

OVERVIEW OF THE MORAL CONCEPTS OF CONFUCIANISM

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Annotation: The cultural traditions of the Far East have been forming their own philosophy, not inferior to the level of logical-discursive conceptuality and the problem area of Western European philosophy. One of the most important components of Far Eastern traditions is philosophical thinking. One such philosophical thought is Confucianism, and we can see its spread in South Korea and its influence on the social and political life of the country. In today's modern economic development trends, the role of Confucianism in the civilizational rise in South Korea is huge. In order to understand Confucianism in modern South Korea, it is of course extremely important to study the ancient Chinese cultural world and, in connection with it, the historical roots of Confucianism. The fact that we can still enjoy the advanced philosophical, ethical, scientific and social ideas of Confucianism in South Korea is the basis for the relevance of the topic.

Keywords: Confucius, Confucianism, "Li", "Jen", "Ti", "Ki", order, morality, ritual, humanism.

Introduction

Confucian culture has always served as the most glorious component of the culture of China and many other neighboring countries. For more than two thousand years, he ruled many of the main worlds of the Far East, and had a deep and long-term impact on the way of thinking and cultural-psychological formation of the people of the countries there. Confucian education begins first of all with human self-awareness, because the teaching is considered to reflect human-related and close-to-human conflicts and emotions. In addition, key phrases such as "Human nature is a gift from Heaven" are often quoted by famous Confucian scholars and educators.

Literature Review

Among the Russian scientists, A.L. Titov (Titov, 2015: 38-55), A.E.Lukyanov (Lukyanov, 1992: 188), A.V.Torkumova (Torkumova, 2003: 430), A.F.Trotsevich (Trotsevich, 2004: 323), S.O.Kurbanov (Kurbanov, 2009: 744) and other such thinkers studied the humanistic aspects of this topic, M.L. Titarenko (Titarenko, 1993: 566), A.I.Kobzev (Kobzev, 1993: 788), G.V.Grinenko (Grinenko,



2009: 685), V.L.Vasilev (Vasilev, 2006: 384-492), G.F.Aleksandrov (Aleksandrov, 1959: 371) and others studied the introduction of Korean Confucianism from China to the Korean territory and its spread, the teachings of Confucianism in the Korean territory, the essence of Confucianism in South Korean and Chinese traditions, historical aspects of its philosophy, they think about the main issues of the place in the current era of globalization.

Methodology

The article uses historicity, logic, objectivity, scientificity, impartiality, systematization and generalization of philosophical information, philosophical comparative analysis, and hermeneutic methods.

Results

The ancients observed the vast universe and concluded that it contained absolute order. If their findings were incorrect, stars would collide with other stars in the universe and cause extreme chaos. But the universe works properly and orderly. As a result, they thought that if this absolute order fell to the ground, perhaps the war that destroys the order would end. If people take others into account in their interactions, human relations will be formed without resistance, arguments and conflicts, hatred and ill will. It is this concept of "morality" that the ancients revealed to be the source of order in the universe. And those who believe that the most important thing for the proper functioning of the society in which we live is morality. They wanted society to be formed on the basis of "ethics".

In his teachings, Confucius tried to show the concept of "morality" as a driving force for ensuring a peaceful life in society. Compared to other moral principles, "Jen" and "Li" have a longer history and have always been interpreted as central to the teachings throughout the development of Confucian culture. All previous research on these two main categories uses methods of comparing their meanings, interactions, social functions, and their importance. "Jen" is the ideological core of Confucianism and represents ideology and moral concepts, while "Li" is the external form of "Jen" and represents the norms of human behavior. These two categories have complementary characteristics and relationships, like the sides of a bird's wings.

The concepts of "Li" and "Jen" are important parts of the Confucian core values, therefore, studying the differences between them and their evolution, as well as directly philosophical analysis of these two categories, is of great importance for a deeper understanding of Confucian culture. In general, the concepts of "Lee" and "Jen" have perfect and complex meanings, and moreover, they also have an integral relationship. The concept of "Li" is first of all the basis of Confucian ethics, moreover, it is interpreted as one of the central categories of classical Chinese philosophy. Like many other terms in the Chinese vocabulary, "Li" contains a series of interrelated meanings that make it difficult to express in a single word in other languages. The concept combines the two main meanings of "ethics" and "ritual". Etymologically, the written appearance of the hieroglyph "Li" connects it with the ontological concept "Ti" ("body", "structure", "essence"), where it can be concluded that the graphic basis of both hieroglyphs reflects the image of rituals. Apparently, the etymological relationship of



these two hieroglyphs predetermined the ontological function of the concept of "Li" and, most likely, because of this, it began to be considered as the expression of the most important factor not only in cultural life, but also in society. Until the 1st millennium BC, the influence of "Li" was based on religious ritual, but later it mainly took on a moral interpretation (Сыма Цянь, 1986: 352). In the oldest written monuments (Shu jing and Shi jing), the category of "Li" refers to rituals that allow overcoming political conflicts and, at the same time, reflect world unity, the behavior of dignitaries towards other representatives of lower society, as well as dedicated to the gods and indicated that the palace signifies ritual forms (Древнекитайская философия, 1972: 79).

