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## CONFUCIAN PRINCIPLES IN THE CHINESE HISTORY AND MODERNIZATION PROCESSES OF THE LAST QUARTER OF XX CENTURY

*China's new course has been targeted at operating the policy of "reforms and openness" since 1978. At the same time, the social-cultural, world-view and ethical categories inherent to Confucianism have been gradually implemented into China's state ideology. This article deals with the evolution of categories which appeared in Ancient China and were incorporated into a distinct system within Confucianism and which have been currently co-opted into domestic and foreign policies of the Chinese state. The reasons of returning to the teaching which was formed in the epoch of Ancient China and which defined the ways of China's development for millennia are analyzed in the article. Special attention is paid to eliciting of the modernization potential of the Confucian doctrine and its relevance under the modern conditions. The author comes to the conclusion that correspondence of the moral and ethical nucleus of Confucius' teaching to the aims and tasks of the modern society allowed to rehabilitate this teaching at the present state of China's development and to take it as the basis of social communication and state management.*

**Keywords:** Confucius, Confucianism, Mengzi, Dong Zhongshu, "li" (rite), "wen" (high education and culture), "jen" (humaneness), "de" (virtue, morality), "junzi" (perfect man), "dao" (the way), "xiaokang" (basically well-off society), "Sange daibiao" (The Three Represents theory)

China's active integration into the world's economy and policy in the context of current globalization activates the discussion about the future global role of Chinese civilization and causes the necessity of realizing its achievements in social development and their in-depth study.

Within this framework, spiritual and cultural basics of Chinese culture determining the main priorities of complex Chinese home and foreign policy become the object of the investigators' thorough study.

In the opinion of the majority of researchers, Confucianism was the nucleus of the ideology which promoted the development of Chinese society. Confucian ethical and political system regulated all the main aspects of China's life. These teachings determined the development of Chinese culture and philosophy in the past and certain constituents of these teachings have remained topical till present.

Beginning from the year 1978 China has turned into a modern industrial state rather rapidly and has demonstrated the possibility of economic success based on integration of well-targeted state policy favorable for market environment and cultural and historical traditions. The intensive development of the country's economy aroused the interest in consistent study of all the aspects of the society's life, in people's spiritual heritage and in one of its most important basics – Confucianism, which represents a unique civilizational code determining all the aspects of social life in the countries of Eastern Asia.

The Subject of the Research in the given paper is the main principles of Confucian

ideology which became the basic values of the Chinese society.

The Target of the Research is economic and socio-political development of the People's Republic of China during the period of market transformation which went down in history as "the policy of reforms and opening up".

As it is well known, at the end of 1980s the countries of socialist commonwealth passed through an acute crisis which influenced their economy, policy and social sphere. The consequences of that crisis changed the geopolitical global landscape and some countries, having gone through a difficult process of dissolution, ceased to exist (Czechoslovakia, GDR, Yugoslavia). While the countries of Eastern Europe and former Republics of the Soviet Union were suffering from the growing crisis the People's Republic of China continued to develop dynamically and augmented its economic potential. In this connection the Chinese experience is rather useful for the world civilization. Moreover, it is necessary to say that there were not a few internal and external upheavals in the centuries-long Chinese history. But irrespective of all the factors of destabilization the country has always preserved its entirety and unique history.

In order to answer the question how the People's Republic of China has become an important entity in the world policy having modernized its industry, having transformed its social system and the system of education, it is necessary, first of all, to analyze the traditions of ruling the society, the principles of its organization, the social, cultural and worldview categories which still have a great influence on the people's inner culture, morality, education.

Having developed in high antiquity, establishing and evolving in the process of historical development, these principles and categories have become the basis for the country's management and social norms again as a result of the state's stable policy in China's contemporary history during the last quarter of the previous century.

The origins of China's state ideology date back to ethical and political Confucius' teachings (551-479 BC). The issues considered by the philosopher concerned all the aspects of the society's social life: ranging from the principles, forms and ways of rational governing the state to a code of conduct of an individual. From the point of view of the thinker the desired result of the state ruling was minimization of social conflicts and maintaining of stability in the state. The condition of its realization was compliance with the requirement which demanded that the governance must be carried out by educated and morally faultless people. Formation of a state official supposed the internal moral education and keeping to external system "li" ("rules of behaviour"), which allowed to preserve strict hierarchical relationship in the state resembling family relationship [1, c. 60].

Confucius' views on ruling implied clear distribution and strict fulfillment of functional duties by each member of the society: the ruler must be the ruler, the nobleman must be the nobleman, the father must be the father, the son must be the son. Human relations in the state and in the family must be determined by a range of

rules and by keeping to the norms any violation of which must be suppressed resolutely.

