lack of Chinese traditional filial piety culture. Further, a focus on the ease and convenience of the young necessarily represents a depletion of respect. To conclude, the elderly is owed more support and respect according to the tenets of Chinese filial piety. Regarding these developments, it is worth returning to the traditional filial piety culture to find solutions to the dilemma of the elderly caring (BEDFORD, 2019, p. 100).

First, the basic pattern of families providing care for their elders complemented by the state is still applicable, but the state should reinforce its existing basic elderly care system. This should include enacting or improving relevant policies for allowing families to better fulfil their central role in caring for the elderly and complementing family efforts. For example, to address the issue of material shortages of the elders who lack family support, long-term care insurance can be introduced to provide social safety for their care (WANG, 2020, p. 265). With respect to the increase of the number of empty neuters, relevant policies can be issued to encourage more annual leave for families apart or for parent-care so that children can attend to their parents. Relevant institutions can also be improved to address issues of elder's medical services when their children cannot deliver daily care to them. In addition, the state can encourage older people to leverage their own experience and talents acquired over time to serve society and help others, gaining psychological care from the feeling of being needed and being respected.

Second, in terms of spiritual support, new technologies that emerge in the digital era could provide more convenience and support for the elderly, providing respect as a form of psychological care under the behavioral model of intergenerational reciprocity (OLWEN, 2021, p. 12). For example, elder citizen who wish to become literate in the new technologies should receive user-friendly training on easy-to-learn systems. New systems are designed usually for younger people without consideration of their accessibility to older people.

Another area where the state could improve its support for the elderly is the access to medical services or bedside attendance while their children are absent. The convenience of the digital era should be fully leveraged to allow the elderly to take advantage of the convenience of telemedicine examinations and other high-quality medical services. In brief, people should guide their parents and other elders in adapting to new things, and the state plays its

role to build an elderly-friendly society taking into consideration of respecting elder users and continuously increase its investment in elder care.

## CONCLUSION

This study reviews the formation process of the cultural tradition of filial piety in China and the policies on filial piety in successive dynasties. Through this study, we conclude that although the meaning of filial piety and related policies are changing all the time, the material support and the spiritual respect are always the core of the cultural tradition of filial piety in China. The problem of supporting the aged in current Chinese society is precisely the lack of support and respect. Therefore, re-examining the status of “filial piety” in Chinese history and integrating support and respect into the construction of contemporary Chinese society will promote addressing problems in supporting the aged.

Over the past two thousand years, great changes have appeared in cultural and technological arenas in China. However, the Chinese cultural traditions of filial piety are still relevant and thought-provoking, which provide many beneficial implications for addressing the dilemma of elderly caring in today’s China. The self-sacrifice of children or parents is not the best solution to the dilemma of filial piety in modern society (ZHANG, 2019, p. 227). If the filial piety culture can be re-integrated into the construction of new systems and new technologies, there will be more perfect solutions to today’s predicament. In the face of new challenges in the new era, we should draw upon advanced experience and base our considerations on Chinese cultural traditions to harmonize the roles of the state and families in providing elderly caring. The dual support at material and spiritual levels should be fully considered to efficiently advance the formation of an elderly-friendly society.

We can learn from the latest *2021 Report on the Work of the Government* that, some attempts have been made to apply the concept of filial piety into solutions of the aging population and the elderly caring. For example, basic pension is increased for retirees, subsidies and living allowances are provided for entitled groups, and basic old-age insurance funds are administered uniformly by the state (LI, 2021, p. 13). The multi-tiered social security system will be improved, with 95 percent participation rate of basic old-age insurance. Social assistance and charity systems will also be improved (LI, 2021, p. 13). We will improve traditional services, and provide the elderly and

other groups with more comprehensive and considerate services. The rollout of smart services should also cater to the aged and the disabled, so that smart devices are not barriers in their daily lives (LI, 2021, p. 31) is the reflection of respect. These measures indicate that integrating the cultural tradition of filial piety into China's system construction and science technology development will effectively promote the solution of the aging problems in China.

This study is a review of the process of gradually establishing filial piety as a cultural tradition in China, and the related policies held and evolved across successive dynasties. Analysis of ancient texts indicates that although the meaning of filial piety and related policies are always changing, material support and spiritual respect are always the core of the cultural tradition of filial piety in China. However, the problem of supporting the aged in today's Chinese society is precisely the lack of support and respect. Therefore, re-examining the status of filial piety in Chinese history and integrating support and respect into constructing a contemporary Chinese society will help solve problems of supporting the aged.

Over the past 2000 years, China has seen great changes in cultural and technological arenas. However, the Chinese cultural traditions of filial piety are still relevant and providing many beneficial implications for addressing the country's current elderly caring dilemma. Children's self-sacrifice to their parents is no longer the best solution to the dilemma of filial piety in modern society (ZHANG, 2019, p. 227), and re-integrating filial piety constructs into new systems and new technologies will bring dilemma of caring for the elderly into the 21st century. In the face of new challenges in the new era, we should draw upon advanced experience of China's cultural traditions to harmonize the roles of the state and families in providing care for the elderly. This dual support should efficiently advance the formation of an elderly-friendly society.

Toward the above goals, some advances are achieved. For instance, the *2021 Report on the Work of the Government* reports some attempts on integrating the concept of filial piety into solutions to addressing the aging problems.

We will increase basic pension for retirees, improve subsidies and living allowances for entitled groups, and advance basic old-age insurance funds administered uniformly by the state.

The multi-tiered social security system will be improved, with 95 percent participation rate of basic old-age insurance. Social assistance and charity systems will also be improved (LI, 2021, p. 13).

The above two items show support for the elderly, whereas respect may be addressed as follows.

We will improve traditional services and provide the aged and other groups with more comprehensive and considerate services. The rollout of smart services should also cater to the elderly and people with disabilities so that smart devices will not become a barrier in their daily lives (LI, 2021, p. 31).

These measures indicate that integrating the cultural tradition of filial piety into China's system construction and science technology development will effectively promote solutions to China's urgent elderly caring problem.

LI, H.; WU, G. Implicações da cultura de piedade filial da china para seu cuidado de idosos contemporâneos. *Transformação*, Marília, v. 45, p. 69-86, 2022. Edição Especial 2.

**Resumo:** A piedade filial era um valor central na cultura chinesa antiga, e ainda exerce influência significativa nas atitudes, comportamento e vida cotidiana do povo chinês. Atualmente, a China está enfrentando uma população cada vez mais envelhecida e as preocupações associadas a como cuidar adequadamente dos idosos do país. Através da revisão vertical da piedade filial, ao longo da história da China, para este trabalho, dois elementos constantes emergiram nas tradições, a saber, apoio e respeito. Argumenta-se que a abordagem do problema contemporâneo do cuidado ao idoso exigirá a incorporação adequada de ambas as dimensões, ou seja, fornecer não apenas apoio material ao idoso, na família e na sociedade, mas também prover seu cuidado espiritual. Argumenta-se ainda que quaisquer abordagens destinadas a tratar da questão devem ser baseadas nas condições sociais e culturais reais, na China, incluindo e passando além das tradições culturais de piedade filial.

**Palavras-chave:** Piedade filial. Cultura chinesa. Sociedade envelhecida.

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# STUDY ON THE INFLUENCE OF THE THOUGHT OF JIXIA ACADEMY ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF PRE-QIN SOCIAL ORDER<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** Jixia Academy (稷下学派) is a general term for the Contending academic group in the Pre-Qin Period (B.C.235-B.C.221). The thought derived from Jixia Academy occupies an important part in the development of Chinese ancient ideological history. It has played an important role in regulating and enlightening the construction of the symbolic art of the social order at that time. And it is also of great value to the stability and orderly operation of today's social order. This paper takes the thought of Jixia Academy as the core. Firstly, it analyzes the general situation of Jixia Academy and its ideological connotation. Secondly, it explores the symbolic art of the Pre-Qin social order, including the characteristics of the Pre-Qin social order and the construction path of the Pre-Qin social order. On this basis, it elaborates the influence of the thought of Jixia Academy on the construction of social order in the Pre-Qin Period, in order to make more people to deeply understand the thought of Jixia Academy and its positive role in the construction of the Pre-Qin social order symbolic art.

**Keywords:** Jixia Academy. Thought connotation. Pre-Qin social order. Social system.

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## INTRODUCTION

The social order is closely related to the people's life. The peace and stability of the social order directly determines people's happiness index. For the Pre-Qin Period, especially during the Warring States Period, the social system was undergoing a major transformation, which highlighted the demand for the reconstruction of the symbolic art of social order. Under this great social background, the thought of Jixia Academy played an obvious role in the construction of the symbolic art of social order in the Pre-Qin Period.

The Jixia Academy is derived from Jixia Academy, its rich ideological content and innovative communicating form has laid a solid foundation for the construction of symbolic art of the Pre-Qin social order. Taking the thought of Jixia Academy as the starting point, this paper will deeply analyze its connotation of the thought of Jixia Academy and its influence on the construction of symbolic art of the Pre-Qin social order.

## 1 JIXIA ACADEMY AND AN OVERVIEW OF ITS IDEOLOGICAL CONNOTATION ANALYSIS

As for the origin of "Jixia", people have different opinions, among which Jimen is the most common one. In the Western Han Dynasty, Liu Xiang wrote "Bie Lu", saying, "In Qi, there was the Gate of Ji. There is a school outside, that is, the school established by King Xuan of Qi, so it is called Ji Xia's School". Scholars in later generations supported this view (ZHAO, 2020, p. 25). As for "Jixia Academy", it emerged with the development of modern Chinese. Researchers have verified that its initiator was Mr. Guo Moruo, and this academic discourse system was really popular in the 1980s. The Jixia Academy discussed in this paper evolved from Jixia Academy after more than 100 years of development, which is a general term for scholars with different ideas and academic viewpoints in Jixia Academy. According to Qian Mu's "Jixia Bachelor's Table" attached to "Jixia General Examination", Chunyu Kun, Meng Ke, Peng Meng, Song Xing, Yin Wen, Shen Dao, Jie Zi, Ji Zhen, Tian Pian, Huan Yuan, Wang Dou, Ershuo, Xun Guo, Zou Yan, Zou Shi and Tian Ba were all members of the Jixia Academy, among whom, Mencius and Xun Zi were the most famous and the most well-known by later generations (QIAN, 1992). Sun Yikai divided the figures of Jixia Academy into seven categories: Confucianism, Daoism, Huang-Lao School, Yin-Yang School, Famous School, Strategist, and Military Master. And he listed the representatives of different factions in turn except for the category



of Military Master (GAO, 2019, p. 47). Song Xing, Yin Wen, and Shen Dao are all members of Jixia Academy, among them, Mencius and Xunzi are the most famous and well known. The development of Jixia Academy takes Jixia Academy as the core, and academic thoughts as the basis. After hundreds of years of development, the school still remains prosperous, showing its far-reaching influence and extremely high value. The reason for the long-term prosperity and development of Jixia Academy is closely related to the form of thought dissemination. Jixia Academy disseminates its own ideas in a completely open form, which can attract more attention and concern of literati than the traditional dissemination of classics of past dynasties (ZHU, 2018). At the same time, Jixia Academy adopts the principle of compatibility for academic thoughts, and replaces the previous form of only one school by absorbing the ideas of hundreds of schools. This is the most fundamental reason for the formation of the Pre-Qin Hundred Schools of thought, which provides an example and a solid foundation for the future development of Chinese ideology and academic compatibility. It is worth mentioning that disputes between ideas and academics are inevitable. However, because of the reason that compatibility means equality to a certain extent, it provides an opportunity for different people to express their own views, and also provides a broad space for the mutual development of different ideas, and avoids a series of problems such as being unable to express their own views due to the low status of the school (WANG, 2017). In addition, the Jixia Academy has the characteristics of freedom and independence. On the one hand, the scholars from the Jixia Academy can write, lecture, and advise. On the other hand, the scholars of Jixia Academy will not change their views at will because of the ruler's preferences. This independence, which does not cater to the ruler's preferences, is extremely valuable in that society. According to the different mainstream views of Jixia Academy, it can be divided into the Confucian school, Legalists, Mohist and Huang-lao Daoism and other categories, showing the prosperity and diversity of Jixia thought. The academic viewpoints of all schools are integrated into one, forming a school of thought in which hundreds of schools of thought contend in Chinese history. It has created the great brilliance of Chinese thought. Many thoughts of later generations can be traced back to this period, and the source can be found in the Jixia Academy.

## 2 ANALYSIS ON THE IDEOLOGICAL CONNOTATION OF THE JIXIA ACADEMY

Thought is the core of culture. The ideological connotation leads the cultural connotation and value trend. The ideological connotation of Jixia Academy is an important part of the connotation of Chinese traditional thought. Many thoughts of the Jixia Academy have played an important role not only in the Pre-Qin period, but also in the rapid development of modern times (HAN, 2015). The typical characteristic of the ideological connotation of the Jixia Academy lies in the richness of the content, which is determined by the diversity and complexity of scholars of the Jixia Academy. The thoughts mainly include the rule of law and the idea of harmony between man and nature. Among the ideas of the rule of law embodied by Jixia Academy, Legalist scholars are the most typical and representative. Different from the inherent self-restraint of Confucianism, the legalist thought of the rule of law emphasizes the compulsory restraint of people in the form of punishment and other external specific forms. And Han Fei even elaborated the necessity of the rule of law in social order in the form of double argumentation. Although his thoughts are extreme, to a certain extent, it promoted the birth of legal forms such as later legal provisions, so it has advantages (ZHI, 2014). The origin of the thought of rule of law and legalist ethics is related to the understanding of human nature. It is pointed out in *Guanzi • Jinzang* that “For ordinary people, when they encounter benefits, they go back to fight for them, and when they encounter disasters, they go back to avoid them.” In the Book of *Shang Junshu • Chuan Chi*, it is written that “[...] weighing with a scale to know the weight, measuring with a ruler to know the length”, both of which show the viewpoint of “Human nature seeks advantage and avoids harm, and determines the necessity of the administration by law.” Huang-lao thought is developed on the basis of absorbing the thoughts of various other Schools, emphasizing the combination of “Tao” and “law”. Compared with legalism, it is more reasonable and feasible. On the issue of the unity of man and nature, different people in the Jixia Academy have different interpretations, and there are certain similarities, but there are differences after careful study. The thought of conforming to nature represented by Daoism is very typical in the aspect of unity between nature and man, which can best represent the understanding of most people in the Hundred Schools of thought. The expressions in *Tao Tê Ching* about “[...] the law of man, the law of earth, the law of heaven and the law of nature” best represent the understanding of most people in the Hundred Schools of thought (YANG, 2014). The concept of natural law in Xunzi’s thought of the unity of man and nature is very different

from the former. Taking *Xunzi • TianLun* as an example, in which there are sayings such as “The operation of nature has its own laws and will not be changed by Yao or Ji’s autocracy”. “A gentleman preaches and practices his usual way, and a villain cares about utility for a while”; “Waders make marks on the bottom of the water to show that they are drowning.” Those who are responsible for the people must identify any improper behavior, so that people can be more vigilant and avoid selfishness.” His understanding of heaven is not only limited to the nature of heaven, but also includes the will of heaven, justice and principle of heaven, etc., showing the feeling and understanding of the unity of man and nature at more levels. And his different emphasis on heaven, showing Xunzi’s distinct personal emotional characteristics. In addition to the above two typical thoughts, the thought connotation of the Jixia School also includes Mohist thought of self-cultivation. For example, in *Mozi • Xiushen*, “[...] the person who is in the opposite direction” emphasizes self-denial and introspection; “Therefore, a gentleman will become stronger as long as he works hard, and become weaker as long as his own tastes and desires are satisfied” emphasizes self-improvement; “People or things with weak foundations will eventually be in danger” emphasizes being realistic. For example, Gongsun Longzi wrote in *On Jian Bai* that “Seeing without touching, only know that the stone is white but cannot feel the hardness of stone; only touching a stone without seeing, one can only feel the hardness of the stone but not know its color”, which emphasizes the difference of things by discussing the philosophies of separation and whiteness. Diversified ideological connotations have expanded the far-reaching influence of the Jixia Academy and created the prosperity of a hundred schools of thought in the Pre-Qin Period (YIN, 2012). It should be noted that the reason for the far-reaching influence of the Jixia Academy is not only the diversified content, but also the innovative form of its transmission and inheritance. The open inheritance form enhances the attraction to social groups, and the inclusive inheritance form is more conducive to the integration and development of ideas. The two jointly promote the thought of the Jixia Academy to become a side embodiment of the spirit of the Chinese nation, making it still of great value and great influence in modern society.

### **3 A STUDY ON THE CONSTRUCTION PATH OF SOCIAL ORDER IN PRE-QIN PERIOD**

#### **3.1 ANALYSIS ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL ORDER IN PRE-QIN PERIOD**

The most important feature of the Pre-Qin social order is freedom, which is an important premise for the free collusion of different ideas and reflects the close relationship between the compatibility of the Ji-Xia Academy of thought and the free social atmosphere of selecting and apportionment in the Pre-Qin Period. It was the attitude of the rulers of the State of Qi and the free atmosphere of giving advice in various ways that formed the compatible thought core of the Ji Xia Academy. To the Warring States Period, the Pre-Qin social order developed another prominent feature, that is, chaos. The contention of a hundred schools of thought and the unity of opposites in the chaotic social order reveal to a certain extent the close connection between thought and social order. A careful study of the social order and Jixia Academy during the Warring States Period shows that it has the characteristics of mutual influence and mutual promotion. On the one hand, the chaos of the Pre-Qin social order provided an opportunity for the prosperity and development of Jixia thought. In order to rebuild the peace and stability of the Pre-Qin social order, corresponding thoughts should be guided to highlight the needs of diversified thoughts and suggestions. This was the fundamental reason for the common prosperity and development of different schools in this period (MAYHEW, 2012). On the other hand, the diversified thoughts of Jixia Academy contributed to the stability of the Pre-Qin social order. During the Pre-Qin Period, the society was rather turbulent. Different scholars from Jixia Academy made positive comments to the rulers in order to make suggestions for the stability of social order. It is worth mentioning that all the members of Jixia Academy do not hold official positions, which can guarantee the authenticity and usefulness of their comments. They do not flatter the rulers because of their preference, but really start from the needs of the country and the people to help the development of the country and society. The mentality of serving the society wholeheartedly can still play a certain inspiring role today (ZHANG, 2013). Another prominent feature of the Pre-Qin social order is freedom, and freedom is an important prerequisite for the free collusion of different ideas, reflecting the close relationship between the compatibility of Jixia Academy's ideas and the free social atmosphere of selecting and appointing talented and capable people. Due to the attitude of the gentlemen of Qi State to treat people with courtesy and the atmosphere of free advice, the compatible ideological core of Jixia Academy was created.

It can be seen that the characteristics of social order in the Pre-Qin Period complemented the development of Jixia Academy. The unique background environment in the Pre-Qin Period fundamentally promotes the development of Jixia Academy, and the rich ideological connotation of the Jixia Academy provided theoretical support for the construction of the pre-Qin social order. The two complement and benefit each other.