In all cases, the term "Li" refers to human activities, from honoring the spirits of ancestors to table manners, and the moral relationships that encourage and reinforce them - simply put, "Li" refers to a standard of behavior that limits and guides human action. The general point of view of Confucianism is that the Li category promotes the development of human relationships, peace, harmony and good governance in society. Given the general concern with social order and moral behavior prevalent in classical Chinese religion and philosophy, it is easy to see how this concept became absolutely central to the early Confucians. However, each of the classical Confucian philosophers had a different approach to this concept, which is why it is necessary to consider a number of attitudes towards it in turn.

As a teacher (and later a religious and moral philosopher), Confucius understood the importance of "Li" in promoting morality and social harmony. Regardless of the situation, "Li" is understood in the sense of the inner guidance of human behavior, and also in the sense of regulating one's behavior and guiding it in the right direction personally, socially and spiritually. Yan Hui: "May I ask what it means to have reputation (Jeng)?" The Master replied, "Look to nothing to distract you from observing the rules of the ceremony (Li); do not listen to anything that violates the etiquette of the ceremony; do not speak or do anything that violates ritual etiquette (The Analects of Confucius, 2007: 13). This point of view is emphasized by the tale of Confucius' desire to live among the "uncivilized" people of the Chinese countryside:

Confucius expresses his desire to live among them and asks him, "What will you do with their rudeness?" they ask, then he said: "If there is an exemplary person living among them, what kind of rudeness can there be?" replied that. Such ideas were also central to Confucian ideals of good governance, which established the foundation of Li as a counter to the concept of coercive laws and punishments: "Govern the people well and maintain order by observing the correctness of rituals, and they will have a sense of shame, and moreover, they regulate themselves" (The Analects of Confucius, 2007: 94). The interpretation of this concept as "ethics" and "ritual" and the ambiguity of a morally unified term allowed Meng Ke and Xun Zi, the two major followers of Confucius and the founders of the opposite currents in Confucianism, to interpret the concept of "Li" in different ways (Cua, 1983: 7).

Meng Ke takes a different approach to Lee. He defined this concept not as a learnable model of morality, as Confucius said, but as a term that refers to an inner sense of good behavior. He considers virtues such as justice, goodness, decency, and wisdom to be inherent



in human nature, and therefore places Li at the center of his teaching that human nature is good: "People can be good people as they really are. In their nature, there are features such as kindness, respect for others, approval of them. On the contrary, as for the fact that people are not good, this does not mean that there is a fault in their potential. It's just that they don't pay attention to their good heart. Seek and you shall find it.' Thus, one can see significant differences between Confucian and Meng Ke views. While Confucius emphasized the need for "Li" in promoting harmonious behavior, Meng Ke believed more in human nature (Schwartz, 1985: 194).

Unlike Meng, Xun Zi believed that man is inherently evil—he believes that it lies in the chaos and uncertainty inherent in his age. Thus, following Confucius, he emphasized the need for "Li" to regulate human behavior and build a harmonious society: "So, when a person follows his nature and gives in to his feelings, he will inevitably get involved in quarrels and conflicts, and the society's form and violates the rules and becomes a criminal. Therefore, a person must first change with the teacher's instructions and follow the ritual principles (Li), only then he can follow the etiquette and modesty, obey the rules of the society, and achieve discipline" (Hunzi, 2003, 114). At the same time, he expanded on the formula of his teacher, Confucius, and explored precisely the ways in which these norms of behavior govern and regulate people's desires and emotions. It also mentions that these standards were established by ancient rulers to exercise precise social control:

"A person is born with desires. If his desires are not satisfied for him, if there are no limits and degrees in his pursuits, he will inevitably quarrel with other people. Chaos ensues from the battle. Ancient rulers abhorred such disorder, and so they instituted ritual principles to curb it and satisfy people's desires." Thus, Xun Zi's system summarizes the Confucian concept of Li, but it is undeniably true that he does so in an overtly pessimistic way and also in a somewhat authoritarian context. In addition, Xun Zi expanded the understanding of the role of "Li" by specifically studying its function in regulating human emotions (Cua, 1983: 14).