One of the central categories in Confucius' teachings is the category of "wen" ("culture bearer", "written language", "culture", "civilization", etc.) which is interpreted very widely. This notion denoted wisdom, ritual, ancient tradition which should be kept, transferred and imitated, and even music. "Wen" meant the ancient books which entered the Confucian Canon "Shih ching", "Shū jīng", "Zhou yi (I Ching)", "Ji Li", "Zhou li".

Later, when the other works were added, "wen" began to denote the whole sum of cultural concepts connected with knowledge [2].

The interaction between the internal moral principles and external rules, between individual and social is embodied in the central ideological principle of Confucianism "jen", which is translated as "benevolence" or "humaneness", "philanthropy", "charity", "kindness". But benevolence is understood nowhere near the European sense which underlines the value of individual. "To restrain oneself in order to meet all the ritual requirements that is the benevolence" [1, c. 63; 2, c. 15].

Such understanding underlines, first of all, the strong connection between the individual's behavior and public requirements because the public welfare depends on the individual's conduct. The man should, first of all, think about the people's and the state's prosperity and not be guided by selfish motives. The true man is the man who is able to ascend to super-individual, intellectual, general level of consciousness, whose personal desires coincide with the public demands.

In other words, in Confucian understanding benevolence means minimization of the individuality in the name of general welfare.

Cosmic "jen" acts as a law, as a complex of ethic and social principles of relations between people, and as an overall goal of cultural and moral self-perfecting of a man, family and state [2, c. 43].

The other fundamental category "de", morality, acts as a complementary one to "jen", as its individualised extrapolation, and in the most general sense it denotes the quality providing the best way of existence of each separate being or thing.

The Confucian classical text "Lun Yu" (6<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC) interprets morality as "faithfulness" and "duty".

"De" can be defined as "vitality" which manifests itself in the naturally determined order of things [2, c. 198].

Revived under the conditions of political transit "de" is understood as civil morality in modern China. From the point of view of the contemporary CPC leaders it is the incarnation of the idea of peaceful resolution of conflicts, of the culture of peace.

The idea of "proper correspondence of the content to the form" is put into category "yi" which also means duty and justice.

It is also one of the basic categories of Chinese philosophy. It becomes the key value characteristics of a "junzi" ("a perfect man") [2, c. 46, 67, 82].

The notion “junzi” in Confucian theory is inseparably associated with the idea of the superior ideal of a ruler who is sent by the Heavens. Though “junzi” is afraid of the “heaven fate”, he unquestioningly obeys the “will of Heaven”.

The term “junzi” has both ethical and social interpretation.

The image of “junzi” is associated with the ruler of the kingdom in the twentieth chapter of “Lún yǔ”. The “perfect man” should ideally meet all the requirements which are imposed to the carrier of “wen” (“culture”) and “jen” (“humanness”).

From the point of view of classical Confucianism it is next to impossible to attain the ideal of a “superior man”. It is accessible only for those who are able to self-develop the best moral qualities necessary for ruling the state. “The perfect man” is a statesman, politician and official who is a model for his relatives and all the members of the society, who can charge himself with the responsibility for the society’s welfare. He realizes the priority of state interests and it does not allow him to commit rash acts. He rules the state basing on the sense which obeys the highest natural law “Dao”.

In its turn, the physio-philosophical concept of “dao” (“way”) is considered the way of embodiment of ethical norms of his teachings.

So, the concept of “dao” is used in the widest possible meaning as the “ethical way of the man and the state”. Both the individual and the state (“the Heavenly Empire”) can bear “dao”.

As the bearers are different their “dao” are also different: they can be large and small, straight and curved, inherent both to the “perfect man” (“junzi”) or to the “petty man” (“xiaoren”).

Such notions as “heaven”, “celestial phenomenon” (“destiny”) are also of great significance in Confucius teachings. Moral and ethic norms come to people from the “heaven”, “it gives rise to moral qualities”. The ancient Chinese proverb says: “When the man performs his own way the Heavenly way will be performed by itself”. According to the Chinese concepts the wise person should be the “Heaven and Earth’s friend”.

During many centuries the image of “junzi” represented the criterion of the highest moral and ethical values. But, as Confucianism as the official ideology was created by bureaucracy, consequently, it took from Confucian teachings only those concepts and institutions which had to provide for stable functioning of the imperial system of ruling [4].

Both the social structure, built according to the natural laws, and the order and good care on the earth were considered the result of the proper ruling, the internal basics of which was observance of the above principles.