### 3.2 ANALYSIS ON THE CONSTRUCTION PATH OF THE PRE-QIN SOCIAL ORDER

The construction of social order in the Pre-Qin period mainly includes two major paths. One is the ritual path represented by Confucianism, and the other is the rule of law path represented by the legal family. The two fundamentally determine two completely different symbolic art elements needed by the construction of Pre-Qin social order. The less restrictive system of rites and governance emphasizes the maintenance of social order through people's inner self-restraint, and pays more attention to people's subjective initiative, which is the interpretation of "[...] human beings are good by nature". It provides symbolic art elements such as benevolence, righteousness, filial piety and kindness for the construction of Pre-Qin social order symbolic art (MIAO, 2017). The rule of law system and the ritual system came into being correspondingly. This largely reflects a distrust of human nature. It believes that it is necessary to rely on external coercive measures to restrain the people. It is the prototype of the current judicial system and provides important inspiration for the birth of the judicial system. At the same time, it provides symbolic art elements such as laws and systems for the construction of the symbolic art of the Pre-Qin social order. Rule by rites and rule of law have their own advantages, but they have their own one-sidedness and limitation. The combination of the two can complement each other, better maintain social order, and promote the development of pre-Qin social order in a more orderly and perfect direction. As for the Jixia school, the Guan Zhong school represented by Guan Guan and the Zhonghe school represented by Chunyu Kun all advocated the combination of law and rites to govern the country and took "making the people rich" as their basic pursuit to maintain social order, demonstrating the wisdom of our sages. It should be noted that "making the people rich" is of great significance to maintain social order. *Guanzi • Zhiguo* emphasizes the importance of "making the people rich" by saying that "[...] the people are easy to govern if they are rich, and the people are difficult to govern if they are poor", and puts forward the proposition that "[...] each way

to govern a country must first enrich the people”, from which we can see the necessity of the thought of “making the people rich” for the construction of the Pre-Qin social order.

#### **4 INTERPRETATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF THOUGHT OF JIXIA ACADEMY ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF SYMBOLIC ART OF PRE-QIN SOCIAL ORDER**

##### **4.1 THE THOUGHT OF JIXIA ACADEMY GUIDE THE CONSTRUCTION OF PUBLIC OPINION SYMBOLS IN PRE-QIN SOCIETY**

In the literal sense, public opinion refers to the views expressed by social groups about a certain social event. It is a concentrated display of social group consciousness. Its main body is human, through speech and other forms, it externalizes with the help of a variety of media to express attitudes and requirements. It is a common symbol/art element in both historical society and modern society. Because the public opinion symbol and the symbol of social people are both forms of expressing public attitudes, and there are certain similarities between them. But at the same time, there are certain differences. In a specific context, the two can be transformed into each other, so that in many cases, public opinion symbols can form public opinion symbols to achieve their respective purposes (LUO, 2018). Because the social public opinion symbol can reflect the public's ideology and value orientation to a certain extent, it reflects the important significance of social thought in the social public opinion symbol. Only with good ideas as the guide and good theories as the basis can a positive public opinion be formed and then contribute to the progress and development of the whole society. Otherwise, it may cause unbearable harm to the society. Ignoring it will damage social order and even endanger the legitimate rights and interests of the public.

For the Pre-Qin Period, although the communication between people in this period was not as developed and convenient as it is today, the social public opinion symbol also played an important role in this period. The public opinion symbol of this stage mainly depended on the dissemination and induction of literati. Jixia Academy, as an institution of higher learning in the Pre-Qin Period, actively carried out educational work. It not only gathered disciples in the society, but also accommodated sages of various schools. The literati cultivated here greatly facilitated the dissemination of thoughts, affecting the social opinion symbol of the Pre-Qin Period to a large extent (GUO, 2018). At the same time, Jixia Academy occupied a pivotal

position in the Pre-Qin Period. Although the academic disputes between Jixia Academy insiders were extremely fierce, the disputes also prompted the two parties with different views to learn from each other and give up rationally. Its own shortcomings, along with the continuous improvement of disputes, have promoted the continuous improvement of its own theoretical system, which is conducive to the continuous improvement and development of public opinion symbols.

#### **4.2 THE THOUGHT OF JIXIA ACADEMY LED TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL SYSTEM SYMBOL IN THE PRE-QIN PERIOD**

Social system generally refers to various systems in the society, including economic system, education system, legal system, etc. Improving the formulation of the social system is the key to ensuring orderly social order. The symbol of the social system is the key symbol of social order (YOU, 2019). During the Pre-Qin period, the virtue, rite and law were the core topic discussed by Jixia Academy, which successively derived more specific elements of social system symbols, such as benevolence, righteousness, filial piety and kindness, urging the establishment and development of social system symbols. Taking the element of benevolence and righteousness as an example, it is the most prominent and Confucianist representative of the hundred schools of thought. Mencius put forward the idea that benevolence, righteousness, propriety and wisdom are the four ends, which created a normative system of consciously and voluntarily abiding by propriety, and provided a legal basis for the order of propriety. The dissemination of the elements of benevolence, righteousness and related ideas is conducive to the formation of a good social atmosphere, which is the foundation and important premise of maintaining and stabilizing social order. Another example is the legal element, by the promulgation and implementation of the two measures of “closing the canal” and “making the qiu fu”, Zichan from Zheng state expanded the private right of land, reformed the taxation system, and ensured the implementation and compliance of the corresponding system through the form of “casting the criminal cauldron”. It is worth mentioning that the “Casting the Dingding” implemented by Zi Chan of Zheng was the first written law in Chinese history, while the government of Han state focused on magic, not heavy punishment, but “the justice of the law”, creatively developed the “art” of Legalists “by conferencing officials” and “submissive royal officials”, and promoted the integration of magic into the power of the emperor (MA, 2015, p. 44). In addition, the virtue, rites and

law advocated by Jixia Academy are directly related to the establishment of social system symbols in the Pre-Qin Period, through the internal self-request and external moral constraints and legal constraints, the social order of Pre-Qin society is promoted better. This is of great necessity and importance to the political turmoil of the Pre-Qin Period. In the aspect of necessity, there are the necessity of external environment caused by turbulent background environment and the urgent need for social order. In terms of importance, ideology and culture determine the development direction of the social system to a certain extent as well as the advancement and rationality of the social system. It should be noted that the ideology directly affects people's behavior and habits, and the spread of Jixia thought first changes the public's ideology and then changes behavior. The social system established under the premise of the general acceptance and recognition of the public is more likely to be accepted, its execution and operability are stronger, and it is more quickly accepted by the public. This promotes the establishment and improvement of social system symbols, and is more conducive to demonstrating the superiority of social system symbols.

## CONCLUSIONS

Jixia Academy has created the famous academic phenomenon of hundred schools of thought in the history of China, which leads to the ideological trend of debate in the Pre-Qin Period. The collision and mutual absorption of the thoughts of the sages give rise to the rich and diverse thoughts of Jixia Academy. This thought guides the development of pre-Qin public opinion symbols and social system symbols, which in turn affects the construction of pre-Qin social order symbolic art. Other academic researchers should realize the important value of thought of the Jixia Academy, explore deeper into the positive role of the thought of Jixia Academy in the construction of the symbolic art of the Pre-Qin social order, and promote the essence of the thoughts of Jixia Academy to generate new vitality in the new era, thus promoting the enduring influence of fine ideological and cultural connotations in China.



YANG, J.; SWINDALL, H. Estudo sobre a influência do pensamento da Academia Jixia na construção da ordem social Pré-Qin. *Transformação*, Marília, v. 45, p. 69-86, 2022. Edição Especial 2.

**Resumo:** Academia Jixia (稷下学派) é um termo geral para o grupo acadêmico Contendo, no período da Dinastia Pré-Qin (235 A.C. -221 A.C.), e o pensamento derivado da Academia Jixia ocupa uma parte importante no desenvolvimento da história ideológica antiga chinesa. Esse pensamento desempenhou um papel importante na regulação e esclarecimento da construção da arte simbólica da ordem social da época, sendo também de grande valia para a estabilidade e o funcionamento ordenado da ordem social atual. Este artigo toma como núcleo o pensamento da Jixia Academy. Primeiramente, analisa a situação geral da Academia Jixia e sua conotação ideológica. Em segundo lugar, explora a arte simbólica da ordem social Pré-Qin, incluindo as características da ordem social Pré-Qin e o caminho de construção da ordem social pré-Qin. Com base nisso, interpreta a influência do pensamento da Academia Jixia, na construção da ordem social no período Pré-Qin, a fim de levar mais pessoas a compreenderem profundamente o pensamento da Academia Jixia e seu papel positivo, na construção da arte simbólica da ordem social |Pré-Qin.

Palavras-chave: Academia Jixia. Conotação de pensamento. Ordem social pré-Qin. Sistema social.

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# LA CONTEMPORANEIDAD TRANSCULTURAL DE LA PINTURA DE JUAN BAÑOS EN CHINA

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**Resumen:** El propósito de este artículo es explorar en el contexto de Shanghái la manera en que se revelan, definen y cuestionan las distancias y las cercanías entre las culturas china y española a través de los lienzos pictóricos de Juan Antonio Baños (España, 1980). Su nomadismo o condición de extranjero va a plantear algunas dudas sobre la identidad y el lugar que el artista ocupa en el mundo contemporáneo, además de sugerir algunos patrones según los cuales las fronteras desaparecen, mientras que otras nuevas son erigidas. El mero gesto de Baños de traducir los trazos encontrados en la ciudad de Shanghái por medio de un tejido de dislocaciones y citas incita una sinfonía heterogénea de espacios y tiempos variados que amplifican las posibilidades de conocimiento artístico entre Oriente y Occidente. Ante el análisis de un panorama poscolonial contemporáneo que va del hiperrealismo barroco a una epistemología retro futurista de la ciudad, pasando por el arte *pop kitsch*, el artículo muestra como este itinerario de traducción transcultural nos desplaza hacia un periodo post-paradigmático.

**Palabras Clave:** (In)Traducción. Trazos. Transculturalidad. Neobarroco. Contemporaneidad.

## INTRODUCCIÓN

A través de la mirada de Baños, se busca una lectura de la ciudad de Shanghái con el propósito de revelar la distancia que existe entre la cultura española y china: una lejanía o acercamiento cultural que el autor de este artículo califica a la vez de traducible e intraducible. Este proyecto forma parte de la experiencia de exilio artístico de Baños, que se entiende como el reconocimiento de la pérdida de las certezas del pasado, mientras el artista

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residía en Shanghái (2011-2014). El autor del artículo hace uso de numerosas conversaciones, con el pintor y analiza su obra desde un esfuerzo novedoso de investigar a partir de la lectura de sus textos visuales.

De alguna manera, este es un proyecto de indagación en la obra de un artista español contemporáneo que a partir de los años noventa exploraría la posmodernidad a partir de lo figurativo sin necesariamente romper con tendencias anteriores más conceptuales (BREA, 1992; JARAUTA; BUCI-GIUCKSMANN, 1992). Como en el resto de culturas posindustriales, el arte contemporáneo español ha manifestado un estatismo capitalista en los campos del diseño y la arquitectura (LIPOVETSKY; SERROY, 2015). Frente a este modelo, aparecerá la dificultad de acercarse a las cosas materiales de nuestro entorno cotidiano debido, en parte, al efecto de lo fugaz y efímero (VIRILIO, 2003). En este estado de cosas aparecerá en los ochenta una reivindicación de un estilo de honda raigambre española que embebido de las novedades y vanguardias resultará una suerte de neobarroco. Tal estilo nacerá con intención de deconstruir el trasfondo teológico de la modernidad, como una especie contemporaneidad<sup>2</sup> neobarroca del arte. La fortificación posmoderna en el arte contemporáneo español se encuentra asociada a una conciencia estética que se acerca a la proporción estilística del pasado barroco y aun lo duplica. Entre sus metas se encuentra la necesidad de descomponer las meta-narrativas y grandes relatos neocapitalistas para germinar discursos visuales imaginativos e ilusorios que se opongan a otros más racionalistas o realistas (CALABRESE, 1999). El neobarroco se puede entender como una corriente artística caracterizada por los juegos pomposos de distanciamiento y recorridos poco subjetivos. Con tales ingredientes, se pretende dominar la incertidumbre de la representación con impulsos de alegoría barroca (JARAUTA; BUCI-GIUCKSMANN, 1993). Esta experiencia neobarroca tiene uno de sus mayores defensores en la figura de Calabrese (1999, p. 22), quien celebra el “límite y exceso” como una manera de atajar la búsqueda de lo infinito mediante la transversalidad y un lenguaje artístico. La traducibilidad del trabajo de Baños en Shanghái arrastra este legado y complica aún más la noción de arte contemporáneo chi n. Todo ello da como resultado un marco poscolonial en el que otras sensibilidades subyacen en la contemporaneidad china y no queda otro remedio que dar validez a aquellos dispositivos que provienen de rastros culturales múltiples, que se distribuyen en diversos espacios de pensamiento temporales. Este

<sup>2</sup> Para ver más acerca de la idea de contemporaneidad entendida como *being on time*, se puede consultar el libro de Terry Smith (2001, p. 10) **What is Contemporary Art?**

artículo trata de explorar el universo neobarroco de Baños, en el momento mismo de su contacto con la urbe de Shanghái para poder traducir así esa simbiosis de mundos desbordados de significados culturales.

Dentro de la formulación de estructuras chinas, al replantearse la idea de *chineseness*<sup>3</sup> en el arte contemporáneo chino, cabe preguntarse como Hanru (2002, p. 32) si el interés de la posmodernidad China por lo occidental es derivado de las enormes restricciones de reconfigurar lo local. En el proceso, esto permite que haya una rearticulación de la identidad local con respecto a lo global. Ciertamente, más allá de lo *glocal* como un tipo de jerarquía en términos de localización, no deberíamos olvidar que en el discurso poscolonialista persiste una clara homogeneidad a la hora de vislumbrar narrativas sobre su contemporaneidad, donde la estética global sigue siendo dócil a las construcciones occidentales del arte contemporáneo (RATNAN, 1999). Eso implica que cualquier tentativa de reconocer la alteridad del otro (como una identidad colectiva) choca siempre con el dominante modelo epistemológico de una estética basada en las relaciones asimétricas de poder en las que la *otredad* está sometida al espíritu absoluto de la modernidad occidental. Tal idea choca con la diversidad y tolerancia que prometía el arte posmoderno como un arte que bebía de las fuentes de las corrientes de vanguardias, (como intenta hacer el neobarroco desde dentro del arte contemporáneo), para vigorizar nuevos proyectos contemporáneos (FOSTER, 2016).

En resumen, con nuestro trabajo tratamos de explorar cuestiones tales como la (no) referencialidad de trazos de identidad del artista occidental; y de estudiar cómo se protege y traduce entre fronteras los procesos de producción de espacios pictóricos en los que todavía hay fuertes identidades nacionales.

## 1 LA CONTEMPORANEIDAD TRANSCULTURAL Y TRADUCCIÓN DEL OTRO: ENTRE OCCIDENTE Y CHINA

En el mundo globalizado constatamos que la transculturalidad y los discursos de hibridación han ido tomando forma, pero hay varios peligros que se deben tener en cuenta en este tipo de arte transnacional. Enwezor (2003, p. 58) destaca que el arte contemporáneo parece estar fuertemente influenciado por paradigmas unívocos y centralizadores. Las trayectorias

<sup>3</sup> La palabra expresa el fuerte sentido de identidad nacional China que excluye otras maneras de entender la nación China y el ser chi n. Al mismo tiempo, se entiende que el artista español formó parte del arte contemporáneo chi n.

históricas y los recorridos modernistas de los discursos y prácticas del arte contemporáneo siguen los modelos que él denomina de *off-centre*. En otras palabras, este centro de producción contemporáneo se estructura por medio de la coexistencia de muchos centros a la vez que estarían repartidos en centros de poder poscoloniales. Por otro lado, el crítico contemporáneo Bourriaud (2002, p. 17) discute la neurótica obsesión que tiene la cultura contemporánea de intentar descentralizar lo universal o de relocalizar el centro del arte contemporáneo, en vez de retomar las relaciones entre sujetos y su contexto inmediato. De ahí que la crítica a Enwezor y su lógica de *off-centre* proponga una alternativa llamada *off-shore*. Con este nuevo concepto se sugiere un nuevo alineamiento que esté organizado y convocado por estructuras dispersas que carezcan de un centro de influencia.

De cualquier forma, la expansión de ciertas tendencias del arte moderno occidental en la contemporaneidad china ha sido tanteada por Hung (2008), quien ha argumentado que cualquier origen del arte contemporáneo en China es revivido en el presente a través de temporalidades que cuajan en apropiaciones tanto históricas como atemporales. Con esto, cualquier narrativa contemporánea autóctona china se inmiscuye en nuevos marcos de reflexión histórica de lógica hetero-temporal. A partir de los años noventa, Hung habla de un periodo posmoderno chino que viene después de la fiebre cultural modernista ocurrida en 1980, en la que todo lo occidental era motivo de aprendizaje. Esto evidencia que el arte contemporáneo chino, conscientemente o inconscientemente, siempre ha tenido un claro centro de referencia. Este tema de los orígenes basados en temporalidades contemporáneas también aparece tratado por Minglu (2008), quien expande el debate y presenta el axis espacial como un ente chino delimitado y aislado de cualquier otro espacio geográfico histórico. De una forma parecida a Hung, Minglu nos sugiere que nos encontramos ante una nueva época en la que la contemporaneidad china se define por su esencialismo cultural.

Otra voz prominente en el escenario contemporáneo chino, Paul Gladston (2010), ha ofrecido sólidos argumentos para contrarrestar las interpretaciones más o menos esencialistas o nacionalistas de Hung y Minglu, quienes rechazan cualquier interacción dialógica entre lo local y global. Como un intento desesperado de hacer ver que la modernidad china trasciende las dos versiones domésticas y no-aleatorias de contemporaneidad - a saber, la de Hung y la de Minglu-, Galdston critica esa falta de perspectiva de



incertidumbre cultural y artística, en la que se delimita todo a fases temporales cíclicas que no toman en consideración lo contingente como un aspecto fundamental de los cambios en el lenguaje de la modernidad artística china.

## 2 LA TRADUCCIÓN CULTURAL DEL ARTE CONTEMPORÁNEO

Por lo tanto, la pregunta sobre si el arte contemporáneo puede ser analizado desde otras perspectivas más allá del esencialismo cultural chino parece estar subestimada. De aquí la necesidad de traducir e interpretar otras formas no-chinas de hacer arte en el contexto chino. A pesar de este proceso de evolución cultural, la traducción entre dos culturas, en general, nunca es transparente y Baños tiene muy presente que sus pinturas en China van en contracorriente de ese *telos* de la historia. Similar a Benjamin (1971, p. 127), que en su definición de *traducción cultural*, tiene una visión más amplia del término traducción *per se*. En este nuevo paradigma, la idea de traducción trasciende textos reales; más bien implica la intersección de culturas que pueden problematizar la idea de progreso moderno, tal como se discute en el análisis del pintor español en su traducción de la ciudad entendida como texto. En los estudios poscoloniales, Bhabha (2002) hace hincapié en la traducción cultural sometiéndonos a una ambigua hibridación entre culturas. Hay una especie de dualidad en el significado de traducción cultural en el que se enfatiza los instantes de alteridad inseparables a todos los actos de traducción. Además, se puede observar la puesta en escena de la diferencia entre colonizador y colonizado como una característica positiva. Aunque estaba en una etapa importante de su carrera, y no era un mero emigrante, nuestro joven pintor tampoco llevaba la vida de un rico extranjero expatriado en China. Su anhelo de traducir lo que estaba viendo a través de sus pinturas nos puede recordar a la imposibilidad, a la que se refiere Spivak (2007) de traducir lo que vemos. Spivak invocaba el azar de nuestra propia existencia apócrifa como la forma más auténtica de traducir incesantemente el mundo exterior. Por esa razón, la traducción cultural de Baños se basa en su compromiso de tener intimidad con el texto; es decir, sus trazos se deben a lo que Spivak considera como traducciones “más eróticas que éticas” (SPIVAK, 2009, p. 369).