Korean Confucian scholars were shaped by the belief that "human nature" is inherently good. They adhere to the Meng Xi tradition of education, which believes that education is a means of improving and promoting the virtuous nature of human beings. The subtle nature of moral education is another important feature of Korean Confucianism, and even historical Korean kings received formal Confucian education with lectures from scholars on the conformist ethics of Confucianism. From this point of view, it is not unreasonable to say that Meng Ke's ideas were particularly responsible for the metaphysical stimulation and recalibration of Korean philosophy during the Choson period, ultimately leading to its philosophical debates (Sohn, 2000: 193).

In Confucianism, society is built on the principle of "Li". The rules of social etiquette regulate relations in the family, in friendship, between sovereigns and subjects, and others. "Li" is also a set of customs and attitudes passed down from ancestors to generations. Specifically, it consists of norms of proper social behavior taught to others by fathers, village elders, and government officials. The concept of "Lee" instilled in children the virtues of piety,



brotherhood, righteous deeds, good behavior and loyalty. In addition, its direct influence instilled moral norms such as loyalty to representatives of positions higher than oneself and respect for persons occupying an important place in society.

Until the 15th and 16th centuries, Neo-Confucianism in Korea was mostly based on ideology, but from the middle of the Choson Kingdom, schools based on material foundations were established. These material foundations are organized on the basis of the opposition of the categories "Li" and "Ki", where we can see that "Ki" refers to material things related to the mind, and "Li" refers to states related to the spirit. Since the long centuries when Confucianism entered the territory of Korea from China, scholars of this doctrine continued to understand the category of "Li" only as "principle" or "harmony", but with the spread of Neo-Confucianism, they describe it as a philosophical term defining its own characteristics. Early Confucian scholars rarely used "Li" in their philosophical writings, and even when they did use the category, it mostly referred to "good order" as manifested in Xun Zi's moral thought.

Thus, although the meaning of "form" is close to the ancient meaning of the term, "principle" is more widely used in philosophical studies, as this interpretation is believed to better illuminate the special nature of "Li". We can say that Zhu Xi rediscovered "Li" after expressing its cosmological, metaphysical, and moral-political dimensions and their complex interrelationship.

The most developed period of Neo-Confucianism is the 16th century, and its spread and further development in Korea is connected with the name of the philosopher Li I (Yulgok), who is still highly respected in the country today. He was the founder of a school called Chugipha, and representatives of this school continued his philosophical views. Li I derives from a dualistic interpretation of the core concepts of Korean philosophy, and on this basis puts forward the idea that "Li" and "Ki" cannot be separated from each other. "There is no gap between them" (Чон Чин Сок, 1966: 181). Yulgok puts forward the theory that "beginning is in both Li and Ki". Yulgok's dualistic position can be appreciated through the following fragment: "If there was no Lee, what would be the foundation of Ki? Then the foundations would not exist. That is, if the first does not exist, the second does not exist either. There is an idea that Li and Ki cannot be separated, but can miraculously unite. Li I writes, "Everything between heaven and earth is Ki." Based on these thoughts, he concludes that processes related to "Li" are eternal, and "Ki" is transitory. "Li" follows innate goodness, shapes the nature of people and things, and is present in everything. Yulgok discovers the transitory nature of human birth and death, associated with the emergence and disappearance of Ki, while Li is said to exist as something independent of life and death. Ultimately, the dualism of Li I led to the recognition of the leading role of "Li". If we consider it in terms of things, Ki is the material passive material, and Li is the active principle, the cause of change, the governing force.

Loyalty to traditions, following them, for example, respect for parents are among them. In a general sense, "Lee" includes any activity aimed at maintaining the foundations of society. According to Confucius, in general, all our actions, whether it is eating or greeting, should be not just, but ritualistic, that is, it should be done consciously, gradually, with feeling. People



should maintain the practice of devotion to traditions both in their own actions and in the right example and support given to their brothers. Individual approaches, as well as interpersonal approaches, together show how the category of Li covers everything, good and bad, form and formless, on a large scale and in detail. We can see that this is the full realization of "Lee" in society.