V. Malyavin writes: “According to the Chinese canons people’s deeds could be as majestic as the nature’s performances and the social structure had to simulate the natural life ... the authority’s role of ordering the world is materialized in neat geometry of peasants’ fields”. [3, c. 16-18].

Of great importance for Confucianism were the ideas of Confucius’ adherent

Mengzi (Mencius) (372-289 BC) which coincided with the leading trend of these teachings development [1, c. 87].

In connection with the concept of a “perfect man” the category “wu ch’ang” (five constants) in Mengzi’s interpretation should also be touched upon. According to his teachings the man’s nature internally possesses the so-called “wu ch’ang” (five constants) which are expressed by five basic categories of Confucian ethics: “jen” (humaneness), “yi” (duty-righteousness), “li” (propriety of rites), “chih” (wisdom) and “hsin” (sincerity). These moral norms are absolute, identical and permanent but they manifest differently in different situations and relationships.

Developing Confucius’ convictions Mengzi creates the concept of “jen chen” (humane ruling). But, contrary to his Teacher, he insists that a natural man is kind by his nature and that is why it is easier for him to carry out “ke tsi fu lu” (“overcome his self-interest and return to the rules”).

The criterion of kindness, kind heart, is the determining one among the four value criteria of a personality (kindness, benevolence, thirst for knowledge, sense of justice).

The man’s nature draws him to kindness in the same way as the water strives to run down. According to Mengzi’s teachings “xing” (“the man’s nature”) is originally credited with all the moral perfections and they only have to be embodied (“min” – “illuminate”) through the practice of self-improvement.

Of rather great importance for Confucianism was the so-called theory of “T’ien-ming” (“Mandate of Heaven”) which was also developed by Mengzi. According to this theory only the morally perfect man can be empowered by the Heaven, understood as the impersonal supreme force, to rule the people as a monarch. If a man is devoid of such moral qualities but, nevertheless, he occupies the throne, Mengzi declares him an usurper and says he can be and must be dethroned so that the throne could be given to the true owner of mandate. He calls such a substitution of the ruler by the word “ge ming”, “the change of the mandate”. In the modern Chinese language this word denotes “revolution”.

Mengzi’s theory had a divinatory character and was usually used either for grounding the legitimacy of the new dynasty enthronement or for condemnation of the unsuccessful attempt to change the ruler under the principle “Treason doth never prosper: what’s the reason? For if it prosper, none dare call it treason.” [1].

The representative of Confucianism of the Han period Dong Zhongshu (Tung Chung-shu) (179-104 BC), who elaborated Confucius’ and Mengzi’s teachings about the will of Heaven, used the mystified during the Zhànguó period teachings about the light and dark principles “yin-yang” and five elements, and grounded the teleological thesis about the interaction of Heaven and Mankind. During this period the canon studies “Jing syue” become socially significant branch of knowledge. Dong Zhongshu’s merit also lies in the fact that he introduced the Confucian teaching to his emperor and suggested to eradicate all the other teachings and respect only the “teaching of service class people” in order to make the ideology unified.

During the period of ruling of the emperor Wudi (Wu of Han) (140-87 BC) Confucianism got the rank of the state ideology. Five canons (Wǔjīng), the most respected Confucian books: “Shijing” (“Book of Poetry”), “Shujing” (“Book of Documents”), “Liji” (“Records of Rites”), “Zhouyi” (“Zhouyi Changes”), “Chungiu” (“Spring and Autumn Annals”) became the embodiment of the “sheng” teaching of the most wise rulers of antiquity [7, c. 666].

Representatives of Confucianism in the period of Han dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD) introduced certain legalistic doctrines into the structure of ruling: the concept of systematic renewal of the state machine by promoting new officials, concept of equal opportunities, concept of clear ranking within the ruling establishment itself, concept of unification of officials’ thinking, concept of censorial surveillance, concept of mutual guarantee and personal responsibility of an official [5].

But the final form, which remained almost unchanged during the centuries until 1949 and which is widely spread now, was given to Confucianism by Zhu Xi (1130-1200).

So, Confucianism in its historical development was a synthesis of the most important achievement of ancient Chinese thought basing on Confucius’ philosophy. The success of Confucian ideas in the practice of state governing was determined by the fact that Confucius had managed to express traditional peculiarities of the mentality of Chinese nation and accentuate such its moments which promoted stable and harmonious development of both the individual and the state.

In the 1960-70s of the previous century Confucian and Mengzi teachings were forbidden and replaced by the artificially implanted Marxist doctrine in Mao Zedong’s vulgar interpretation.

Updating of Confucianism in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was connected with the concept of China development offered by Deng Xiaoping who became the leader of the country in 1978. In 1978 Deng Xiaoping declared that the aim of socialism with specific Chinese character is the achievement of the “xiaokang” society level by the year 2000.