Conociendo un amplio análisis de las visiones y las traducciones occidentales del valor artístico oriental y, en particular, de la pintura china, Clunas (1997) destaca la noción de superioridad cultural occidental con respeto

a un otro oriental que es supuestamente inferior, sostenida por una fantasía geopolítica artificial y sin fundamentos reales. Todas estas connotaciones etnocentristas de un oriente imaginario siguen vigentes en algunas de las representaciones de los medios de comunicación occidentales referidas a China. Tales constructos refuerzan estereotipos en la dirección contraria, en los que también se cuestionan la producción de conocimiento y discurso que concierne al occidente. Estos modelos parciales tanto orientalistas como occidentalitas definen la traducción poscolonial China.

El concepto de traducción en el mundo del arte plástico en China está marcado por la copia del original, el cual trajo conceptos de autenticidad. Tal idea imposibilita la tarea de Baños a la hora de imponer una traducción occidental sobre una forma de entender el espíritu de la copia como búsqueda de la perfección. Al mismo tiempo, Chen (2007) nos recuerda que el carácter distintivo chino y occidental funcionan como dos espejos en los que uno se refleja en el otro. Esto no significa que estos dos polos opuestos no puedan nunca entenderse. A partir de esta dinámica, Chen demuestra que el lenguaje de taxonomías conceptuales y realidades artísticas solo se puede traducir en un contexto dado. Este planteamiento también explica como los traductores occidentales del poeta chino Shangyin (813–858) muchas veces lo etiquetan como barroco, por sus elaborados artificios técnicos que redoblan recíprocamente tanto su fe en mitos como su búsqueda personal de verdad poética en la naturaleza. El aporte que hace Chen para la comprensión de este fenómeno estriba en que estas traducciones pueden acabar desligando su poesía de su verdadero significado (CHEN, 1982, p. 4). Siendo constructivos, esta mirada barroca también, puede entenderse también como una oportunidad de enriquecimiento de la cultura local. Por lo tanto, el espectador chino debería abrirse a una nueva mirada gracias al arte de Baños y su vocabulario visual extranjero. Al mismo tiempo y parafraseando a Chow (2014), el lenguaje de la imagen, como el lenguaje real, nunca es *mater n.* En nuestro contexto particular, la mirada pictórica occidental de Baños conviviría con el lexicón del arte chino, cuya posición arbitraria se ve coaccionada dentro de una complejidad ideológica en la que también entrarían en juego las industrias culturales y de la maquinaria del arte contemporáneo global en China.

El legado cultural de Baños es también producto de la historia del arte en la que el colonialismo español también ha dejado huellas más allá de sus fronteras. Posiblemente el estilo más importante fue el barroco, una estética que aun hoy marca muchos de los marcos conceptuales y artísticos

españoles. El teórico de la cultura visual española Jose Luis Brea (1992) interviene desde los noventa en los debates de los discursos contemporáneos del país para prolongar una deconstrucción sin precedentes contra el influjo del barroco en la contemporaneidad. Según Brea, la alegoría y el barroco se han convertido en una narrativa totalizadora de la mano de Calabrese, quien ha monopolizado el discurso del arte contemporáneo español. Como su nombre indica, el neobarroco sería una manera de entender el arte contemporáneo español de una forma fija e inequívoca que motivaría una nostalgia que nos desviaría del verdadero significado de la obra y, a la postre, de posibles juicios reflexivos por parte de la audiencia. En este sentido, Brea entiende la cultura visual contemporánea en un mundo globalizado como un problema homogeneizador. El neobarroco en España definiría uno de esos tantos otros discursos laureados en el *off-centre* a los que alude Enwezor (2003, p. 58). Las identidades culturales cada vez son más parecidas y las estéticas cada vez están más definidas por las instituciones de arte contemporáneo. Para entender la obra de Baños en Shanghái, el artículo intenta mostrar cómo hay que crear un espacio de traducción que sea a la vez deconstructiva- según los postulados de Brea y su fe ciega en Derrida- y de alteridad de trazos. Este estudio también incluye el pliegue barroco de Deleuze, así como las mejores prácticas de Benjamin, el traductor simbolista, para explorar y analizar las relaciones interculturales entre China y España en la pintura del artista contemporáneo.

### 3 LA TRADUCCIÓN DE BAÑOS ENTRE LA DECONSTRUCCIÓN Y LO FIGURATIVO

Benjamin ha llamado nuestra atención en un afán de destacar que en la traducción la originalidad debe de permanecer. Pero, como bien sabemos, la traducibilidad de la que habla Benjamín esta también condicionada por su polo opuesto, la intraducibilidad. Esta intraducibilidad tiene el sentido de imposibilidad irretractable de la traducción de una cultura a otra, que se debe a su incapacidad de desobedecer a lo trascendente y metafísico. En medio de una posible intransmisibilidad, nos trasladamos a un océano de asimetrías geopolíticas que no representan la posibilidad de abrir horizontes de hospitalidad entre culturas, y, en las cuales, se crean zonas de (in)traducción. En un plano semejante, Apter (2006), asegura que la traducción cultural está sometida a mutaciones continuas de significados que vienen y devienen en zonas culturales. Estas zonas emergentes de opacidad servirían para imaginar una “topografía intelectual amplia, una zona de compromiso crítico” que no

está restringida por las demarcaciones de la nación (APTER, 2006, p. 5). Baños sigue las advertencias de Spivak, de evitar el traducir con imposiciones técnicas en el proceso de traducción del arte contemporáneo, al enfocarse en lo que hay o existe entre la traducción y el texto. Se reconoce aquí una cercanía al ser que tiene vitalidad múltiple y que espera recuperar ese espacio secular reivindicando un acto político. El lenguaje del pintor ya no es el mismo una vez que circula y viaja dentro del texto visual que evidencia esas complejidades siempre desde planos como iremos viendo racionales e irracionales. He aquí, pues, la idea del pliegue y del repliegue de Deleuze (2005), que, a partir del perspectivismo materialista de Leibniz, nos puntualiza la modulación de un pliegue que va del finito al infinito. Este concepto del pliegue sirve para describir el barroco y traducir el neobarroco de Baños. Con él, el artista español intenta desplegar sus políticas de lugar para encontrar la sociabilidad de la ciudad como hemos comentado de Bourriaud (2002, p. 12) y sus intentos de *relacionalidad estética* en sus grietas culturales. En los cuadros del pintor hay tensiones de traducibilidad e intraducibilidad como dos pliegues que permiten una elasticidad orgánica de sus lienzos, entendidos como cuerpos orgánicos con alma y materia que van de lo abstracto a lo figurativo y viceversa.

Este ejercicio de entendimiento de la intraducibilidad de las lenguas, entre naciones y comunidades culturales, nos va a ayudar a entender otro aspecto visual que Benjamin (2006, p. 128) había explotado usando el concepto de “[...] ‘afinidad de lenguas [culturas]’ para indicar que la traducibilidad está siempre determinada por la imposibilidad y/o posibilidad, entre intraducibles.” No obstante, parafraseando a Derrida (2005), se trataría de una justicia siempre diferencial y nunca poseída por parte del otro. La afinidad entre culturas sería el elemento fundamental, y no tanto la originalidad de Benjamín, lo que hace que la (a) culturalidad respete los rasgos diferenciales y pueda reconocer que ambas culturas tengan aspectos diferenciales, siempre que el “Yo” penetre en el “Otro” con el fin de (des) subjetivizar.

Los orígenes metafísicos solo podrán ser superados si se entiende que al tratar de traducirlos, se van a emplear los movimientos de la *diseminación* o *différance*, que para Derrida (1973, p. 129) estaría autorizada por la escritura en lugar de por el habla. Deleuze (1970, p. 186) mantiene que esa fuerza motriz de *diseminación* o *différance*, revela *afecto*, en otras palabras, “[...] una potencia positiva que niega tanto al original como a la copia, al modelo como a la reproducción.” Al fin y al cabo, la perspectiva derridiana considera que la frontera entre lo (in)traducible y lo (no) legible siempre está

marcada por el reconocimiento de la existencia de estas posibilidades en el propio texto. Derrida nos vuelve a aludir en el célebre ensayo de Benjamín, *La tarea del traductor* (1971), su insistencia en la posibilidad de un devenir en la traducción. Derrida complementa esta idea con la posibilidad de lo imposible, como una traducción, en la cual, la presencia difiere en una demora, en la que ya no se podría entender igual el original. Con esto cabe pensar que para Derrida lo intraducible puede funcionar como un sitio que recolecta su diseminación espectral para poder re-ajustar cualquier desajuste histórico, temporal o cultural, y así unir “[...] lo que no se mantiene unido.” (DERRIDA, 2012, p. 31). Este postulado comparte una lectura con Hanru (2002), que defiende la posibilidad de crear terceros espacios dentro del arte contemporáneo *chi n*. Este nuevo marco interdiscursivo supondría el rechazo de posiciones binarias y el potenciamiento de procesos con distintas voces y prácticas artísticas venidas de cualquier lugar del planeta. En estos terceros espacios, los sujetos son desposeídos de los ropajes que los hacen visibles con el propósito de despojarse de ellos y pedir un asilo en un limbo desprovisto de nación. Nos encontraríamos en una zona espectral *a la* Derrida, en la que la frontera estaría marcada por otras formas marginadas de entender el propio texto legítimo desde varios puntos discursivos. En esta negociación deberíamos cruzar las consignas poscoloniales y nacionales para desautorizar la realidad de la crisis representacional e identitaria y, de este modo, reconfigurar esas diferencias. De esta forma, se entenderá el cariz abierto y dual de la intraducibilidad para poder visualizar lo no-legible en las pinturas contemporáneas de Baños. Los pensamientos contenidos en el siguiente análisis de los cuadros del autor intentan acercar teorías occidentales posestructuralistas en el marco de interpretación oriental china y así ampliar un diálogo entre las dos culturas. En esta frontera, el pintor intenta con su violencia cromática recobrar todo aquello que ha sido reprimido u olvidado, al traducir al *otro chi n*. No se quiere dar a entender que estas teorías en su análisis crítico de textos visuales son superiores a las exógenas, sino que son vistas como lentes que puedan equipar con puentes sólidos el camino que separa ambas culturas.

#### 4 LA TERRITORIALIZACIÓN Y LA DESTERRITORIALIZACIÓN SE PLIEGAN EN LA CIUDAD DE SHANGHÁI

Vamos a empezar fijándonos en esa mirada supuestamente posmoderna por medio del estudio meticuloso que hace el pintor del retrato, en el que las

posturas y miradas de figuras orientales son desmontadas en su pintura. A pesar de que pueda parecer precipitado, por lo pronto se puede deducir que estos retratos van a tener un fuerte componente europeísta. En las escuelas europeas, nunca se había hecho tanto caso al color en vez de al dibujo como en el estudio del retrato español. Este rasgo estilístico del retrato español perecerá a lo largo de su evolución desde el siglo XV hasta los tiempos contemporáneos. Si en imágenes anteriores en la historia del retrato español, las referencias espaciales al “alma de Dios” desataban las pasiones del alma, en Baños estas pasiones se difuminan. Los retratos de Baños enriquecen el imaginario de un pueblo chino que está acostumbrado a mirarse el ombligo. El pintor español se va a apropiarse de figuras importantes de la dinastía Qing (1644-1912), como la primera mujer del último emperador Pu Yi (1906-1967), Wan Rong (1906-1946) (Figura 1). Se diría que su efecto primordial no es tanto la extensión universal e iconoclasta de la dinastía Qing, sino obviar el rasgo de solemnidad de la emperatriz. Con el uso de las líneas que atraviesan el cuerpo de Rong, el pintor la hace incluso más anónima y más cercana a nosotros. La elección de borrar con una especie de cruz la silueta de la emperatriz no es nada arbitraria y nos recuerda a algunas de las pinturas de Gerard Richter (nacido en 1932), en las que la presencia del sujeto tiene que estar excluida. El sujeto transcendental chino es transformado por un inconsciente colectivo que Deleuze (1994) describe como el plano de organización y el plano de consistencia. El primero opera al nivel de la tradición jerárquica; y el segundo actualiza e intensifica todo dictamen arbóreo. En los lienzos de Baños, el plano de organización está encuadrado por el retrato solemne de Rong, cuya figura dinástica es actualizada con la energía gradiente que procede de los colores y ondas expansivas, y no tanto de la cara impasible o estatus social de la emperatriz (Figura 1). Uno de los aspectos cruciales que presenta en su pintura es la intersección entre ambos planos, en el que, por un lado, el plano de organización estaría representado por la propia imagen de Rong, y por el otro, la posibilidad del actualizar un colectivo alternativo a partir del plano de consistencia, el cual, cada vez hace más abstracta la imagen con el fin de que se deje ver por ella misma. En definitiva, este rasgo es una clara indicación de la crisis de subjetividad en la que el artista nos sitúa y que reemplaza los significantes del pasado por nuevas interpretaciones. En esos puntos puntuales hay una lectura astronómica en los que, como átomos barrocos, se desplazan por medio de líneas de fuga que se travisten dentro de un cuadro que está en expansión. Este cuerpo invisible permea como un átomo en hipermateria y aborda una

explosión cuántica en la que el espacio se dilata, pero no se sabe hacia dónde se dirige, ni si se puede reprimir.

**Figura 1** – “The light Being” (2012) series.  
Retrato de la emperatriz Wan Rong



**Fuente:** Cortesía del autor. Mixed media on canvas. 200 x 200 cm.

En sus composiciones abstractas hay también una cosmología que explota toda la materia que hay en cuadro en todas las direcciones. Baños también propone la descripción que Deleuze y Guattari (2016) tantean del plano de consistencia para re-territorializar el vacío semiótico que ha dejado el legado cíclico y dinástico de la pre-modernidad china en el presente y rellenarlo con fuerzas nuevas, en un arranque de buscar significados más atrevidos. La posibilidad de logro en este decurso dependerá de la creación de un lugar oportuno para que esto ocurra, se mueva y anuncie su disolución. Su manera de licuar la silueta de la esposa de Pu Yi es una clara forma de degradación de su dibujo, y responde a la mejora de la resolución de la imagen en la era digital.

Una de las incógnitas en los pliegues deleuzianos de Baños es desentrañar el pasado-presente-futuro, sobre todo para mirar nuestro tiempo y detenernos a mirar en lo definible y/o (in)definible, al igual que lo finito y/o (in)finito de sus cuadros. Sus iconografías están cruzadas por la fugacidad del momento, lo que hace que sus abstracciones revelen cosas que no tienen necesariamente que pasar, pero que su arte pictórico hace que sucedan. Lo que define el mapa espacial de sus lienzos son los cuerpos, tanto figurativos – humanos y de animales –, como los no figurativos, y ambos transmigran en diferentes significados que dialogan horizontalmente con la ciudad de Shanghái. Por un lado, todo este universo está escondido en la figuración y en la fábula sensorial del pintor que busca una vuelta a lo natural y cotidiana. Por otro, la abstracción de sus cuadros encubre una realidad que aspira sin concesiones a continuar con lo real, pero que también está en disposición de trasplantar los haces de luz de la ciudad y su iconicidad majestuosa en una metrópoli que está en constante cimentación y ebullición. Entre el mundo de lo real y el de la representación, que podría descifrarse como una iconografía ritual de propaganda pop (celebridades, luces de neón, líneas de fuego, flashes y fluorescentes) que desdibuja la propia función del arte contemporáneo en China, donde nunca ha acabado por formar parte de la sociedad. Uno de esos representantes totémicos es Qi Baishi (1864-1957), cuyas obras se han colocado entre las más caras de la historia en los centros de subasta chinos (Figuras 2 y 4). Otra vez, un nuevo espacio-temporal de lo real aparece, por medio de esta fotografía tridimensional de la anatomía humana, que quiere amonestar la economía del estrellato en el arte contemporáneo chino. Este fenómeno está concentrado en unas pocas celebridades artísticas que irrumpen en el espacio simbólico del espectáculo, tan representativo de lo que Baños vio y vivió en el mundo de las industrias culturales chinas.



**Figura 2** – “The Light Being” (2012) series. Retrato de Qi Baishi.



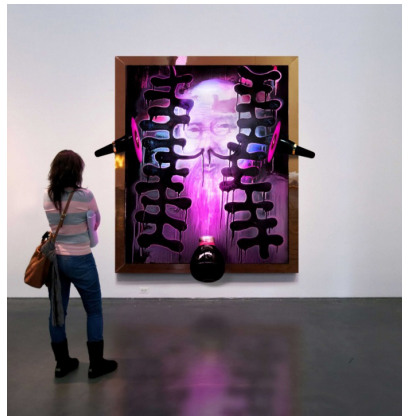
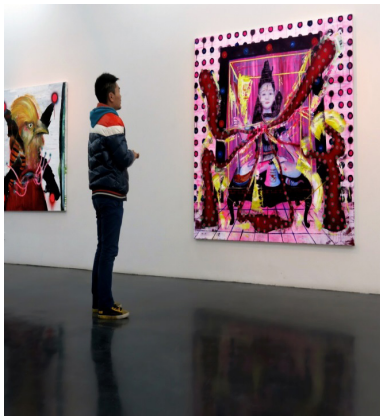
**Fuente:** Cortesía del autor. Mixed media on canvas. 100 x 80 cm.

## **5 EL RETRO FUTURISMO POP DE SHANGHÁI Y SU HIPERREALISMO BARROCO A TRAVÉS DE LA PINTURA DE BAÑOS**

Una vez que Baños entra en contacto con la cultura china y empiezan sus primeras vivencias en la ciudad de Shanghái, su anhelo de traducir visualmente lo que ve es lo que más le obsesiona. El constante bombardeo de logos, comercios, topologías desde la industria financiera y comercial de los rascacielos de la considerada París del este hace que estos vínculos irradiantes de convivencia deban tomar una dirección que albergue un contenido transformador. La crisis del capitalismo tardío que ha inundado la ciudad de Shanghái, tan unida al espectáculo, hace que la pintura de Baños no deje de mirar al futuro impregnado de luces de esta ciudad cinematográfica, con sus centelleos de neón. Simultáneamente, con una sensibilidad moderna, nuestro pintor tiene una actitud de querer involucrarse en el tiempo presente, mientras que navega por el pasado para agudizar su conciencia histórica, desarrollando tácticas más o menos místicas de esferas naturalistas casi impensables. Greenspan (2014) utiliza la metáfora de las luces de neón de Shanghái para ilustrar la faceta armónica de la filosofía no-dual del yin/yang en su vertiente irracionalista. La

irracionalidad es irreductiblemente la condición paradójica de armonización – ya que se advierte una instrumentalización de las estrategias neo-modernistas intrínsecas en el racionalismo imparale y en los avances tecnológicos de la ciudad. Las luces de neón consiguen una moderación en la desigual vida cotidiana de la mayoría de los habitantes de Shanghái. Para el artista, sus artificios pictóricos provocan un contraste cromático y construyen la apariencia incandescente de personas y lugares como resultado de la construcción estética de una escena luminosa vinculada a la memoria, el mito, el tiempo pasado y la energía latente: muy cerca a la tesis de la estetización capitalista de lo fugaz de Lipovetsky, pero con características chinas. Shanghái se convierte así en una ciudad retro futurista; en ella la aceleración en la construcción de nuevos edificios y rascacielos que aspiran a ser los nuevos tótems de la modernidad científica socialista tienen que convivir en perpetuo conflicto con las creencias folclóricas y nativistas chinas (Figura 3) (GREENSPAN, 2014, p. 4).