The main principle of Confucian ethics is the concept of "Jen" (humanity), which is considered as the supreme law of relations between people in society and family. At this point, Confucius formulated the golden rule of ethics: "Don't do for others what you don't do for yourself." This principle of ritualizing various aspects of daily life is believed to be designed to allow people to better experience life and its spirit. Of course, any ceremony should be filled with respect (to oneself, other people and nature) and dignity. Ritual norms, value-based behavior patterns of Lee's concept unite people and at the same time allow the necessary space for comfortable communication and implement the principle of equality in communication between people of unequal social status. According to Confucius, man is a unique being with dignity. Human dignity originates from and is embodied in "Li". A learned habit, a ritual distinguishes a person from an animal.

This category became one of the most important symbols of Confucianism in the V-III centuries BC. At the same time, the concept of "Li" became the main target of attacks against Confucianism by philosophical schools competing with Confucianism. Proponents of Taoism emphasized the artificiality and ineffectiveness of Confucian "morality" in terms of fidelity to nature, as well as the weakening of faith. Supporters of the doctrine of Moism, from the point of view of socio-economic utilitarianism, criticized the excessive interest of the Confucian concept of "Li" in the ritual aspect, its extremely complicated forms and unjustifiably expensive ceremonies. Supporters of legalism rejected the concept of "Li" as the highest principle of social regulation and instead put forward administrative principles and legal laws as an alternative option (Этика и ритуал в традиционном Китае, 1988: 118).

Li rituals and practices are dynamic in nature. Lee's practices are revised and evaluated over time to reflect emerging societal attitudes and beliefs. Although this is a very slow change over time, the main points of development of human morality remain at the core of "Li", which is mainly related to social order. Confucius theoretically understood the concept of "Li" and turned it into the most general characteristic of the correct social structure and human behavior for himself and others: "The ruler should rule his subjects through "Li"" and throughout his thought, "Man is also overcomes self and appeals to ``Lee," he adds, adding that another important feeling constitutes humanity (Jen). The expansion of the control of sovereignty with the emotional sphere was the basis for giving this concept the status of a general epistemological standard in Confucianism: Here the Lun Yu is quoted as saying, "By expanding the knowledge of humanity and culture and strengthening it with Li, you can avoid transgressions."

Confucius meant that the government should follow the principles of "Li" to be correct. Some Confucians suggested that as an important part of this process, one would attain



perfection by learning the concept of Li. In general, Confucians believed that government officials should focus more on "Li" norms and rely less on punishing people in positions of authority. Confucius emphasized the importance of ritual as the foundation of a properly functioning government. In his wisdom, Confucius considered the feudal lords who adopted ancient customs to be the just rulers of the central regions. Conversely, feudal lords who did not adopt these customs were considered uncivilized, not worthy of being considered Chinese or part of the central regions. "Lee" were the moral standards of a society to be followed by all members of the society. Li also includes that members of the upper class should treat themselves with fairness and respect. As Confucius said, "A ruler should employ his ministers according to the rules of etiquette, and ministers should serve their rulers faithfully" (The Analects of Confucius, 2007: 139).

Humanism is one of the central categories of Confucianism. This category is referred to as "Jen" in Confucianism and is usually translated as "humanity", "compassion", "charity", so it is used as a synonym for the concept of "humanism" in a general sense in many literatures. It follows that Jen represents the characteristics of a person and the order in which he should live his life. This is the principle of humanity in the members of society, and it is their duty to observe these norms (Китайская философия, 1994: 213).

According to ancient Confucian sources, it was impossible to say what kind of person a person is without simultaneously answering the question of what kind of morality he has. In other words, a person has formed himself and is qualified and evaluated according to his morals in society. Confucius himself answered the question of what humanism, that is, "Jen", said: "This concept means to love people. Don't do to others what you wouldn't want done to yourself. Then hatred will disappear in the family and the state," he answers. Zen is one of the main categories of Chinese philosophy and traditional, spiritual culture. Adherents of Confucianism distinguish aspects of Jen that embody several main semantic aspects: 1) a set of moral and psychological - ethical principles, as well as reflecting such aspects as love or pity for people, duty, justice, decency, intelligence, courage; 2) moral-metaphysical - spiritually related, reflected in a sympathetic-integrative attitude of an individual to everything that exists, including inanimate objects; 3) social - a set of norms of relations in society; 4) political - rules of relations that regulate behavior in the state (Духовная культура Китая, 2007: 13).