For each Chinese the term “xiaokang” is connected with the Confucian tradition and represents one of the ideals of young Confucius. It can be translated as the “basically well-off society” or “moderately prosperous society” [8, c. 69]. On the contemporary stage this idea is applied both to the state (its embodiment is the factor of tranquility and economic advance) and to the family, where its embodiment is the condition and the exponent of relative prosperity.

The ideal of the “xiaokang” society is clear not only to the Chinese but also to all the peoples of South-Eastern Asia. It is the society where violent social stratification does not exist and not very large revenue level is sufficient for normal living, and market economy is controlled by the state.

American political scientist S. Huntington describes the principles of modern Confucian ideology as follows: “The interests of the collective body are placed above the interests of a personality, the power has the priority before the freedom, and the

duties are considered more important than rights in classical Chinese Confucianism and its derivatives in Korea, Vietnam, Singapore, Taiwan and (less brightly and explicitly) in Japan. Confucian societies lack traditions of justice opposition to the state, i.e. the few rights and freedoms that still existed were given by the state. The preference is given to agreement and cooperation rather than to diversity of opinions and competition. The major values are maintenance of order and respect for hierarchical relationship. The conflict of ideas, groups and parties is considered harmful and illegal. The most important achievement of Confucianism was that it accomplished the merging of the state and the society and outlawed the autonomous social institutions on the state level” [9].

So, to a great extent, the stability of the Chinese society development is based on the principle of traditionalism, which, having embodied in value norms, represents the most important mechanism of self-preservation and reproduction of the Chinese ethnos. N. Chepeleva claims: “Every person adopts previously standardized scheme of cultural sample which is handed over to him/her by his/her ancestors, teachers, figures of authority as an undisputable guidance for all situations usually arising in the social world. The knowledge corresponding to the cultural sample proves itself, or, to be more precise, it is taken for granted until the opposite is proved” [11, c. 6].

Persistently striving to revive and implement the traditional value system existing for centuries into the social and political life of the country China’s contemporary leaders put forward the concept “Sān gè dàibiǎo” (concept of “Three Represents”). The idea formulated by Jiang Zemin for solving social and economic issues was included into the Statute of the Communist Party of China as the guiding idea (together with Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong’s ideas and Deng Xiaoping’s theory) by decision of the 26<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of China. In accordance with the idea of “Sān gè dàibiǎo” the Communist Party of China represents the interests of the advanced productive forces, progressive Chinese culture, fundamental interests of the Chinese people at large.

Under modern conditions the Communist Party considers itself not only the party of working class, peasantry and intellectuals but also the party of “new social elements”, i.e. of entrepreneurs possessing private property.

The activities of the CPC leaders are oriented on creation of a “harmonious society”. Actually it represents the idea of social harmony which is traditional for the Chinese people mind and is aimed at solving the problems confronting the country and the nation [10].

One of the main Jiang Zemin’s slogans is the slogan “economics of science”. In this regard it is worth recollecting that during the period of reforms, which began after the new leadership coming to power at the end of 1970s, there had been carried out a complex structural reform of the system of education and culture to the benefit of Chinese population. The creation of “socialist system of education with Chinese specificity” developed against the background of the officially declared course for building “socialist market economy”. In 1985 the Resolution “On Reform of the

Structure of Education” was adopted in China. In 1986 the priority role of education in the country’s modernization was codified and in 1993 the program of modernization was approved. It included the transformation of the educational system from the strictly state into the state-public one.

At that, the responsibility for creation of educational institutions was taken by the government together with the enterprises, establishments, non-governmental organizations and private persons [12]. Modernization of the educational system was carried out by means of decentralization and democratization (including autonomization of educational institutions), by means of switching on the market mechanisms and involving numerous non-governmental financing channels, by means of reviving of practice of private schools, which corresponded to the challenges of the epoch.

In 1997 the 25<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPC confirmed the strategic course in the educational sphere officially. Its essence is reflected in the slogan: “Science and education will bring the country to prosperity”. Actually, it meant the change of the society development model, the society, the development of which for some time was administered by borrowed ideas, and the exchange of that model for the authentic model of the society following its own way (the model of historic development of Japan). Since 1998 there has been carried out the program of knowledge renewal and, correspondingly, the increasing of “wen” – culture. The program assumes reorganization of institutions and engaging of foreign scientists. The government allocated grants for scientific work to 10,000 best lecturers on a competitive basis, annual scholarships were established for 3-5 years, their sum amounted to 12,000 dollars (in addition to the salary), the prizes amounting to 120,000 dollars were awarded to young and middle-aged Chinese scientists for prominent achievement in the sphere of science [13].