**Figuras 3 y 4** – “The Light Being” series (2012). The Great God, Shiva y retrato de Qi Baishi.



**Fuente:** Cortesía del autor. The Great God, Shiva. Mixed media on canvas. 200 x 200 cm. 2012. Y retrato de Qi Baishi. Aluminum, metal gold, nylon, paint, light and stroboscopic flash. 240 x 200 x 50 cm. 2013

A partir de estas capas retro futuristas entendidas como estrategias alegóricas, Baños nos lleva al corazón de la crisis de representación de la modernidad española y europea para redimir una modernidad alternativa y situarla en el mismo plano que la estética realista-totalizadora del

postsocialismo chino. El papel desmitificador de sus trazos nos transmite una capacidad transformadora de los valores y creencias chinos, en este nuevo orden poscolonial, que nos acercan a Benjamin (1971, p. 127) y su alegoría barroca del pasado sin caer en un hermetismo melancólico. La tensión entre la alegoría y la racionalidad se une a la posibilidad de renovación de significados por medio de transiciones rituales y objetos chamanísticos.

Asimismo, se podría hablar de barroco hiperreal en el que lo referencial se desvanece. La inserción del barroco en el contexto contemporáneo sería un intento desesperado por parte de Baños de encontrar formas -como afirmaba Calabrese refiriéndose a las formas neobarrocas- con el objetivo de establecer juicios estéticos que se opongan enérgicamente a las valoraciones regulares y euclidianas, más típicas en cánones estéticos de representación cartesiana. El gusto por lo fragmentario de la era neobarroca se manifiesta entre el erotismo, el espectáculo, el exceso, el hedonismo emocional y alegórico en la representación misma (CALABRESE, 1999). Calabrese define así este paradigma del neobarroco postmoderno, que forma parte del caos ordenado de las sociedades fuertemente globalizadas y tecnificadas. Todo este laberinto fantasmagórico es el nodo desde el que se accede al principio de incertidumbre y de-subjetivación en la obra de Baños. La alegoría barroca en Baños aviva entrópicamente los ejes del tiempo y espacio, y asegura que estén coordinados por la intensidad de sus actos:

No hay que olvidar, finalmente, que lo que está en juego cuando atendemos al potencial deconstructivo del Barroco es el papel ineludible — en una nueva concepción del arte y la cultura en las sociedades hegemónicas de Occidente — de los pueblos y las culturas periféricas, entre ellas las de aquella geografía donde floreció profusamente, en los siglos XVII y XVIII, el arte y la literatura barroca: la península ibérica y sus colonias de ultramar. (CHIAMPI, 1994, p. 175).

Baños, en sus bocetos de objetos, lugares y personas, distorsiona y pervierte las formas *a priori*, y las metamorfosea en nuevos detalles y fracciones, los cuales intensifican lo emocional e irracional de sus pinturas. Su teatralidad brota del barranco de una crisis representacional entre la modernidad Occidental y Oriental. La apropiación del barroco en Baños, como en muchos artistas contemporáneos desde los noventa, va a ser debido a una susceptibilidad a la representación que tiene sus orígenes y continuidad conceptual en la larga economía barroca española (BREA, 1992). Una de las huellas del artista, es su facilidad para fusionar lo abstracto y lo figurativo

con formas de naturaleza humana o inhumana que nos acercan a ver una China invisible, gracias a sus estrategias neo-alegóricas. En uno de sus cuadros podemos apreciar un ave exótica (FIGURA 5) que en la tradición de los pintores *literati*<sup>4</sup>, aparece como un importante motivo junto a flores, en árboles, montañas, ríos y piedras (CLUNAS, 2009, p. 142). Se da una clase de devenir-animal tan omnipresente en el trabajo de Deleuze y Guattari<sup>5</sup>, en el que el antropomorfismo, no es universal, pero es diferencial y está contextualizado (HSIEN-HAO LIAO, 2014, p. 5). Baños establece un oxímoron interesante entre alma y la corporalidad de faisán:

Desde mis inicios me interesa la relación del hombre y el mundo animal. El animal como parte indispensable del rito religioso. La presencia de alma en animales o elementos del mundo natural (Animismo). Animales sagrados con significado cultural, que pueden ser reencarnaciones de espíritus con alma y actúan como médiums receptores de señales imperceptibles a la percepción humana. (BAÑOS, Juan Antonio 21 Jul. 2016)

El mismo trato que el pintor le da a un animal que a un hombre desempeña el papel de otras formas de sentir la cultura que forman parte de la homogenización y armonización cultural que se extiende a una modernidad pre-maoísta, mediada por el daoísmo y el budismo y sus sabidurías no-dualistas entre animales, naturaleza y humanos.

En una especie de *Accionismo Vienés* (1960-1971), Baños emula las acciones de algunos de estos artistas, que utilizaban el aspa para inyectar violentamente energía alrededor de esta (Figura 5). El imaginario cosmopolita de Baños hacia el otro comporta una mirada que nos anticipa un futuro, pero siempre desde un pasado distante, en una sociedad fuertemente comercial. El creador, con su pujanza cromática, nos anima a cuestionarnos esta memoria con símbolos repletos de ironía *Kitsch*:

Sí, aparece [la memoria], pero de la misma forma que están representados los demás, de una forma fingida e irónica. Todas las escenas personalizadas a través de la pintura pertenecen a un tiempo pasado y sobreviven como imágenes reminiscentes en la memoria. (BAÑOS, Juan Antonio 21 Jul. 2016).

<sup>4</sup> Literato se refiere a un grupo elitista de pintores cortesanos que ejercen la llamada pintura paisajista.

<sup>5</sup> Hsien-Hao Liao utiliza los cánones de estética taoísta para ilustrar la interpretación de los sueños de Zhuangzi (476–221 BC) y su conocida revelación de *becoming-butterfly* (to think over who is dreaming of whom, the butterfly or I?).

Bajo este epígrafe, y a la luz de la importancia de esta riqueza material (pre-) y/o revolucionaria en la que Baños se fija, lo material también cobra importancia. Zhang (2008, p. 349) aclara que este tipo de acontecimiento post-alegórico de lo Kitsch en las artes supone una respuesta tajante del socialismo tardío chino a un intento estético y cultural de saltarse el maoísmo realista, en una incesante mirada al futuro desde la nostalgia.

**Figura 5** – “The Light Being” series (2012). El faisán



**Fuente:** Cortesía del autor. Mixed media on canvas. 150 x 150 cm.

## **6 LA MIRADA EN TRAZOS DE LA MUJER CHINA Y SUS RELACIONES LÍQUIDAS EN EL SPACING DE LA CIUDAD**

Por otro lado, sus estímulos oníricos son las luces posmodernas de Shanghái que reproducen el movimiento en la calle. Esos son sus recursos pictóricos y cromáticos que cubren las calles de su Shanghái imaginario. La observación del movimiento excita su pulsión vital y es fuente de creación. Sus inquietantes mujeres encerradas en lugares de ocio, como discotecas, aparecen estiradas y geometrizadas debido a la influencia del cubismo y el futurismo; se paran delante de los pinchadiscos y su música pegadiza o se mueven por calles de perspectivas aceleradas, en un mundo tenso a punto de estallar. El pintor hace resonar irónicamente la postmodernidad española, durante su transición,

esta vez planeando también sobre la conversión socialista china. El pop entre inocente y medianamente transgresor que se asomó en la movida madrileña en los años ochenta es redoblado en el predominio del color sobre la forma. Mientras esto ocurría en el arte contemporáneo de los noventa en la península ibérica, la creatividad del diseño Kitsch transmutó al gigante asiático. Por un lado, el pop político en el que la iconografía capitalista y comunista se entremezclaba con estéticas pop de colores fuertes y penetrantes; y, por el otro, el realismo cínico que representaba a la sociedad china desamparada, en las que las gentes aparecían, con sonrisas simuladas o con caras aturdidas, bajo un régimen que no puede dejar de ser totalitario y una sociedad cada vez más materialista. Mientras que estas nuevas miradas críticas o cínicas se incorporaban, todo esto coincidía con el boom del arte contemporáneo chino que empezaba a ser la sensación del momento, en bienales internacionales como las de Venecia o Berlín. El país se encaminaba hacia su internacionalización y economía de mercado plena (HUNG, 2008). Ambos movimientos pop y sus trazos exorcistas supusieron rupturas con los fantasmas del maoísmo ortodoxo y del franquismo rancio español, que provocan una nueva yuxtaposición entre regímenes totalitarios que se encauzaban hacia sociedades de consumo.

Sin caer en ningún tipo de pop nihilista, pero apropiándose de él, el artista nos adentra en la condición posmoderna del París de Oriente, en el que la batalla ideológica del maoísmo se ha visto relegada por el modelo de propaganda de la posmodernidad *cool*, a los servicios de las estrategias capitalistas de sociedad de consumo. En medio de tanta fiesta y cinismo y al resaltar la evidencia tautológica de la sensualidad de la mujer oriental, Baños no revela necesariamente ningún tipo de orientalismo evidente, y para ello ejecuta un principio de continuidad con la realidad. Por ejemplo, las *gogós* y la vaporosidad de sus apariencias aparecen como si estuvieran bailando en una discoteca de la ciudad de Shanghai (FIGURA 6). El ambiente es forjado con una maestría en la que la movilidad durable y expresividad del personaje es exacerbada en el tenebrismo muy atemperado por el rosicler crepuscular de la luz blanca y traslúcida. Esta pintura testimonial parece escapar de la realidad y de su tiempo, y podría situarnos en cualquier lugar del globo, en el que el pintor traza las siluetas de las chicas con una mirada casi adolescente. Aunque también se esconden las relaciones líquidas, y poco estables, de muchas de las mujeres jóvenes chinas que llegan del campo a las grandes ciudades; y la precariedad de sus nuevos trabajos, así como la fragmentación familiar que estos cambios conllevan (BAUMAN, 2013).

**Figura 6** – “The Light Being” series (2012). Retrato de mujer joven

**Fuente:** Cortesía del autor. Mixed media on canvas. 165 x 140 cm.

Hay cierto voyerismo, pues Baños es como un *flâneur* al que le gusta pasear por las calles de Shanghái; que se deleita en lo sensorial, los colores, las tonalidades y el erotismo de su topografía. Todo esto está neutralizado por su abstraccionismo, lo que provoca que cualquier narrativa relativa a la cercanía de lo occidental o a la lejanía de lo oriental pueda ser tanto familiar como extraña. Esto da como resultado una traducción parcial de su experiencia visual. Esta situación puede desvelar la promesa de un cosmopolitismo incondicional al modo de Derrida de *indifférence*, en la que los trazos traumáticos por los rápidos cambios vividos en la ciudad, y el ineludible sentido de ansiedad puedan ser enunciados a través de un cosmopolitismo que hiere el ojo del que mira. La fugacidad de trazos tira del acontecimiento con un panorama heterorreferencial que radica entre lo temporal y atemporal. Estas efemérides están cultivadas por su fuerte esteticismo relacional, los cuales sugieren nuevas formas de exponer las potencialidades de sus huellas o pliegues para llegar al otro en una frontera inacabada. Derrida (2015, p. 60) ligaría este espacio con su famoso concepto de “*spacing*”, para conectar cualquier acontecimiento con experiencias materiales; es decir, entendidas como la diseminación que “marca una multiplicidad irreductible y generativa”. Esto otorga al trabajo de Baños un aire de “*spacing*”, con cierta infinitud de significados, en el que un significado

no se substituye por otro, sino que son recíprocos. Esta traducibilidad entre lo visible y lo invisible se ve expresada, como comenta el artista:

En ese caso podría decir que la ciudad de Shanghái conecta perfectamente con el biorritmo y expectativas creativas de un artista contemporáneo español. En definitiva, el exacerbado exceso de elementos lumínicos de estética Kitsch conviviendo con elementos de la cultura antigua china crean la conexión perfecta con la herencia de estética barroca española. (BAÑOS, Juan Antonio 21 Jul. 2016)

Todo esto se adapta indudablemente a las intenciones de Baños de abrir la posibilidad de que el acontecimiento puede estar en el devenir de historias reales que pueden hacer progresivamente desaparecer la plasticidad estética del artista. Este *spacing* derridiano, estaría enmarcado por la *indifference*, que constituye otro proceso de definir la (in)traducibilidad, y que aprovecha, entre otras cosas, el rescate de esas experiencias invisibles que se han ido acumulando por el desorden procedente de la transformación, sin precedentes, de la ciudad. La *indifference* será la presencia-ausencia del “ahora”, que siempre está postergándose o a punto de convertirse en un (no) momento fugaz, que sale de todo este desconcierto, y que no tendría relación existente con ningún otro trazo temporal; en otras palabras, estaríamos hablando de un tiempo sin precedentes. En ese sentido, el tiempo de la *indifference* en la traducción de Baños se enmarca entre la posibilidad de la añadidura y la imposibilidad de la sustitución, o lo que es lo mismo, en un eterno presente.

## CONCLUSIÓN

La (in)traducibilidad de la obra de Baños reside en varios giros ontológicos y epistemológicos: el del Yo, el de las intuiciones y sentidos, el de subjetividades racionales de la razón y las irracionales de lo transcendental. En consecuencia, lo inmediato sería no poder traducir con un plano de analogía y de una forma translúcido que hay o queda visible (o invisible) en los intersticios de sus lienzos. En ella se generan nuevas intensidades y percepciones sensibles que permiten la cancelación y confirmación de dicha frontera. Baños ha demostrado que, en una situación de dislocación espacial y temporal, es capaz de reterritorializar y deterritorializar todos los recursos disponibles, tanto aquellos que vienen de su cultura, como los que va encontrando en sus paseos por la ciudad. Se evidencia aquí esta capacidad de mantener cierta distancia, pero también intentar un cierto acercamiento con



lo local, en donde no se sabe en qué lugar empieza y concluye su obra. En mi opinión, es la mejor manera de leer las fronteras formales del texto original que intentan imponerse desde su “originalidad” y evitar superponerlas. Este universo impersonal está cruzado por otras fuerzas subjetivas modernas o simplemente por microrrelatos e incluso mitos en los que se crea una segunda naturaleza o una nueva perceptibilidad post-paradigmática y ontológica, que consiste en abolir y transformar formas de creación artística, metafísicas y pre-metafísicas a través de una hiperteatralidad aparente. Al fin al cabo, Baños tiene que elegir, criticar (desplazar fronteras) o ignorar (cruzar fronteras) qué tipo de táctica debe seguir para poder mantener su posición de artista transnacional, sin ser siempre visto como un artista “español” en China. Este desafío se mantiene como el más importante, en un intento desesperado, por parte de Baños, de crear un universo que difiera de la corriente general artística española y china. De este modo, en este desplazamiento visual, el caso del arte contemporáneo español a través de la obra de Baños puede visualizarse como una alternativa transnacional y transversal del arte contemporáneo español y de su perspectivismo múltiple en la contemporaneidad china situado en el contexto de la ciudad de Shanghai.

LÓPEZ-MÚGICA, J. Transcultural contemporaneity in the paintings of Juan Baños in China. *Transformação*, Marília, v. 45, p. 101-124, 2022. Edição Especial 2.

**Abstract:** The purpose of this article is to explore in the context of Shanghai in regards to the distances and closeness between Chinese and Spanish cultures are revealed, defined and questioned, through the pictorial canvases of Juan Antonio Baños (Spain, 1980). His nomadism or status as a foreigner will raise some doubts about the identity and the place that the artist occupies in the contemporary world. In addition, the contemporaneity of his work suggests some effects according to which the borders disappear, while new ones are erected. The mere gesture of Baños’ artwork in attempting to translate the traces of Shanghai by means of a world of dislocations and citations incites a heterogeneous symphony of varied spaces and times that amplify the possibilities of artistic knowledge between East and West. Drawing from the analysis of a postcolonial framework that stretches from baroque hyperrealism to retro-futurist epistemologies of the city, right up to a *kitsch pop art*, the article claims that this translatable cultural itinerary displaces the ways of understanding contemporary art in China towards a post-paradigmatic period.

**Keywords:** (Un)Translatable. Traces. Transculturality. Neo-Baroque. Contemporaneity.

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## NGUYEN TRAI OF BENEVOLENCE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS ARE NECESSARY FOR VIETNAMESE TODAY<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** Nguyen Trai is a man with a great personality in Vietnam. He has morality, culture, pure soul, and profound wisdom of all times. Nguyen Trai lived in the 15th century in a feudal society with many changes. The paper studied Nguyen Trai's philosophical thoughts to help develop a prosperous and happy country using the nation's traditional cultural values. The article uses the methodology of dialectical materialism as a general principle and a specific historical principle to evaluate Nguyen Trai's benevolence and righteousness in terms of compassion, justice, and management, associated with the interests of the people, the community, and society. The article also uses analytical and synthesis methods to highlight the content of benevolence and righteousness in the cultural tradition of the Vietnamese nation today. The Covid-19 pandemic had affected the world in general and Vietnam in particular. So Nguyen Trai's thought culture is powerfully and effectively prompt in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic in Vietnam and other countries today. In this article, Nguyen Trai's benevolence and righteousness fairness clearly define the responsibility of the state and the obligation of citizens to promote the traditional cultural values of the nation.

**Keywords:** Benevolence and Righteousness. Cultural. Nguyen Trai. Vietnamese.

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## INTRODUCTION

Benevolence and righteousness appeared quite early in the history of ancient Chinese philosophy. Many well-known Confucian scholars, including Confucius, Mencius, Xunzi, Dong Zhongshu, etc., discuss benevolence and righteousness. These philosophers all argued that human relationships are essential to love and morality benevolence and righteousness have existed for a long time in Vietnamese thought. Nguyen Trai has to expand benevolence and righteousness to a new era level – something he achieved before and even in his time. In Nguyen Trai's view, benevolence and righteousness are the trade-offs for people. Benevolence and righteousness mean tolerance; Generosity is the ideal for building a peaceful and prosperous country. In particular, Nguyen Trai's kindness and justness are significant traditional cultural values of Vietnam today, and in the future. Therefore, it is necessary to study Nguyen Trai's benevolence and righteousness thoughts which emphasized the importance of a responsible lifestyle education for the community and people. Especially in the context of globalization with views and lifestyles promoting individualism in a world crisis like the Covid-19 pandemic. The appreciation of Nguyen Trai's benevolence and righteousness is a good value for all societies, even Vietnam, Brazil, China, Europe, Africa, Americas, etc. since all have to move forward.

## 1. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This article uses the methodology of dialectical materialism as a comprehensive principle and a specific historical principle to study the entire philosophical thought of Nguyen Trai Vietnam clarifies the ideology of benevolence and righteousness. The article uses a comprehensive methodology to collect and synthesize all research documents on the history of Vietnam in the 15th century in the Dai Viet history book, the history of Vietnam, and the history of traditional philosophy. The methodology is the historical principle. In this paper, Nguyen Trai mentions benevolence and righteousness in many aspects. Benevolence and righteousness mean loving the people, for the people. Humanity means tolerance and quantity. Nguyen Trai's thought of benevolence and righteousness inherits the Confucian, Buddhist, and Taoist views of humanity. Still, it has expanded and developed, creating a unique history, and culture for the Vietnamese and the world. Humanity is the ideal for building a peaceful country.

In addition, the article also uses the methods of analysis, synthesis, and explanation to clarify Nguyen Trai's thought of "filial piety and respect" in the 15th century and its values in building a culture. Now, the culture of Vietnam in the current social context. The world is heavily affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, national cultural ideas about benevolence and righteousness have helped Vietnam cope well with the past and the near future pandemic.

Nguyen Trai's benevolence and righteousness in the history of 15th-century Vietnam is a step forward. The paper uses a comprehensive method and concrete arguments of dialectical materialism to clarify that benevolence and righteousness are goodness and kindness. Nguyen Trai's benevolence and righteousness thought have their unique values. This article defines that Nguyen Trai's research on benevolence and righteousness has been formed in Vietnam and become a cultural value of Vietnam, especially in Vietnam's current fight against Covid-19.