The hieroglyph "Jen" consists of a character representing a person and two numbers, respectively. "Jen" is realized in a person's relationship with other people. It is such relationships as mutual warm relations in society that make up the real space of human existence. According to Confucius, ancient times, that is, ancestors, are examples of behavior and they determine the norm. A person's moral efforts must rise to the level of the ideal past. Such an attitude does not mean that a person lives with history, on the contrary, it has a more clear and strict form in Confucianism: "Respecting parents and elder brothers is the basis of humanity." Confucius, who gave this concept the meaning of universal virtue, interpreted it as "love for people". However, mutual humanity does not imply equality between people, but a



just hierarchy. In it, the criterion for promotion is knowledge (Confucian laws, ancient texts). The Confucian ideal is the "noble man" who cares about observing social rules and rituals; he opposes the "low man" who only cares about self-interest. Noble people should be a moral example to the people, which is more effective than legal coercion and serves to increase the efficiency of state administration.

From the point of view of values of social life, among the qualities promoted by Confucianism, we can say that in the category of "Jen" Chinese Confucianism expresses the behavior of perfect individuals, while in Korean Confucianism, in addition to the idea of a perfect person, it emphasizes conformity. It should be noted that the category "Jen" in Chinese Confucianism expresses the concept of putting oneself in the place of another person, while in Korean Confucianism it also shows feelings of appropriateness and moderation. These differences in emphasis in different countries are not only axiological, but also cultural. The conclusions we can draw in the comparative cultural studies of East Asia appear not only at the level of literature and philosophy, but also in research in the fields of sociology and anthropology.

The humanitarian aspect of the Gen category is at the core of Korean Confucianism as well as ancient Chinese Confucianism's cultural ideals. An example of this is the idea of protecting the people. "Treat them (the people) as you would protect your babies, and the people will be peaceful and healthy." It was not only a political idea, but also had moral and axiological significance. Through the category of "Jen", the idea of humanitarianism emphasizes the protection of the elderly, the weak, orphans and the young (Roger, 2017: 225).

At this point, it is worth noting that in his treatise, Xun Zi focuses more on the concept of "humanity" than on many other concepts that are the basis of Confucianism. Analyzing the pamphlet, firstly, the treatment of "Jane" shows that it is not just a reminder to the society. Second, as a rule, when talking about Jen, the author will, of course, also talk about a number of other categories related to her, as well as the influence, points of contact and intersections of these categories. And finally, thirdly, it is in these passages that Xun Szi formulates the basic rules of his philosophical views (Титов, 2015: 38-39).

Conclusion

The humanitarian category played the most important role in Confucian philosophy, acted as a universal principle and gathered all the most worthy moral values, while its content varied depending on the ideas of a particular philosopher or an entire school. In the Lun Yu monument, which reveals the views of Confucius, it is concluded that "humanity" is related to other important categories, including "ritual" (Li). From the point of view of Confucian traditionalists, this interpretation was understood as a means of regulating public life (Scarpar, 2003: 6).

Neo-Confucians under the influence of Han Yu expanded the ontological content of the concept of Jen. Cheng Hao, Zhang Zai, Wang Yan Min and others interpreted it as an attribute of Heaven (tian), the organic consubstantiality of a person with the whole universe, and compared the lack of humanity in the human spirit to paralysis in the physical state of the body.



Tan Sitong identified Jen with the universal "love force", the permanent and all-pervading manifestation of the world's substance - the ether. Kang Yuwei supports this view, associating jen with electromagnetic attraction. Philosophers of the 20th century interpreting classical Chinese teachings interpret jin in original Confucianism as a conscious adherence to moral standards or spontaneous moral intuition, and in Neo-Confucianism as the principle of "moral metaphysics" (Кобзев, 2010: 31).

The beginning of interaction between people is a general principle of behavior. Its concrete symbol is rituals (Li). Ritual, according to Confucius, binds people together, but relative to every typical relationship, it represents the optimal distance that allows different individuals to communicate effectively. In Confucianism, the concept of humanity is defined as reciprocity and equality. However, people differ in their natural qualities and social status. So, a reasonable question arises: how to implement the principle of equality in relations between unequal people? Rituals are the answer to this question. Rituals in Confucianism are social relations of individuals. Rituals themselves are a moral measure of behavior, because they ensure the harmonious existence of people, give them common signs. The ceremony is variable, but is conducted on its own basis and according to its own laws. Confucius said: "Behave yourself to observe the requirements of ritual in everything - this is humanity." That is, if "Jen" is the spirit of human communication, "Li" is the content of communication (Лукьянов, 1992: 104).

According to Confucius, man is a unique being with dignity. Human dignity originates from "Li" and is embodied in "Jen". A learned custom, a ritual, separates man from animals. Moral education consists of mastering the rules of "Li", studying literature, music and other arts. Confucius writes: to have "Jen" means to obey "Li" (Древнекитайская философия, 1972: 86).

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