And that is far from being complete reflection of the efficient policy which was carried out by the Chinese government of the CPR at the end of the previous and the beginning of the current centuries within the framework of building the moderately prosperous society – “xiaokang” where science and education are paid special attention. Though, judging by official documents, in 1990s the transition to educational paradigm had already been shaped with a particular focus on strengthening of moral component in the educational process and increasing of general cultural level of the personality. However, irrespective of certain hallmarks of formation of “individualization” paradigm the situation has not changed significantly up to now.

At present studying of Confucius’ works is included into the programs of regular schools. Certain paragraphs from his works are subject to studying in primary and secondary schools. Pupils get acquainted with the works of the main thinkers Confucius and Mengzi in the 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> forms but still only with some fragments. They mainly get acquainted with the notions of “jen”, “yi”, “li”, “chih”, “hsin”. But at the universities, especially in linguistic departments, their works are studied rather



thoroughly.

No matter how dramatic the PRC achievement in the sphere of education and other spheres is, all the above said shows that Confucianism has influenced and continues to influence all the spheres of human's life in China tremendously. The turn of the Chinese leadership and later of the scientists to Confucian heritage at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is an integral part of a wider global policy. The policy's aim is to modernize the language of traditional culture and integrate a new cultural platform into it. At that, the traditional values themselves will be transformed and adapted to new realia.

Responding to the challenges of time the ideology of contemporary China is striving for Confucian ideal of "the golden mean" where the priority of state and society interests is above the personal interest. Confucian principles focused on social realia and translated into modern life turned out to be actual in organizing stable and sustainable society.

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**Чжен В.А. Конфуціанські принципи в китайській історії та модернізаційні процеси останньої чверті ХХ ст.**

*Новий курс Китаю з 1978 р. був спрямований на проведення політики «реформ і відкритості». Водночас у державну ідеологію КНР були поступово імplementовані соціально-культурні, світоглядні та етичні категорії, властиві конфуціанству. У статті розглядається еволюція категорій конфуціанського вчення, що нині взяті на озброєння у внутрішньо- та*

зовнішньополітичній лінії КНР, які виникли та були оформлені в чітку систему у Стародавньому Китаї. Аналізуються причини повернення до принципів навчання, сформованих в епоху Стародавнього Китаю, які визначили шляхи його розвитку на тисячоліття. Особливу увагу приділено виявленню модернізаційного потенціалу конфуціанської доктрини, її затребуваність в сучасних умовах. Автор робить висновок про те, що відповідність морально-етичного ядра конфуціанського вчення завданням та цілям розвитку сучасного суспільства дозволило на нинішньому етапі розвитку Китаю реабілітувати його, поклавши в основу соціальної комунікації та управління державою.

**Ключові слова:** Конфуцій, конфуціанство, Менци, Донг Чжуншунь, «Лі» (обряд), «вєнь» (висока освіта і культура), «жєнь» (гуманність), «де» (чеснота, моральність), «Цзюнь-цзи» (досконала людина), «дао» (шлях), «сяокан» (в основному заможне суспільство), «Санге дайся» (Три представництва).

**Чжен В.А. Конфуцианские принципы в китайской истории и модернизационные процессы последней четверти XX в.**

Новый курс Китая с 1978 г. был направлен на проведение политики «реформ и открытости». В то же время в государственную идеологию КНР были постепенно внедрены социально-культурные, мировоззренческие и этические категории, свойственные конфуцианству. В статье рассматривается эволюция категорий конфуцианского учения, в настоящее время взятых на вооружение во внутри- и внешнеполитической линии КНР, которые возникли и были оформлены в четкую систему в Древнем Китае. Анализируются причины возврата к принципам обучения, сформированных в эпоху Древнего Китая, которые определили пути его развития на тысячелетия. Особое внимание уделено выявлению модернизационного потенциала конфуцианской доктрины, ее востребованности в современных условиях. Автор делает вывод о том, что соответствие морально-этического ядра конфуцианского учения задачам и целям развития современного общества позволило на нынешнем этапе развития Китая реабилитировать его, положив в основу социальной коммуникации и управления государством.

**Ключевые слова:** Конфуций, конфуцианство, Менци, Донг Чжуншунь, «Ли» (обряд), «вэнь» (высокое образование и культура), «жэнь» (гуманность), «де» (добродетель, нравственность), «Цзюнь-цзи» (совершенный человек), «дао» (путь), «сяокан» (в основном зажиточное общество), «Сангэ дайбяо» (Три представительства).