According to Douzinas (2005), the Western philosopher argues that humanity is both a moral virtue and a desirable quality of political society which applies to ethical and social decision-making. That is evident in the western philosophical concepts of benevolence and righteousness as justice of Plato and Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas, or Hobbes and Hume, Kant, Mill, and Rawls. The above philosophers consider benevolence and righteousness with justice, freedom and social problems. For Plato, benevolence and righteousness is a virtue of establishing the correct order with each department performing its proper role and not interfering with the proper functioning of other departments. Aristotle said benevolence and righteousness consist of justice and fairness related to equitable distribution and correcting what is unfair. For Augustine, the cardinal's virtue of justice requires that we strive to grant all rights; For Aquinas, benevolence and righteousness are the logical meaning of opposite types of injustice that involve proportional distribution and reciprocal transactions. Hobbes believed that justice was a false virtue, necessary for civil society, a function of the voluntary agreements of social contracts; For Hume, benevolence essentially serves the common good by protecting property (in general). Kant's philosophy refers to justice as a virtue and right to respect, freedom, autonomy, and dignity of each person. Mill's philosophy says that it is a utility of society. Everyone is the freedom of man. And Rawls analyzed justice for equal liberties of all members of the community. Therefore, justice in Western philosophy is the freedom of every individual in society. Western philosophers often regard justice as the most

fundamental foundation of all virtues for arranging interpersonal relationships and establishing and maintaining a stable political community, monitoring the historical interaction of these theories. What is the growing understanding of justice regarding free, rational agents? One may disagree on the nature, basis, and application of legal justice, but this is at its core.

The article uses a comprehensive methodology and the specific history of dialectical materialism to clarify the words and righteous thought of the Confucian philosophical system as a doctrine that Nguyen Trai influenced while being educated. According to Brister (2021), man associates with meaning in Confucian classics, Confucianism conceives human compassion, which only means what is worthy of following the correct morality and reason. The cause is considered the root of the importance. The cause is the vast love, the affection that is the feeling in the five primary human relationships (the year of the chakra): the King, my father, and son, my spouse, brothers, friends. It is the human responsibility to carry out the cause (i.e., commitment in the five primary relationships mentioned above). I am clarifying Confucianism's benevolence and righteousness thoughts to see Nguyen Trai's creativity in expressing his philosophical opinion applied to the specific social context of Vietnam in the 15th century.

The article also uses analytical and aggregated methods to clarify the essential contents of Nguyen Trai's benevolence and righteousness thoughts, thereby expressing the factors that constitute cause, effect and meaning; Simultaneously, it codified his Beijing legitimate beliefs.

Since then, the article clarifies Nguyen Trai's ideological values for the construction and development of the cultural traditions of the Vietnamese people today. Vietnam has taken its people to the root of its rule. The people are the goal of developing a prosperous country. People live a warm and happy life in the ideal society that Vietnam strives to build.

## **2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

To conduct the research, the paper answers the following research questions:

1. What is Nguyen Trai's idea of benevolence and righteousness?
2. What are Nguyen Trai's benevolence and righteousness thoughts?



3. How does Nguyen Trai's idea of benevolence and righteousness mean for Vietnamese culture today?

### **3. RESULTS**

#### *3.1 NGUYEN TRAI BIOGRAPHY*

Nguyen Trai (1380 - 1442) is distinguish philosopher history in feudal times of the Vietnamese. Nguyen Trai's name is Uc Trai; he came from Chi Ngai village, Phuong Son district, Lang Giang highway (now in Chi Linh, Hai Duong), then moved to Nhi Khe village (Thuong Tin, Hanoi). He is the son of Nguyen Phi Khanh, a doctor at the end of the Tran dynasty, the grandson of the private master Chuong Tuc Quoc, who served Tran Nguyen Dan. Tran Nguyen Dan, was a venerable man and a great minister of the Tran dynasty, but he did not oppose Ho Quy Ly but entrusted his descendants to Ho Quy Ly. As an official of the Priest under the kings Tran Nghe Tong, Tran Du Tong, and Tran Phe De. Nguyen Trai comes from the maternal side of the feudal Dynasty. He is a famous, intelligent and talented person. Nguyen Trai lost his mother at the age of 5, so his upbringing was due to his father. That's why his feelings for his father are so deep.

According to Ngo Si Lien (1998), Nguyen Trai appointed King Ho Quy Ly as a chief historian. In 1400, Ho Quy Ly overthrew the Chen dynasty and continued implementing reforms such as a slavery policy, deadline payment, reorganization of education, examinations, and health. Shortly after being crowned King, Ho Quy Ly opened the exam room. Nguyen Trai took the exam. He passed the exam to become a Doctor when he was 20. His father, Nguyen Phi Khanh, tested the exam Doctor in 1374, but he did not work as an official but he was a teacher. By 1400, when Ho Quy Ly founded the Ho Dynasty, he became an official for the Ho Dynasty and was appointed as a scholar's scholar, then promoted to The Grand Master, Self-Agent Lieutenant General of Thi Lang, Private Prince.

I 1406, The Ming Dynasty in China invaded Vietnam. The Ho Dynasty fought back but was defeated. Ho Quy Ly's father, a son and several courtesies, including Nguyen Phi Khanh, were captured by the Ming army and sent to China. According to Phan Ngoc 2010), when his father left, Nguyen Trai and his young brother Nguyen Phi Hung cried and followed his father to the border Nam Quan. He wanted to serve their elderly father

during their captivity. But Nguyen Phi Khanh said to Nguyen Trai: You were an educated, talented person, so you should try to avenge me. Does your son cry like a girl like a woman? (Confucianism conceived that women under the triad law should be weak and depend on men. Men are princes, so they have to train themselves to be strong men, that is, to follow kindness and fairness). Nguyen Trai listened to his father return to find a way to fight the enemy and save the country.

Returning to Thang Long, the Ming army captured and imprisoned Nguyen Trai. Hoang Phuc of Minh Thuong knew Nguyen Trai was a talented figure and tried to entice and seduce him, but he was determined not to follow the enemy.

According to Phan Huy Chu (2005), in 1407, Nguyen Trai went to see Le Loi, the leader of the Lam son army in Lei Giang, Thanh Hoa province. After detention in Dong Quan (Ha Noi capital), Nguyen Trai overcame the enemy siege to escape. He joined Le Loi in the Lam Son uprising against the Ming army. Nguyen Trai presented Le Loi with his strategy for driving out the Ming army, which the Vietnamese history books call Binh Ngo Book. Ngo The Vinh commented on a collection of poems by Uc Trai: According to Nguyen Trai (1976), Nguyen Trai's plan to fight the enemy was to use the art of provoking the generals to lure the arrogant and contemptuous enemy into a place where our insurgent army would ambush him. The next step is to use a strategy to hit the hearts of generals and soldiers, causing fear and insecurity shaking the enemy's. According to Tran Huy Lieu (1966), in the resistance war against the Ming army, from 1418 to 1427, Nguyen Trai advocated relying on the people to fight the enemy and save the country. When the country was at peace, Nguyen Trai declared that the feudal state must build and develop. King Le schemed the ten years of resistance against the Ming army: the letters from the subpoena to the Ming general were written with one hand. After chasing foreign invaders to The Ship, Nguyen Trai established the rank of Servant, which was listed as the first state in the reign of King Le Thai Tong. He made An Interior Minister (i.e., Prime Minister).

According to Nguyen Trai (1976), in his life as a cadre, worrying about things for the country must be before everything else; being happy with everyone's happiness must be pleased after everything. Nguyen Trai always lives a simple life, needing to save integrity. His house in Dong Kinh (Thang Long) is just a cottage (the corner of the tent is in the South, and there is one room). When he ruled the militia on the Northeast Island, his home in Con

Son: four empty sides with no objects, houses with only books as valuables. In his life, he constantly worries about what the world has to worry about, happy after the world's joy. According to Nguyen Trai (1976), in his letter of thanks, Nguyen Trai which appointed as the central council of interest of the three military masters. He wrote: Great people have to worry in front of everyone and be happy without anyone seeing. According to Ngo Si Lien (1998), in 1437, when King Le Thai Tong sent him to perform a musical ceremony, he also told the King that the King had to stabilize and develop the nation: Dare to love the emperor, love and present everything. All people abandoned the villages and neighborhoods, no anger and melancholy, that is, keep the roots of music.

Around the end of 1437, the beginning of 1438, Nguyen Trai retired and lived in Con Son - where he was once his grandfather's fief. In 1442, Le Thai Tong, King of patrolling the East, reviewed martial arts in Chi Linh district, Hai Duong province. Nguyen Trai took a distance to visit the Con Son pagoda in Chi Linh district, Hai Duong province. The King died in action, and the mandarins accused Nguyen Trai of killing the King. They destroyed his family for three generations. In 1464, King Le Thanh Tong vindicated Nguyen Trai after committing crimes and asking for his descendants' rest.

### *3.2 BASIC CONTENTS OF NGUYEN TRAI'S BENEVOLENCE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS*

Nguyen Trai's concept of benevolence and righteousness is love in the policy of living for happiness, kindness, and career settlement of all classes of people in the same culture, language, territory, and customs. According to Nguyen Trai (1976, p. 324), "Benevolence and core righteousness in the people / The Army punished for nonviolence for the first time."

It is the law of nature, society, history. No state has the right in the name of any power to infringe on the shores and culture of other peoples. These are human values, benevolence, and righteousness rights as a god that all peoples should respect. Contrary or violated, that value violates justice, an tyranny that needs to eliminate. According to Nguyen Trai (1976, p. 326), "[...] when Han, Tang, Yuan, Song invaded all failed bitterly. So Liu Cong was greedy and had to lose / Zhao Xuan wanted to run as fast as possible / Toa Do was caught at the mouth of Ham Tu / O Ma had to die on the Bach Dang River [...] God, angry/Heaven, the earth did not tolerate it."

Zhong and Zhongyong in Confucian Classics talk about the “Zhong and Zhongyong” religion; Confucius discusses how to keep thoughts and deeds always at a neutral level, not excessive, and must try to live life according to humanity, justice, and etiquette. Wisdom, faith, to become a gentleman. Zhong and Zhongyong mean living, knowing, practicing, learning to benefit from being human, and suffering from being free from bravery. It means, Someone knows from birth, easy to do, he has knowledge; who needs to learn to understand, make life beneficial, have compassion; Only those who are miserable know that trying in life has courage. For Nguyen Trai are benevolence and righteousness, which are the sake of people understanding who knows and loves people. Nguyen Trai’s benevolence and righteousness are the unity. Nguyen Trai’s benevolence and righteousness are to take the spirit of solidarity as the first premise in all of his actions. That holds the will of heaven and the human heart, humanitarianism. Nguyen Trai’s ideological view of benevolence and righteousness results from inheriting the traditional philosophical ideas of the East in general and the history of the Vietnamese in particular. Nguyen Trai’s benevolence and righteousness become a culture of the nation. It flows according to the tradition of the culture of kindness and justice of the Vietnamese people later. For Nguyen Trai, benevolence and righteousness are an idea and primary methods of reasoning. Because it is the convergence of human thought passed down from generation to generation. The content of this thought is to express as follows. In a word, the benevolence and righteousness concept indicates a combination of promoting good and forbidding evil, the function of which can be performed both morally and politically.

*FIRST, THE BENEVOLENCE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS THOUGHT MEANS PATRIOTISM, MERCHANTS.*

Nguyen Trai’s life, career, and mindset have left many profound ideas and philosophies for Vietnam. It is closely attached to Vietnamese society, knows how to forget foreign invaders, study, diligently improve itself, and develop cultural, social, political, and military knowledge. The benevolence and righteousness of Vietnamese must be independent, free and happy people who deserve respect and service. In other words, The Vietnamese are of Vietnamese society, serving Vietnamese society; Vietnamese society is a Vietnamese person helping the Vietnamese people. That’s all, and there’s no other meta-problem. Nguyen Tai Thu (1993, p. 172), “It’s the idea of real people.” Nguyen Trai’s view of benevolence shows that the King’s relationship is that the superior

must do everything to care and love for the people and the country. That is the duty of the King. That is different from Confucius's view of benevolence and righteousness. Confucius said that in society, there are five crucial moral relationships called the "five wheels," including the relationship between the King - me, father-son, husband-wife, brother - brother, and friends. Each relationship has its own standards for each object, such as a good father, a filial son; good brother, good brother; husband knows love, wife hears right; above from filial piety, below with respect; benevolent King, I am loyal. To implement the above ethical relationships well, Confucius also said the King needs to adopt the ethical standards of benevolence, righteousness, courtesy, wisdom, trust, loyalty, courage, filial piety, and respect to adjusting their behavior. Therefore, Confucius's thought of benevolence and righteousness are between politics and morality. Benevolence and righteousness are between subordinates, and subordinates must submit to the superior and the powerful. Benevolence and righteousness determine the consciousness of the individual, the family, and the sense of community. Benevolence and righteousness mean patriotism, the love of the people, which is different from the human spirit of Confucianism. Confucius' humanitarian view was to make the prince's name loyal to the King and gracious to his father. Nguyen Trai expresses the human spirit with the country; pious is with the people in the nation. Nguyen Trai's benevolence and righteousness are obtain when it is associated with the national interest, which is independence, governmental freedom, and people's happiness. Benevolence and righteousness must come from patriotism and love for the Vietnamese people. Nguyen Trai has been for the country and the people all his life. He contributed to the protection and construction of the country, not for the rights of the Tran Dynasty, Ho Dynasty, and his reputation and status. When associated with the national interest, Trai's benevolence and righteousness are the independence, freedom of the nation and happiness of the people. Benevolence and righteousness must come from patriotism and love for the Vietnamese people. Before Tran's downfall, according to Nguyen Trai (1976, p. 488),

The Tran Dynasty relied on their power to get rich, despite the misery, / Forgetting the extraordinary task of caring for the people, for the country/ The people hated without knowing, has to reprimand without fear... As a result, the country's deciding, disciplined policies are disturbed. Coming to the Ho Dynasty, Nguyen Trai said: Recently, the people complained: because the Ho House is unruly, / The people hate./ The Minh Army has the opportunity to harm the people, / interested in selling water./ the people live like their on fire, / Push the red into a deep cave.

Therefore, kindness and justice are to save the country from aggression. When the state was at peace, Nguyen Trai built a policy, an economy, defense, culture, education in the period of peace. It was to take care of the masses to settle down, permanently free from the misery of slavery. According to Nguyen Trai (1976, p. 324),

The thick blood of the people today is to build tomorrow / District was heavy tax collection; / In the village there is no weaving noise./ Water, The South China Sea, does not easily wash away dirt, / Chopping down all the structures in Nam Son forest is not enough to record the crime. Therefore, Nguyen Trai only hopes to drive out the allies: Society is stable, / the country renewed./ Heaven and Earth are peaceful from here/ The sun and moon will be bright. The government has ushered in long-term prosperity. The nation has washed away the shame of existing.

According to Tran Huy Lieu (1966), Nguyen Trai thinks the King governs the people so that they do not have to complain about the suffering in society. According to Nguyen Trai, the meaning is to care for the people's life meet their aspirations by policies to manage the country, the state must take political purposes for the people to serve. That means striving to the end against foreign invaders, destroying the enemy's brutality, fighting for the country's independence and the people's happiness. Nguyen Trai's benevolence and righteousness thought are of high value; It inherits the importance of Buddhism with the spirit of compassion, salvation, and rescuing people from suffering. Daoism is benevolence, and righteousness is the religion of heaven and earth, which is to follow nature to act. Confucianism is about keeping the spirit of loyalty to the country and being hospitable to the people. Besides, the Dynasty tradition is a sincere and noble way of life, inheriting patriotism, compassion and wisdom. Especially the compassionate and righteous thoughts of the Vietnamese people must always change their face in the scene of boiling oil and fire chaos. It is the soul of benevolence and righteousness in the historical reality of the Vietnamese people. Therefore, Nguyen Trai's benevolence, and righteousness are the love of the country, love for the people and the idea of fighting against invaders, protecting national sovereignty, developing the country peacefully. *Second, benevolence and righteousness mean that each person trains and cultivates himself to live for the community, for others.*

Nguyen Trai's thought of benevolence and righteousness shows his personality within a person. It is obtained through the training and nurturing of each person. The benevolence and righteousness of people are expressed through

their behavior in relationships. With benevolence and righteousness, Nguyen Trai is ready to suffer hardship, hunger, a thirst to fight against the enemy aggression and maintain national independence and sovereignty. However, when the enemy surrenders, he uses kindness and justice to treat the enemy with tolerance, the generosity of buying ships and providing food to live peacefully with their families. Nguyen Trai responded to Phuong Chinh's letter. According to Nguyen Trai (1976, p. 450), "The Leader is general of the army, benevolence and righteousness must be his root, bravely doing what he thinks is necessary. The grand plan must take the cause to heart, and the great work must take the people as the head." When the country is peaceful, the benevolence and righteousness of Nguyen Trai focus on educating the people to know how to develop the country. Nguyen Trai's benevolence and righteousness are also an understanding of the suffering from misery when the country invades. He said it was the government's responsibility to raise and increase the production and livestock, quickly lift people out of poverty and the oppressive exploitation of the invaders. Therefore, Nguyen Trai advocates that as soon as the country is peaceful, the most urgent task of the state is to ensure that people are not hungry or torn, bringing people to the ceremony, a cultural lifestyle, order, and discipline in society. The thought of letting go of disturbing emotions in Buddhist philosophy, the naturally inconceivable belief in Daoism, and the idea of filial piety manifested in Nguyen Trai's views when feudal society showed limitations. According to Nguyen Trai (2014, p. 70),

Fame was leisure./ Don't worry about good, evil, praise, or blame./ The pond is dry to pick up water, spinach,/ Radiant lotus grass/. The wind and moon are full on the storehouse roof,/ The boat carrying the saddle is so heavy then/ I have both Loyalty and filial piety/ Grinding non-defects, not dying them black.

In feudal society, it has made people increasingly degenerate, against self-interest, against jealousy, fighting more, caring for superiors, and trampling the weak is inevitable. Therefore, people suffered a lot in feudal court. Nguyen Trai expressed his views and advised people to give in, endure themselves and give others an extra part to pray for harmony. In addition to the need to do all his duties diligently, for loyalty, filial piety, abandonment of embezzlement, and good laziness, he also urgently demanded humility, not meaninglessness. According to Nguyen Trai (2014, p. 29), "The humble alley is morality, and who is easy to do?" It is also a good moral value in the traditions of the Vietnamese people.

*THIRD, BENEVOLENCE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS ARE TOLERANCE FOR THE ENEMY SO THAT THE PEOPLE AND SOLDIERS CAN BE AT PEACE.*

Lao Tzu mentions benevolence and righteousness as a kind of virtue. That is equivalent to benevolence and righteousness in Confucianism. However, Taoism is also because of love and good behavior towards others. For Lao Tzu's Taoism, love and benevolence are present in a very good person. People with benevolence and righteousness are a person of humility and humility, benefiting everyone without distinction, just as water benefits all things. People are generous because they are humble and humble, so they are generous; they do not compete with anyone, so no one blames them. Taoism is that ideal people are close to Tao, so they are close to the Supreme Being, the saint. But Nguyen Trai's benevolence and righteousness are fighting against the invading enemy to protect the people's peace. Nguyen Trai's bearable and honest thought is to act for the people, save the people and the country. Benevolence and righteousness are not doomed to people's suffering. According to Nguyen Trai (1976, p. 324), "The blessed man burn in the furnace of tyranny, the little child pushed into the pit of calamity. They were lying to God to deceive people. The plot of thousands of difficulties, invasions, and evils must accumulate over nearly twenty years". The struggles to liberate the nation from oppression and destruction in our nation's history are only resistance; It is both a purpose and a method for achieving universal human values. From a weak and lacking force in the early days of the army, Lam Son command's popular policy focused on the shining righteous contents, causing the enemy to flinch and become highly divided. Until there are strong soldiers, that policy continues to be consistent. The art of meteorology is applied flexibly to each specific situation and enemy object. According to Nguyen Trai (1976, p. 103), benevolence and righteousness are about making the "four seas of peace". Thus, the expectation of peace between the peoples of the two countries is completely justified, in line with the two countries' aspirations. He always desires that the culture is applied according to the country's rule. According to Nguyen Trai (1976, p. 93), "The heart wants to rest with the people, culture must be peaceful." The holy heart of the retired people should feel the culture of shared peace. With benevolence and righteousness, Nguyen Trai advised Le Loi not to kill soldiers but also to provide salaries and means to return home, which is the power to drive the enemy with justice. And use your mind to see through the psychology of what their enemies want and what they need. Analyze the weaknesses and strengths of the enemy to open them up to the right plan. It is tolerant and meaningful to the enemy to invade the



country. In short, Nguyen Trai's benevolence and righteousness are ultimately human love, compassion, and justice.

Fourth, benevolence and righteousness mean that the state must take the people as the root of the country's peace and prosperity.

Confucianism stands on the stance of the gentry aristocracy, so benevolence and righteousness are the political policy of governing the country and in the ruling policy of the government. Hence, he built a political theory that takes benevolence and righteousness to take the lead and uses virtue and legitimacy to regulate social relationships. Still, Nguyen Trai was born and raised in turbulent times. He also suffered the pain of separating from his Dynasty. Therefore, Nguyen Trai understands human suffering and the values of peace. Thus, Nguyen Trai's benevolence and righteousness bring peace to the people. In his letter to the enemy general, he called for the surrender of the stronghold. Nguyen Trai mentioned a lot about it. Nguyen Trai's thoughts on benevolence and righteousness also mean respect and gratitude to the people. Even after the successful resistance, the "people" appreciated that the country was liberated and moved towards a new chapter. Nguyen Trai understands that people produce food and clothing; That the emperor's palace is built on people's sweat.

According to Nguyen Trai (1976, p. 437), "The benefit that the mandarins in the imperial court enjoy is to repay the people's merit." Nguyen Trai has lived his whole life close to the people. He, therefore, clearly saw the noble qualities of the people, understood their earnest aspirations, and witnessed their great power in creating national history benevolence and righteousness means seeing people as the nation's roots being close to them, compassionate, and working for them. It is best and fair to save the water and its people, the power of benevolence and righteousness for such a program to stop. Nguyen Trai's thought is also the strength to defend the fatherland, expressed through the role of a patriot also emphasized. According to Phan Ngoc (2010, p. 216), "Every century there are heroes who have sacrificed their lives for the country." It's a very new and humane perspective of Nguyen Trai.

According to Nguyen Trai (1976), the view of governing the country: The land belongs to the people, it does not belong to the King, any court, the King is only the ruler of the country, not the owner of the country. Nguyen Trai's point is that whoever eats fruit must remember the planter, Nguyen Trai's point is that whoever eats fruit must remember the planter. People have

to be responsible for the King. And the officials follow and take care of the people. He advised the court not to collect heavy taxes but to take care of people's learning. According to Nguyen Trai (1976, p. 196), "The palace is beautiful but full of purely luxurious customs.; According to his decision, it amounts to a hundred years of resentment." His spirit, the court must implement a humane political line for the people with the content of tax reduction, making the people warm, except for the sadists to protect the people. That issue represents critical points, such as seeing people as the root of the country, respecting communities, and promoting community thought. As one of the participants in the Lam Son uprising and then holding the first officials of the Le dynasty, Nguyen Trai saw the role of the people, how to exploit and promote human resources to successfully carry out political tasks. Therefore, he dreamed of a miracle that could bring a rich life to the people at one point.

According to Nguyen Trai (1976, p. 253), "Perhaps stupidly holding the piano for an hour / Rich people all over the country." In the Commandment of the Crown Prince, on behalf of King Le. According to Nguyen Trai (1976, p. 60), "People are carrying boats and those capsizing boats are also people. The boat capsized to believe that the people were like water."

Since then, Nguyen Trai has said that all of the country's policies, procedures, and treatment are in people's hearts. Those who agree have power. Therefore, what is not supported by the people is abandonment, not against the people. According to Nguyen Trai (1976), for people to decide, it is necessary to unite them with love by treating them fairly regarding their rights and taking care of their legitimate aspirations and interests. It is a correct concept of Nguyen Trai, although he has not raised the issue of the relationship between obligation and rights. Nguyen Trai's booty and righteous thought were to express in the spirit of a talented person. The history of previous dynasties, building the bureau authorities conducts nominating descendants, relatives of the King and officials. That leads to a prolonged regime. The quality of the staff is poor, accustomed to living a plush life, far from the people, not seeing the real life of the people and the county's needs. According to Nguyen Trai, the state should use talent. Talent comes from the people. The people are the factor that makes the country's prosperity peaceful. A regime is only truly dominant when the people support it.

*FIFTH, NGUYEN TRAI'S BENEVOLENCE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS ARE THE CREATIVE INHERITANCE OF CONFUCIAN, BUDDHIST, AND DAOISM.*

The three philosophical ideas that greatly influence Vietnam mainstream boat philosophy are Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism. These three philosophical ideas have penetrated Vietnamese human social life and have become the traditional cultural values of the nation. That stems from the philosophical thought of Nguyen Trai. When studying Nguyen

Trai's review, Confucian thought manifested in Nguyen Trai's role in the Le Sơ dynasty, which carried out the monopolistic Confucianism in state management. According to Nguyen Huu Son (2007), Nguyen Trai's thoughts on Buddhism and Daoism in philosophy are expressed in his poetic works with moral admonitions.

As a Confucian, Nguyen Trai believed in heaven's destiny, in the holy religion, although performing the sage and succeeding on the path of fame became a scourge for himself. According to Nguyen Trai (1976, p. 325): "It is difficult to avoid one's destiny, / Not to destroy that sacred religion by heaven." (According to Nguyen Trai (1976, p. 2998), no matter how much people try to escape their predestined fate, they cannot: "Lie to the sky and then tell the sky-high, / What hidden is hidden from the heaven net?" That's why you learned your lesson. It is, to be honest, to preserve the primary religion to avoid disaster. According to Nguyen Hung Hau (1998, p. 147-148), in the yoke, Trung Dung also said: "The disaster, the blessing to come, even good can know in advance, even the unwilling can know in advance. Therefore, the will is as smooth as a god." (Blessed will, uncovering all good prophets. Try to become like a god.

Nguyen Trai's benevolence and righteousness in Buddhist philosophy express his leisurely and reclusive lifestyle. His life is associated with the impermanence of nature. He looks at the moon, and the lake water, where people noticed "legs like," "Buddhanature." Lovely natural scenery harmoniously without cutting down trees to displace birds. According to Nguyen Trai (1976, p. 405), he added to his pleasures: "The greedy moon does not let go of fish, / The forest regrets birds for fear of tree development./ Oil dust who asked, / This man had this beast." Influenced By Buddhist philosophy, Nguyen Trai has shown a kind heart, giving the perseverance of the Buddhists. That is also the "middle" view in Confucian philosophy.

According to Nguyen Trai (1976, p. 443), “[...] it is human love; we should not be doing anything to harm others but should accumulate virtue to bless the children and grandchildren: Blessed many sisters by where I accumulate, / Spring comes naturally all new things. / There is to keep property every day, / resentful people worry about complaining about people.” Buddhism said that the giving is the rest, said to be, not lost. Nguyen Trai (1976, p. 446) wrote: “Of the world island, / The difficulty must be the better porridge./Seeing the food coming is complete,/Supporting each other must be a blow. Please don't hurt the selfish person,/Be virtuous to give it to me. /Whose hands feed the mouth,/Anorexia sitting eating mountains.” Nguyen Trai's Buddhist and Confucian philosophical thoughts are expressed by: “giving”. Give back to yourself (Buddhism) and your children (Confucianism). The Buddhists consider human life to be suffering, man himself to be selfless, and alms is one of the acts of cultivating good karma so that man is soon freed. What the Confucian family needs is how to make the descendants effectively promote their father's good traditions. They must be a shining example to educate their children and grandchildren in real life. “The Light of The Light” is a shining example of the older generation that remains for their descendants; in turn, their descendants take it as pride and continue to “brighten the wisdom of the ancestors” (University). The meeting between Buddha and Grape is exciting and profound.

The philosophical thought of Daoism and Confucianism both refers to the general concept of “Daoism”; however, the Confucian “Tao” is associated with relationships in society and is regulated by “cause, ceremony, and legitimacy.” The concept of society is also different from Daoists, who believing that the ruler is the primary humanistic way. The virtuous will have many people to follow, people living virtuously, significantly the goodwill, followers, and many children and thus have great blessings. Wealth is associated with fame. To achieve human fame, people must learn, and go from “[...] cultivating, to family, rule of the state, peace of the world.” And the “Tao” of Lao Trang is the natural “Tao”. Being “inanimate” is considered the optimal principle of human behavior. The ideal social concept is that society is a small country; people must live in need and not fight each other. In particular, Daoism's eternally meaningful positive point is the anti-war ideology, i.e., against the destruction of nature, against all causes of human greed, competition, and destruction of each other.

According to Nguyen Trai (1976, p. 440), when talking about painting, he also expressed his thought of combining Grapes-Tao:

The blessing of the common is the painting of the common, / Grasping is not the blessing of the end. / Written literature takes the holy verse, / The cause of the rewind must be faithful” From the Daoist point of view, blessings are always interesting; the boundaries between them are difficult to distinguish, to know that there must be sincerity.

Thus, in Nguyen Trai’s opinion benevolence and righteousness have an inheritance in the philosophy of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism. In Nguyen Trai’s thought, the combination of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism has become a national philosophy of Vietnam.

Thus, in Nguyen Trai’s opinion, benevolence and righteousness have an inheritance in the philosophy of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism. In Nguyen Trai’s thought, the combination of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism has become a national philosophy of Vietnam. He advised people not to value material things but to live with virtue, understand the enduring value of morality, and value the soul’s honor and wealth rather than the wealth of money. There is fame, but important morality is the root of nature. To be moral, we must do good, live with filial piety, have air, bend, pray for fame, complain, forgive others, live clean, healthy, pure, and always face our weaknesses. That is the philosophical idea of Daoism in the conception of human life. Daoism’s concept of life denied fame, self-lessness, inconsolable, and harmony with nature. According to Nguyen Trai (1976, p. 454), while maintaining the commandments of the Buddhists, the purity and self-preservation of Daoism are also to preserve the traditional values of each house: “Seeing benefits makes sense, / The west makes the passion.” That means it should not be for its gain to give up meaning but to show a passion for the benefit.

According to Nguyen Trai (1976, p. 460), avoid greed and money is to avoid because excessive anger will lose peace, leading to forgetting the cause: “[...] anger hurts peace, / It has been helpful to me. / If the blood race fails the reason, / The heartbreak.” According to Nguyen Trai (1976, p. 459), greed and passion will adversely affect family happiness, i.e., harm the “focus on social relationships” that Confucian focus on: “Sharpness is what passion is! / When there is a room of reflection [...] Defeat of the family of life seen, / Spiritual damage to the good. / The patriarch is usually okay, / Connected to the harmony sometimes.” The concept of Daoism, Grapes, and Buddhas

in Nguyen Trai's thought is united in him because the prince's name should be ready to do the cause. According to Nguyen Trai (1976, p. 420), it is not acceptable to punish the enemy because of Buddhist compassion: "A heart that is not greedy is a treasure;/The person free from greed is a fairy." Or according to Nguyen Trai (1976, p. 423), "It is better to be rich in heart than in fame, / Self-harming body at the harmony animal".

#### 4 DISCUSSION

From studying Nguyen Trai's benevolence and righteousness thought, we see the need to build and develop fair values in Vietnamese culture today.

*Firstly, benevolence and righteousness take the people as the root with the appreciation of the common good, collective interests and spirit.* It's a value mentioned a lot and has many expressions in practice and everyday communication. Benevolence and righteousness promote community development. That is different from individualism.

Nguyen Trai's benevolence and righteousness have become a cultural tradition; customs are part of the Vietnamese people. It is a national structure to indicate the difference between Vietnam and other peoples. It is an expressional source forming national development, vitality, and independence. At all times, the state must take the people as the root; A happy country is a goal for the Vietnamese people to defeat all enemies. Benevolence and righteousness remain a value that needs to promote the nation's strength, reaching the highest level. In an e-mail Nguyen Trai sent to Bac Giang to show the enemy Vietnam's traditional power. According to Nguyen Trai (1976, p. 522),

The North has its own, and The South has its own. There is also the country of Annam, known as the land of poetry. Each direction is different. But talented people have always been there. The best way for the Ming army is to take off their armor and surrender. The lieutenant to submissively takes us back to Annam's independent state. That way, both sides benefit. Gaining independence, he still declared his responsibility to preserve the country's customs, considering it one of the nation's vital sources. The people of the South must not imitate Wu, Chiem, Laos, Siam or Chan Lap's language and costumes to disturb its own customs.

Nguyen Trai's method was to take few troops to fight those with many troops; Use a righteous reason to fight against the violent. He believes it is

essential to use community power to hit the enemy's weaknesses to solve the most critical task. Promoting community power based on reconciliation is notable in Nguyen Trai's thinking. First of all, he appreciated the essential role of the official team, addressing its relationships. He requests that the King and officials reduce tax, fix corruption, laziness and end the middle class in order to promote the people, peace and productivity. He wished that the King would amend the book, create favorable conditions for people to do business and live peacefully in a trustful manner. He sees it as essential to keeping society peaceful and prosperous. The above comments show Nguyen Trai's: The person in his mind is cultural. Therefore, the exploitation of human resources is materially, culturally, and spiritually. He promotes spiritual and cultural values such as national independence, traditional customs, harmonious love, respect for the common good. Promoting national strength is a great value in his thinking. This idea has excellent value for the historical reality of Vietnam. He contributes to the education of patriotism, the spirit of fighting for independence and freedom. However, due to the limitations of class history, Nguyen Trai's thoughts also contain some unreasonable, ideological, and metaphysical points about society: Not yet aware of the regulation of feudal class interests to form the views, ethics, and lifestyles of the dominant class. Therefore, rich humanitarian and progressive values, his thoughts are not applied by this type of domination; on the contrary, he was also shackled, isolated, and harmed by the opposing forces of the court. In Vietnam today, in all relations between the Party, the State, and the people, it always takes the people's interests to build the country. The State brings the people's happiness as a social development goal.

*Second, the community is more concerned about the inseparable relationship between the state and society with the community.* The community emphasizes that the state and society are forms of community existence and see the community as a dedication to the state and society, creating a concentration of power and recognition of society with the subject of power; this allows the government to have firm and regulated interventions for the common good. Many people tend to pursue material interests and forget about the good values of their grandfathers and the moral standards of compassion and empathy, etc. This lifestyle will help build a better society without exploitation, and therefore people will become happier. We live together, so there must be equality, sharing, empathy, mutual benefit, and respect for our society to be more developed and civilized. An individual's life is inseparable from the life of the community. For the community to develop further, each

individual needs to join hands to build a community, becoming a source of strength to fulfill their mission in all areas of social life. Therefore, Vietnamese people today also need to develop a lifestyle for the benefit of the community. Thereby, the community's solidarity promotes its role and strengths in the day; Simultaneously, this lifestyle also has great significance in community development and economic growth, helping the community towards the values of truth, goodness, and beauty. That lifestyle has helped the community develop and integrate more and more, thereby contributing to the country's overall development.

*Third, the rights and responsibilities of the individual to the community are constantly enhanced.* For the community, the rights of individuals do not separate the common good of society. The commitment and obligations of that individual to the community and society. Depending on the degree of balance between rights and obligations that apply to organizations with different characteristics. The district emphasizes the relationship between the individual and the community and society as a unified community, very community-friendly. This trait shows that the community exists because of the close connection between members with shared values, promoted interests, and fundamental roles. In the current context of international integration, Nguyen Trai's benevolence and righteousness become increasingly important when the foreign and pragmatic lifestyles risk ideological and moral degradation, separation from tradition, loss of national identity, deviations in the socialist way. There needs to be a responsible lifestyle, self-discipline, care, and empathy for everyone. In particular, there needs to be tolerance for the faults of others. There must be a sense of responsibility in building and protecting the Fatherland. Benevolence and righteousness practice is a way to train the personality and culture of each Vietnamese in the cause of building and defending the Fatherland. It also contributes to preserving the good traditional values of the nation and helping our homeland become more prosperous and more beautiful, lenient.

*Fourth, Nguyen Trai's thought of benevolence and righteousness is the fusion of three philosophical ideas of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism in Vietnam's cultural and social life.* Nguyen Trai's thought of benevolence and righteousness is also the absorption, combination, harmony, and integration of the quintessential and core elements with the will of national independence, patriotism, and solidarity. Community cohesion, kindness, tolerance.



Nguyen Trai's thought of benevolence and righteousness has become the nation's internal culture in the struggle for national liberation and preservation of national independence. Thereby, Nguyen Trai's benevolence and righteousness thought has left valuable and practical historical lessons in preserving, preserving, and promoting traditional cultural values of the nation in the process of exchange and cooperation in international integration today.

Confucian tolerance and Nguyen Trai's thoughts have greatly influenced the spirit of tolerance of many Vietnamese Confucianists in history. Ho Chi Minh's thought is to crystallize national culture with a culture of human tolerance. He absorbed the traditional idea of tolerance and added new revolutionary elements to form a deeply human perspective. Due to the framework of the article, we will cover Ho Chi Minh's tolerant thought as a more specific and specific topic. In the current trend of integration and development of our country, we have received many universal values of ethics, law, democracy, benevolence, and righteousness. We have accepted that. The importance of the nation is also increasingly contributing to enriching human culture. The most fundamental problem is a fuller awareness of tolerance so that people live in harmony, not killing each other. The ultimate goal is to live peacefully and develop sustainably in the ordinary home of the world. Tolerance also has profound, humane implications in the country's need for reconciliation. The Vietnamese people and Lac Hong's blood love each other more, contributing to building an increasingly wealthy, democratic, and civilized Vietnam. Therefore, the study of Nguyen Trai's charitable and righteous thoughts is essential in preserving and promoting the traditional cultural values of the Vietnamese people.

In the current context of globalization, benevolence and righteousness values are high and beautiful values to build a strong Vietnam. Especially in the Covid-19 pandemic, both the general type and the Vietnamese people, in particular, are facing unrecognizable enemies. In the nation's history, the obstacles are similar to the challenges of the Vietnamese revolution more than 400 years ago (against the Ming Dynasty in the 15th century); The Covid-19 pandemic is a devastating war with many differences. Along with benevolence and righteousness, Vietnam and other countries worldwide face an almost unstoppable, uncertain, and unpredictable enemy. An enemy that brings the whole world to a standstill, affecting most countries and territories, and even the most powerful ones must shake. Evil governments around the world are confused about the scale of economic development or its people's health.

International relations are also affected in many respects as countries have to take care of their economies first, and competition in large countries has more complex manifestations.

Therefore, the study of Nguyen Trai's human values is the theoretical basis for the Vietnamese people to further promote in the current circumstances.

First, the people's benevolence and righteousness were the roots of social stability and development. In the current global unrest, Nguyen Trai's benevolence and righteousness make up the traditional cultural values of the Vietnamese people. Today, benevolence and righteousness are values for Vietnamese people to fight the Covid pandemic together. Vietnam has low average economic strength, high population density, and large cities. Therefore, it is necessary to have benevolence and righteousness of the people and the state to unite one heart in the face of passionate patriotism.

Secondly, benevolence and righteousness mean to show the spirit of the great national unity. According to Vietnam (2021, p. 112), "The whole Vietnamese people unite and work together to build the country, realize the aspiration to develop a prosperous and happy country. Vietnam strives to become a developed, socialist-oriented country" by the middle of the 21st century.

Now, the state has a policy to protect everyone's health from the Covid 19 pandemic. With the nature of people's solidarity, Vietnam has formed national strength in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.

*Third, benevolence and righteousness arouse the trust and strength of the whole nation to stabilize and develop the country.* The power of the national unity bloc is always one of the most critical and powerful resources for Vietnam to overcome all difficulties and challenges and successfully implement the cause of national renewal and development. According to Vietnam 2021, rich people's goals are: a strong country, democracy, justice, and civilization. However, due to modern globalization, Vietnam is more determined and strives more to promote trust, community responsibility and consensus among the people.

The findings of this study use a reference for learners and researchers in philosophy and cultural studies and state managers to better understand Nguyen Trai's personality and thoughts. At the same time, they are supplementing the theoretical basis to build the current Vietnamese cultural values.

## CONCLUSION

Absorbing and inheriting the idea of humanity from Eastern philosophy, Nguyen Trai's thought of Benevolence and righteousness is understood as treating a man like himself; virtue is considered the core content of self-cultivation. Nguyen Trai's benevolence and righteousness should continue and become the Vietnamese people's unified cultural boat. Today, helping Vietnam develop is also a significant value. In the current Covid-19 pandemic, the value of benevolence and righteousness needs to be raised to affirm the great unity of our nation. Benevolence and righteousness are part of everyone's spirit because those who fight and serve promote cadres and leaders. These heroes can overcome the challenges and difficulties ahead. The fight against Covid-19 is still tough with the emergence of many new variants, with a high spreading rate. That requires stability and consistency of the state in a leadership role. At the same time, each citizen must be proactive for the nation and community, unite and love each other against the epidemic to prevent the spread. Benevolence and righteousness must be accompanied by faith and will to overcome the Covid-19 pandemic.

PHAM, K.T.; BUI, X. D. O pensamento filosófico de Nguyen Trai sobre benevolência e justiça e seu significado na construção cultural e desenvolvimento do povo vietnamita hoje. *Transformação*, Marília, v. 45, p. 125-148, 2022. Edição Especial 2.

**Resumo:** Nguyen Trai foi um grande filósofo patriótico vietnamita, uma das maiores personalidades de todos os tempos. Ele viveu no século XV; seus pensamentos se tornaram um grande exemplo de ética, cultura, alma e sabedoria vietnamitas. O artigo estudou os pensamentos filosóficos de Nguyen Trai, para ajudar a desenvolver um país próspero e feliz, usando os valores culturais tradicionais da nação. O texto utiliza a metodologia do materialismo dialético como princípio geral e como princípio histórico específico, a fim de avaliar a benevolência e a retidão de Nguyen Trai, em termos de compaixão, justiça e gestão, associadas aos interesses do povo, da comunidade e da sociedade. O artigo também usa métodos analíticos e de síntese, para destacar o conteúdo de benevolência e retidão, na tradição cultural da nação vietnamita hoje. A pandemia de Covid-19 afetou o mundo, em geral, e o Vietnã, em particular. Portanto, a cultura de pensamento de Nguyen Trai é poderosa e eficaz na resposta à pandemia de Covid-19, no Vietnã e em outros países, na atualidade. Neste estudo, a benevolência e a justiça de Nguyen Trai definem claramente a responsabilidade do Estado e a obrigação dos cidadãos de promover os valores culturais tradicionais da nação.

**Palavras-chave:** Benevolência e retidão. Cultural. Nguyen Trai. Vietnamita.

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# ACHIEVING PERFECTION WITH THE BUDDHIST FAITH: A PROBE INTO THE MATTER-OF-FACT ATTITUDE IN RESEARCH ON RELIGIOUS FUNERARY DOCUMENTS IN CHINA<sup>1</sup>


Lizhi Xing<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** In Research on Religious Funerary Documents in China, the author studies the religious funerary documents used at funerals for more than two thousand years from the Warring-States period (475-221 BC) to the present with the truth-seeking and objective attitudes. Besides some criticisms and reasonable doubts, he points out that the previous articles present a somewhat lopsided view with prejudice when the scholars interpret the existing literature. He further explores the underlying implications of the archaeological materials based on studying large numbers of references. In this way, reliable conclusions are obtained with rigorous academic attitude.

**Keywords:** Religious Funerary Documents. China. Truth-Seeking. Questioning. Rigorousness.

*Research on Religious Funerary Documents in China* — “Maidi Quan”, “Zhenmu Wen”, and “Yiwu Shu” is written by professor Huang Jingchun and published by Shanghai People’s Publishing House in March 2018 (hereinafter shorted as *The Document Research*). In the book, the author systematically studies religious funerary documents including “Qiance” (A list of funerary objects), “Maidi Quan” (land-purchasing contracts, according to which the

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dead owns a plot of land where the tomb is built so that the final resting place will not be disturbed after burial), “Zhenmu Wen” (tomb-guarding inscriptions), “Yiwu Shu” (funerary clothing and goods lists), and “Mingtu Luyin” (permit to the netherworld) unearthed in Jiangxi, Sichuan, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Fujian provinces in China and in the Korean peninsula over more than two thousand years from the Warring-States period to the present. *Research on Religious Funerary Documents in China* introduces a “Maidi Quan” donated to professor Huang Jingchun by a geomancer in Yushan County, Jiangxi Province in 2013 and another one used then, obtained from a geomancer Mr. Liang in Jingchuan County, Gansu Province in 2014. These represent the latest time bound for “Maidi Quan” in the book. From the religious perspective, the contents related to Buddhism and Daoism are extracted from these documents, and objective and detailed textual research was performed with the author’s fact-finding attitude.

Firstly, the academic viewpoints of leading scholars are questioned. Academic research is a process focusing on innovation, the foundation of which is truth-seeking. To seek the truth, one should have the courage to question existing conclusions and even those of leading scholars. As Mencius said, “no book is better than believing in a book completely”, which speaks highly of the questioning spirit. The truth-seeking spirit is well reflected in *The Document Research*. To begin with, it rectifies some concepts. For instance, “Zhenmu Wen” first occurred in the Eastern Han Dynasty and the earliest one was unearthed in Xianyang City, Shaanxi Province. The inscription is identified to be written in the third year of Yongping in the reign of Emperor Ming of the Eastern Han Dynasty (60 AD). It is termed as “Zhenmu Quan” by Luo Zhenyu, “Zhuji Wen” (inscriptions to pray for an end of all plagues) by Zhang Dongliao, and “Mu Quan” (tomb inscriptions) together with “Maidi Quan” by Liu Yi. The author discriminates against the nomenclatures proposed by the three scholars. From the perspective of writing materials, the texts written on bar-shaped deeds made of bamboo, lead, and iron were called “Quan”, while these texts were mainly written on pottery vases, bricks, stones, and inscribed on wooden tablets unearthed from tombs of the Eastern Han Dynasty. Thus, it is not accurate to call them “Quan”. By reviewing the “Zhenmu Wen”, it is found that “exorcising demons and becoming immortal are common topics in ‘Zhenmu Wen’” (HUANG, 2018, p. 56). To realize these goals (exorcising demons and becoming immortal), there are other ways in addition to praying for an end of all plagues (Jiezhu), such as expressing gratitude to the land god (for tomb construction), eliminating punishment on

the descendants for their ancestors' crimes, erasing countless misfortune for sins of the newly deceased, checking accounts and belongings, and exorcising evil spirits and evil gods. It is notable that replacing "Zhenmu Wen" with "Zhujie Wen" is overgeneralized. Meanwhile, it is also ambiguous without distinguishing the "Zhenmu Wen" and "Maidi Quan". By studying the bias of these nomenclatures and distinguishing difference of the two, a relatively impartial statement was concluded (HUANG, 2018, p. 62).

It is the textual function that should be focused. For this reason, "Zhenmu Wen" is accepted by more researchers as the concept has a broad coverage, and is not limited by the types of writing materials and the attributes of objects to be repressed or relieved.

Meanwhile, the author also points out bias in the understanding and utilization of "Zhenmu Wen".

*Academic Research on "Mu Quan" in Ancient China* written by Ikeda on who is a Japanese scholar of Chinese funerary documents and Dunhuang Studies, contributes substantially to the study of documents pertaining to "Maidi Quan" and "Zhenmu Wen". Despite this, there still exists certain inaccuracy. For example, Ikeda on believes that sentences, such as "either happy or not, do not miss us" and "never return to this world" in inscriptions that emblems fear of and repulsion to the deceased in Han Dynasty, have disappeared after the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries (IKEDA, 1981, p. 208). *The Document Research* lists some relevant sentences to exemplify that unreachable conditions are still set in folk funerals to repel ghosts and separate worlds of the living and the death, rather than "[...] disappearing after the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries" (HUANG, 2018, p. 65): "[...] the living and the dead belong to different worlds" on "Maidi Quan" of Tao Zhihong died in the sixth year of the reign of Emperor Yang from the Sui Dynasty (AD 610) (excavated in Hunan Province), "[...] never to meet again unless earth-shaking changes occur" on "Maidi Quan" of Ren Pu died in the second year of Mingde of Houshu State (AD 935) (unearthed in Chengdu), "[...] living in cities and towns, while resting in the tomb after death" on "Zhenmu Wen" of Lv Zhongqing died in the ninth year of Chunxi in the reign of Emperor Xiaozong of the Southern Song dynasty (AD 1182) (excavated in Chengdu), "[...] never meet unless the stone human statue speaks, the stone horse walks, and the stone inscriptions..." on "Maidi Quan" in the tomb of Wang Xing and Li Baniang couples built in the third year of Shaoding in the reign of Emperor Lizong of

the Southern Song Dynasty (AD 1230) (unearthed in Rongchangba, Guizhou Province), tomb inscriptions “[...] protecting the family, bringing them peace and prosperity, and exorcising demons by invocation to thunderlords all around” of wizard Li Zhen carved in the thirty-eighth year of Wanli in the reign of Emperor Shenzong of the Ming Dynasty (unearthed in Tongjiang County, Sichuan Province), and the nowadays folk “Zhenmu Wen” that “[...] one will not die and be buried unless the stone decays.” Thus, the inaccurate conclusion of Ikeda on collapses.

Secondly, typos in previous documents are pointed out. “Maidi Quan” and “Muzhi Ming” (epitaphs) are both funerary documents used for a long term in funeral and both introduce the life history of the deceased. The difference lies in that the former is used in the netherworld for repression of ghosts and gods while the latter is used to praise achievements of the deceased for the living to remember. It is possibly because the living are eager for and tend to praise the contributions and achievements of the deceased, “Muzhi Ming” are paid much more attentions than “Maidi Quan” in the archaeological excavation and heritage research. In some cases, the “Maidi Quan” is even mistaken as “Muzhi Ming”. For example, in excavation reports, including the *Report of a Tomb in Song Dynasty in Mojishan, Xiangyang*, *Report of a Tomb in Ming Dynasty in Sunqiao Town, Jingshan County*, and *Xu Aqu’s Stone Relief in the Eastern Han Dynasty unearthed in Nanyang*, “Maidi Quan” and “Zhenmu Wen” are mistaken as “Muzhi Ming”. *The Document Research* discriminates difference thereof separately from characteristics, ideologies, makers, materials, and literature values, and then points out their similarities. It is suggested that the religious and historical values of “Maidi Quan” cannot be underestimated. This helps the archaeological community to figure out the similarities and differences of the two so as not to repeat the previous mistakes.

Works such as compilations or yearbooks completed by a group of researchers together are often found to have errors because many researchers involved and the editors are not professionals. In “Maidi Quan” excavated in Nanling County, Anhui Province in 1978, it reads: In the midnight of December 6<sup>th</sup> in the eighth year of Chiwu of Kingdom Wu during the Three-Kingdom Period, director Xiao Zheng bought a pot of land of four qing (a unit of area, 1 qing approximates 6.67 hectares) and fifty mu (a unit of area, 1 mu approximates 667 square meters) from the landlord Ye Dun in Xixiang, Wuhu at the price of 3.5 million (of the currency unit used then).



The “Maidi Quan” is included in *Yearbook of Archaeology in China, 1985*, while named as “Ye Dun’s Maidi Quan”. In fact, Ye Dun is the seller and Xiao Zheng the buyer and tomb owner. Considering that inscriptions are generally named, that is, the name of tomb (land buyer) plus inscription types, so it should be corrected as “Xiao Zheng’s Maidi Quan”. Another example is the “Maidi Quan” made in the first year of Honghua (AD 1679) unearthed in Yunnan Province. The tomb owner Guo Hongwei is a trusted general of Wu Sangui, as included in the *Report of a Tomb in the Qing Dynasty unearthed in Wangjiaying, Chenggong, Yunnan Province* by Zhang Zengqi. While in the *Compilation of Stone Inscriptions in Southwest China in Past Dynasties—Volume of Yunnan Provincial Museum*, it is recorded as “Guo Zhuangtu’s Maidi Quan”. As a matter of fact, it is made by Guo Zhuangtu, the son of Guo Hongwei, when he reburies his father in the first year of Honghua -- 19 years after the death of Guo Hongwei. Therefore, it should be named as “Guo Hongwei’s Maidi Quan”. *The Document Research* points out and corrects many such writing mistakes of similar characters, which can only be discovered with professional knowledge and meticulous work. The author has detected quite a number of corrigenda in *The Document Research*, which demonstrates a high level of his academic literacy. Such corrections could help to inspire other researchers of this field to expand professional knowledge and keep in mind that a rigorous academic attitude should always be retained and encouraged.

Thirdly, the author objectively reveals the truth behind the inscriptions. “Maidi Quan” contains many fictitious contents, particularly the land prices of commonly tens of thousands and even hundreds of thousands and millions (of the currency unit used then), which are basically not true. While, Japanese scholar Niida Noboru and some Chinese scholars believe that these are real land prices then and even use them as reliable data for studying land systems at that time. According to *The Document Research*, these are fictitious and cannot be taken as reliable data with the aim of correcting erroneous practices of the Japanese and Chinese scholars. In fact, there are few households of more than ten-thousand *yuan* in rural areas of some provinces such as Henan, Shaanxi, Shandong, Gansu, and Jiangxi even in the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, let alone the ancient society more than one thousand years ago. The ancients did not have and were reluctant to spend more than ten thousand (of the currency unit used then) to buy a graveyard for their dead relatives. The author believes that most of the land prices are unreal and it is of high possibility that the listed prices are measured by hell money. So they cannot be taken as the actual land price.

As discussed in the book, writers of religious funerary documents are mainly necromancers without much schooling. Even in the Song and Yuan dynasties Confucian scholars are also relatively closely implicated in writing these documents, the high stylization derived from archaic and abstruse words make the documents illegible. As a result, interchangeable, variant, popular-form, simplified, and even misused characters could be frequently seen in these inscriptions. Therefore, it is of great importance to study these characters, particularly “Liding” (rewriting ancient scripts into regular scripts) and interpretation of characters in early funerary documents. It needs profound philological knowledge to thoroughly discuss relevant problems. From this perspective, it can be seen that the author is in possession of a profound cultural background and foundation. This is evidenced by the repunctuation and inscription interpretations that it is feasible to deduce the times that the words were used by studying relevant words, and to ascertain the original functions of the funerary documents when retaining semantics in spoken language from perspectives of the points or ways of word formation. For example, in the detailed discussion of “Haoli” (graveyards overgrown with weeds) and “Haoli Fulao” (officials in the netherworld) in Chapter 4 (*Gods in the Religious Funerary Documents*), the author discriminates the sources of the term “Haoli” proposed by numerous scholars such as Yan Shigu living in the Tang Dynasty in his *Annotations to Han Shu (The History of the Han Dynasty)*, Gu Yanwu (Qing Dynasty) in *Archaeological Record of Shandong*, Yu Shiyong in *Views of Life and Death in Later Han China*, professor Rao Zongyi in *Gu'an's Collections*, and Jia Haijian in *Analysis of Belief of “Souls Going to Haoli”*. The author compares “Haoli” with “Huangquan”, “Jiuquan”, “Youdu”, and “Xiali” (which literally mean muddy spring water (seen when digging tombs), deep underground, gloomy and dark places, and countryside, respectively). It is pointed out that they all have the connotation of the netherworld, as expanded from one aspect of the graveyard, such as, being deep into springs, sombre and dark, or overgrown with weeds. They differ only in word-formation points: some highlight the location of a graveyard, and some describe threatening scenes. They all depict the characteristics of funeral culture and burial mounds in ancient China. So it should be feasible to regard them as terms created in the same period, the Warring-States period and Qin-Han Dynasties. Such an objective and impartial point of view sheds light on the academic bias confusing the academic community for almost one thousand and five hundred years.

Questioning should be based on ample evidence, rather than blindly critical of others. For viewpoints without adequate evidence, the author proposes his opinions in *The Document Research* to raise questions for academic discussion. For example, when studying the duties of envoys sent by the lord of heaven serving as a postman or an imperial commissioner in Chapter 3 (*Discussion of Relevant Confusions in Religious Funerary Documents*), the author lists the opinion of other scholars (Japanese scholar Hayashi Minao, French scholar Anna Seidel, and Chinese scholar Liu Yi) that Chiyou (a mythological warrior engaged in a war with the Yellow Emperor), adoring in the Han Dynasty is an imperial commissioner, all according to the Chiyou stone relief and the inscription of “imperial commissioner” unearthed in Shijiazhuang. *The Document Research* proposes a point of view that the stone relief functions as the Monarch soldier while the inscription strengthens the function. Then, whether the inscription and the stone relief are in a referential relation or a coordinating relation, that is whether Chiyou corresponds to the imperial commissioner or not, warrants further discussion. This provides an interesting topic for in-depth research of the academic community. It is recommended in the *Doctrine of the Mean* that “[...] a gentleman should inquire about confusions prudently, think carefully, and distinguish discrepancies clearly (ZISI, 2020, p. 56).” For disputes that are not affirmed, the author firmly states the shortcomings of existing conclusions. In cases of insufficient evidence, the author proposes his own point of view instead of blind speculation for in-depth research in the academic community.

Academic work is to explore the laws of nature and society and meanwhile to seek for truth. Only with righteous and rigorous attitude, adequate practices, and numerous doubts/criticisms, can the truths be obtained. The academic attitude presented by *The Document Research* and the courage to criticize scholars and literature together with the profound knowledge of the author are undoubtedly useful and inspiring until now.

XING, L. Alcançar a perfeição com a fé budista: uma sondagem sobre a atitude verdadeira na pesquisa de documentos funerários religiosos na China. *Transformação*, Marília, v. 45, p. 125-148, 2022. Edição Especial 2.

**Resumo:** Em *Research on Religious Funerary Documents in China*, o autor adere às atitudes objetivas e de busca da verdade e questiona as ideias dos principais estudiosos, ao analisar os documentos funerários religiosos usados em funerais por mais de dois mil anos, desde o período dos Estados Combatentes (475-221 A. C.) até o presente. O autor critica os pontos de vista de alguns estudiosos famosos e apresenta dúvidas razoáveis a esse respeito. Ele ressalta que seus artigos exibem uma visão um tanto desigual e preconceituosa, na interpretação da literatura existente. Ele ainda seleciona a literatura para um nível mais profundo e explora as implicações subjacentes dos materiais arqueológicos. Dessa forma, são obtidas conclusões, mostrando a abordagem acadêmica dos autores.

**Palavras-chave:** Pesquisa sobre Documentos Funerários Religiosos na China. Busca da Verdade. Questionamento. Rigor.

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# THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF “LEARNING-ORIENTED TEACHING” IN THE ANALECTS AND ITS INSIGHTS FOR CONTEMPORARY TIMES<sup>1</sup>

Zhaoli Shi<sup>2</sup>

Tao Kang<sup>3</sup>


**Abstract:** In the study of ancient Chinese educational philosophy, some scholars believe that the main reason why traditional Chinese educational philosophy attaches importance to teaching rather than learning lies in Confucianism. This statement is unacceptable. If we take a careful and further study of the educational philosophy and practices of Confucianism, especially Confucius, the master of Confucianism, we will come to an opposite conclusion that Confucius attaches great importance to learning. It can be said that the characteristic of Confucius’s educational philosophy theory is “learning-oriented teaching”. This paper explores the manifestation of Confucius’s philosophy of both learning and teaching in *the Analects*, the reasons for its formation and its contemporary significance.


**Keywords:** *The Analects of Confucius*. Learning-oriented teaching. Learning theory. Enlightenment to contemporary education.

## INTRODUCTION

According to the description in *The Analects of Confucius*, it can be clearly seen that one of the distinctive characteristics of Confucius’s philosophy

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of education is “learning-oriented teaching”. “Learning-oriented teaching” is a kind of new teaching idea with ancient roots, which focuses on “teaching through learning” and emphasizes student initiatives in the learning process. Confucius divided the learning process into three interrelated development stages: learning, thinking and acting (HAN, 1985). He raised the issue of inspiring thinking and guided students to stimulate their own exploration of learning and promoted the students’ independence and cooperation ability. Instead of being the directors of the class, teachers should be the creators of the learning situations, organizers, participants, and facilitators of students’ learning activities. In cultural cultivation, teachers should become mentors and role models for students in learning, thinking, personality, etc. in order to achieve teaching goals (YE, 1991). The idea of “learning-oriented teaching” has been embodied in *The Analects of Confucius* over 2000 years ago. In dealing with the relationship between “teaching” and “learning” in the teaching process, Confucius paid special attention to “learning”. He took learning as the premise and basic condition of teaching and discussed teaching by the principle of learning through his own learning experiences and by his students’ learning conditions and psychological characteristics.

## **1 HOW DID CONFUCIUS ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE TO LEARNING IN TEACHING?**

Among the 20 chapters of *The Analects of Confucius*, the first chapter is about learning. In a collection of speeches containing philosophy, politics, ethics, morality, and education etc., as soon as he began to talk, he mentioned learning first. Confucius remarked, “It is indeed a pleasure to acquire knowledge and, as you go on acquiring, to put into practice what you have acquired.” (GU, 2013, p. 1). He even believed that studying is more important than eating or sleeping. On one occasion, Confucius remarked, “I have spent a whole day without eating and a whole night without sleep. Instead, I was thinking. It was of no use. I found it better to acquire knowledge from books.” (GU, 2013, p. 377). Why did Confucius emphasize learning to such an extent? According to the understanding of Confucius, the significance of learning is divided into several levels. For him, “I am not one born with understanding. I am one who has given himself to the study of Antiquity and is diligent in seeking for understanding in such studies.” (GU, 2013, p. 142). So, he attached great importance to “learning”. He often said that “In education, always study as if you have not yet reached your goal and as though you’re worried about losing

it.” (GU, 2013, p. 171). For students and ordinary people, if they don’t study, they will have “six failures”, that is,

First there is the mere love of morality: that alone, without culture, degenerates into fatuity. Second, there is the mere love of knowledge: that alone, without culture, tends to dilettantism. Third, there is the mere love of honesty: that alone, without culture, produces heartlessness. Fourth, there is the mere love of uprightness: that alone, without culture, leads to tyranny. Fifth, there is the mere love of courage: that alone, without culture, produces recklessness. Sixth, there is the mere love of strength of character: that alone, without culture, produces eccentricity. (GU, 2013, p. 422).

That is to say, if one doesn’t study, he will be ignorant, uninhibited, self-hurting, sharp, disorderly and arrogant. Study can eliminate these shortcomings. For teachers who teach other people, learning is the premise of teaching. Learning ability is the qualification of being a teacher. Confucius remarked, “If a man will constantly go over what he has acquired and keep continually adding new acquisitions to it, he may become a teacher of men.” (GU, 2013, p. 28). He used to ask himself, “To meditate in silence; patiently to acquire knowledge; and to be indefatigable in teaching it to others, which one of these things can I say that I have done?” (GU, 2013, p. 129). Learning from reviewing and learning without tiredness mentioned here is the process of learning. It is the precondition of being a teacher and teaching tirelessly. If teachers do not attach importance to learning and take learning as the premise, they will lose the qualification of being teachers and, of course, they will not be qualified to teach their students. This is in line with Marx’s thought of “Educators must be educated first” (YANG, 2014).

Just because Confucius attached great importance to learning, he summarized a complete and systematic learning theory in his long-term teaching practice. In addition to the above-mentioned profound insights on the significance of learning, he also established a systematic learning process combined with “[...] listening, thinking, exercising and practicing”, advocating the rigorous style of study — “He was free from self-interest, from prepossessions, bigotry and egoism.” (GU, 2013, p. 179). He emphasized the correct attitude towards learning— “being honest”, “being modest” and “being persistent”. He put forward the learning ideas and methods of “erudite knowledge and inquiry”, the “combination of learning and thinking” and “combination of old and new knowledge” etc. And they all have incisive views

and profound insights. It is no exaggeration to say that if Confucius's discussion on learning in *the Analects* is systematically summarized and explained, it is the earliest "learning" theory in China.

## 2 THE MANIFESTATION OF CONFUCIUS'S TEACHING THOUGHT IN THE *ANALECTS*

Confucius emphasized learning, but also teaching. The characteristics of his teaching and discussions on teaching lie in that, teaching starts from learning and bases itself on learning. Teaching is carried out in learning and integrated with the learning process. In short, it is "learning-oriented teaching", which is fully expressed in *the Analects*.

First, whenever Confucius mentioned "teaching" and "instruction", he equated them with "learning" and regarded "learning" as the premise and condition of "teaching" and "instruction". This thought of Confucius was inherited and developed into the teaching principle of "Teaching and learning benefit each other", that is, "One discovers his ignorance only through learning. Learning is followed by knowing the deficiency while teaching is followed by knowing the difficulty. Then one can reflect and then can make self-improvement. So "teaching is half learning and learning is half teaching." (GU, 2013, p. 403). This argument tells people incisively and clearly that teaching and learning are two aspects of the same thing. As far as its importance is concerned, teaching and learning are equally divided, and neither can be missing. Teachers' teaching promotes students' learning, at the same time, students' improved learning promotes teachers' teaching further. Such continuous mutual promotion and development have profoundly revealed the dialectical relationship between teaching and learning (CHEN, 2014).

Secondly, Confucius's teaching theories were mainly based on how he learned to teach his own students, which can be called teaching by learning. In *the Analects*, there are records of how Confucius taught his disciples. For example, Confucius often exchanged ideas with his students by defining what kind of person "he" was, "his" feelings towards learning, "his" attitude to learning, "his" experiences of the moral cultivation, "his" way of lifelong study and the goal he pursued in his life, "his" understanding of benevolence, etiquette, filial piety, learning, etc. From talking about their own learning experiences and self-cultivation, he permeated into the teaching of his disciples, which can be called "speech" teaching. At the same time, Confucius



also attached great importance to “body” teaching. The so-called “body” teaching is to lead by example, always pay attention to use one’s own example and personality to influence students, so as to achieve a subtle teaching effect. He said, “If a man is orderly in his personal conduct, he is served without difficulty in giving orders. But if a man is not orderly in his personal conduct, he may give orders, but his orders will not be obeyed.” (GU, 2013, p. 296). Based on this understanding, Confucius attached great importance to his role model in teaching. He put forward the requirements of “being eager to learn” and “being happy to learn” to the students. He himself was a learning model who was never tired of learning, worked hard and forgot his own worries. He wanted his students to “hear more”, “see more”, “know more” and to be “well-informed”. He himself was an aggressive, versatile, and knowledgeable master. He required his students to have the virtue of honesty and modesty of “knowing is knowing, not knowing is not knowing” and he himself was an honest and humble man who admitted his “ignorance”, preferred “asking questions and learning from his subordinates”. He hoped that students would not be afraid to correct their mistakes and when he made mistakes, he would be as honest and willing to correct his mistakes as if he had been lucky enough to change. In a word, Confucius, with his lofty personality, made himself a personal example as an effective means of combining “teaching” and “learning” closely by practicing and matching his words with his teaching. Confucius was a sincere teacher, and his students naturally held profound feelings towards him.

Thirdly, Confucius attached great importance to students’ learning psychology. Teaching according to students’ psychological state is the outstanding embodiment of Confucius’s thought of learning and teaching. From his own personal experiences in learning, Confucius realized that the depth and breadth of a person’s acquisition of knowledge depends on his subjective psychological state of learning. Learning is a kind of hard mental work. But Confucius taught students to take learning as a joyful thing and get fun from it. He said, “When it comes to learning, those who know it are not as those who love it; those who love it are not as those who find their joy in it.” (GU, 2013, p. 118). And he praised Yen Hui, one of his favourite disciples, saying that, “So much heroism is in that man! Living on one meal a day, water and living in the lowest hovels of the city, — no man could have stood such hardships, yet he — he did not lose his cheerfulness. How much heroism is in that man!” (GU, 2013, p. 112). Confucius attached great importance to students’ psychological state of learning and the initiatives of

students' learning, which showed that he had a profound understanding of the law of learning. In teaching, in order to mobilize students' initiatives to learn and enjoy learning itself, he initiated the famous teaching principle of inspiration. He said,

In my method of teaching, I always wait for my student to make an effort to find his way through a difficulty before I show him the way. I also make him find his own illustrations before I give him one of my own. When I have pointed the bearing of a subject in one direction and found that my student cannot himself see his bearings into other directions, I do not then repeat my lesson (GU, 2013, p. 132).

Zhu Xi explained it by saying, "Don't rush to enlighten a man until he wants to understand but failed. Don't rush to instruct a man until he wants to speak out but can't. Only when the students are in the positive thinking state can the teachers timely induce and trigger them." (Chapter 7 of *The Analects of Confucius*). (GU, 2013, p. 133). That is to say, the "inspiration" of teachers' teaching must be based on the psychological state of students' learning and the "enlightenment" must be based on the "circumstances" and cannot be forced into learners. "If you teach him the East, but he can't infer the West, the South and the North from it, then you don't have to teach him anymore." (YE, 1991, p. 86). This shows clearly to what extent teachers enlighten the students and how much knowledge students should be given. Learning cannot be determined by teachers' subjective wishes, but by students' psychological state of learning and practical needs (ZHANG, 2003). In order to inspire students' initiatives and enthusiasm, Confucius often applied Question & Answer Method for teaching. He put forward various questions to students and encouraged them to think and ask more questions. Sometimes he praised the students for asking good questions, such as "perfect", "good questions" and so on. Sometimes, in order to inspire students' interest in learning, students' existing knowledge and intuitive things around them are often used to illustrate abstract concepts and principles. For example, "running water" is used to interpret the endless phenomenon of all things, "pine" is compared to one's moral integrity, "North Star" implies the virtue of politics, "the wind on the grass" is compared to the virtue of a gentleman, "Yoke of a cart and trolley" is compared to one's faith. His inspiring teaching was so fascinating that questioners "did their best" and the students felt "I can't stop learning". All of these highlight the characteristics of his teaching thought of learning and teaching.

Fourth, Confucius’s teaching students according to their aptitude is equal to the concept of “learning-oriented teaching”. In *The Analects of Confucius*, there is a record like this:

A disciple, the intrepid Chung Yu, asked if he might at once carry out any truth which he had learnt into practice. “No”, Confucius answered, “You have the wishes of your parents and your old people to consult. How can you take upon yourself to carry at once into practice what you have learnt?” Another disciple on another occasion asked the same question. “Yes”, replied Confucius, “Carry it at once.” Later, another disciple took the liberty to ask Confucius why he gave two completely different answers to the same question. “That is because”, answered Confucius, “One man is too diffident, I therefore said that to encourage him. The other man, while, is too forward, therefore I said that to pull him back.” (GU, 2013, p. 244).

This story shows that Confucius’ answers to the same question are quite different because of students’ different personalities. Teachers should focus on the differences and adopt different educational methods to promote each student’s development. According to this model, Zhu Xi said, “Confucius teaches people according to their different talents.” (LI, 1990, p. 201). This is where the term “teaching students in accordance with their aptitude” comes from. In fact, it is more precise in “learning-oriented teaching” process (DAI, 2013). Confucius made it clear that “Men, in their nature are alike, but by practice they become widely different (Yanghuo).” That is to say, people’s temperaments are similar by nature. Due to different day-to-day “practice” (GU, 2013, p. 415), however, the qualities of each learner such as their character, virtue, ambition, interest and ability are quite different from each other. Therefore, teaching should be based on the fact that the students are quite different in many aspects. He put it clearly that, “You may speak of high things to those who in natural qualities of mind are above average men. You may not speak to those who in natural qualities of mind are below average men.” (GU, 2013, p. 118). The key to the success of “learning-oriented teaching” is to be familiar with the different situations of students’ learning. Therefore, Confucius took great pains to understand and study his students. “You look at how a man acts, consider his motives, and find out his taste. How can a man hide himself, how can he hide himself from you?” (GU, 2013, p. 28). He had a very specific and profound understanding of his students’ cultivation, interests, hobbies, specialties and knowledge levels through “observing their behavior, motivations and means to achieve their goals”. And he even knew what kind of work was suitable for each of his students in the future.

Therefore, when his students asked about benevolence, teaching, politics and learning etc., Confucius' answers were not always the same. Teaching should be carried out in a targeted way just like applying medicine according to the patient's indications or shooting the arrow at the target. Obviously, the essence of teaching lies in the fact that teaching should be based on the characteristics of students, students' learning objects, process and the learning environment (BRUCE, 2009), which is well reflected in Confucius' teaching thought of "learning-oriented teaching".

To sum up, the characteristics of Confucius' teaching theory of "learning-oriented teaching" are obvious. With the theory and practice of combining teaching with learning, Confucius correctly solved the relationship between teaching and learning in the teaching process and revealed the objective law of teaching process. Therefore, his teaching was very successful. In practice, he had "taught many talented students".

### 3 THE REASONS FOR ITS FORMATION

The formation of Confucius's teaching thought regarding learning and teaching is by no means accidental. There are at least three reasons for this. First, from the characteristics of the private schools founded by Confucius, they can be regarded as talent training institutions of Confucian political schools in nature. The purpose of it is to train the talents who run the country to carry out the Confucian "benevolent governance". The teaching objects are adults. The content of teaching is "four kinds of education: literature, practice, loyalty and faith". The organizational form is individual teaching. Based on the characteristics of these schools, in order to solve the relationship between teaching and learning in the process of teaching, Confucius's teaching thought naturally highlights learning and he attaches more importance to learning. This is the objective condition for the formation of Confucius's thought of learning and teaching.

Second, from Confucius's subjective cognition, the materialistic epistemology of "Men are close in nature, but far apart in habit" can be considered to be the epistemological and theoretical basis of his study. Admittedly, there are some descriptions of idealistic Transcendentalism in *the Analects*, such as Confucius's belief in the "heaven" of "being born to know" and "not being able to know" and so on. However, from the perspective of Confucius's teaching methods, his teaching practice is a complete negation of

his point of view with little idealism (ZHOU, 2000). He never promised to say that he was the genius who was born to know, but he repeatedly stated that he was not a “Genius” but a diligent “learned” person. It is from his view of “close in nature, but far in learning” that we regard “Knowing you know nothing is the beginning of wisdom” as a principle of self-discipline and confirm that “learning, thinking, practicing and reflecting” are basically in line with people’s cognitive process. He puts forward many insights about the process of cognition, such as “Knowing more and seeing more”, “Thinking more deeply”, “Combining learning with thinking”, “Reviewing the past and learning the new”. It is from this point of view that many of his teaching principles and methods are in accordance with the law of teaching. If Confucius takes the idealistic Transcendentalism of “born to know” as the ideological basis, it is inconceivable that his teachings and methods can accomplish the remarkable achievements that they have, and his philosophy of teaching has been emitting brilliantly for more than 2000 years.

Third, real knowledge comes from practice. It can be seen in *The Analects of Confucius* that there were both idealistic Transcendentalism and materialistic epistemological tendencies in his philosophy (LI, 1990). Then why did Confucius take the materialistic epistemology as the basis of teaching, thus forming the characteristics of his teaching thought of learning and teaching? This is due to Confucius’s long-term teaching practice. Chairman Mao said, “True knowledge comes from practice (from *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Volume V, P291).” (MAO, 1977, p. 291). Confucius began his education career at the age of about 30. He has taught for 40 years. His teaching theory is deeply rooted in the fertile soil of practice. In addition, he took the teaching practice seriously all his life with an attitude of modesty, diligence and faithfulness, constantly revising and abandoning his idealistic views so that his understanding and theory were constantly closer to the truth and finally he summarized many valuable ideological heritages in line with the principles of teaching.

#### 4 ITS ENLIGHTENING INSIGHTS FOR CONTEMPORARY TEACHING

Confucius’s educational philosophy of “learning-oriented teaching” has universal significance. For our teaching today, there are at least the following enlightening insights and significance. Firstly, in the teaching process, teachers must overcome the tendency of emphasizing teaching rather than

learning. Teachers should change their teaching concepts and establish the idea of “learning-oriented teaching” and “teaching by learning” (LUO, 2016). Secondly, the reform of teaching methods should start from the reality of “learning” and explore while “learning”, reflecting on the teaching objectives of “learning for application”. Third, according to the needs of “learning”, a new teaching model can be designed, that is, “promoting teaching by Learning — Collaborate Study—Process Feedback—Self-evaluation” teaching model (DAI, 2013). Especially in the current implementation of online education, we should establish the teaching concepts of “student-oriented” and “learning-driven teaching”, understand the interaction relationship between the elements in the process of education, optimize and combine various teaching strategies so that the online classroom can really become an efficient platform to stimulate students’ self-development.

**Note:** In this paper all quotes from the *Analects* are from Gu Hongming’s translation, *Analects of Confucius*. Zhong Hua Book Company, 2008.

SHI, Z.; KANG, T. A filosofia educacional do “Ensino Orientado para a Aprendizagem” nos *Analectos* e seus insights para a contemporânea. *Transformação*, Marília, v. 45, p. 157-168, 2022. Edição Especial 2.

**Resumo:** No estudo da filosofia educacional chinesa antiga, alguns estudiosos consideram que a principal razão pela qual a filosofia tradicional chinesa da educação atribui importância ao ensino e não ao aprendizado é devido ao confucionismo. Essa afirmação não é aceitável. Se fizermos um estudo cuidadoso e mais aprofundado da filosofia educacional e das práticas do confucionismo, especialmente Confúcio, o mestre do confucionismo, chegaremos a uma conclusão oposta de que Confúcio atribui grande importância ao aprendizado. Pode-se dizer que a característica da teoria da filosofia educacional de Confúcio é o “ensino orientado para a aprendizagem”. Este artigo pesquisa a manifestação da filosofia de aprender e ensinar de Confúcio, nos *Analectos*, as razões de sua formação e seu significado contemporâneo.

**Palavras-chave:** *Analectos* de Confúcio. “Ensino orientado para a aprendizagem”. Teoria da aprendizagem. Iluminismo para a educação contemporânea.

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