

PRECONDITION OF HUMAN NATURE THEORY IN KONGZI'S TEACHING

“性相近也，习相远也”

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Key words: Kongzi, throughout love, human nature, studying, sweet love, “性相近也，习相远也”，“性”，“习”..

Abstract: We aim to reveal and explain The Ancient Chinese philosopher Kongzi's doctrine of human nature, written in his books. In doing so, I mention in his biography and foundational books, written by him. The main idea in his “human nature problem”, in “性相近也，习相远也” which means “The real nature of the man is very similar but because of different habits and environments; it becomes dissimilar mutually so it comes gradually differences”. I explained this meaning and related issues of this doctrine.

In the history of Chinese philosophy, Kongzi and his disciples', doctrines have been wide capacity in the searching area; it has been intensively searching so far. Kongzi (孔子) was a thinker, educator, politician and founder of Confucianism⁵⁶. He exerted the greatest influence on the Chinese people in ancient China and received the honorific title ”夫子/Master Kong”⁵⁷. The word “Zi (子)” or “Master” is polite suffix added to names of most philosophers of the Chou Dynasty, meaning Master Kong⁵⁸. Because of this, remembered as KongFuZi (孔夫子).

A brief biography: “Confucius’ (Kongzi, 551-479 BC), personal name was Qiu (丘). He was born during the Spring and Autumn (春秋)⁵⁹ period in the State of Lu (鲁), in present Shandong Province. His ancestors had been nobles in the State of Song. Because of political troubles, the family had lost its noble position and migrated to Lu (鲁) before the birth of KongQiu. By the age

⁵⁶ Guo Shangxing. *A Chinese-English dictionary of Chinese philosophy*. Shanghai foreign language education press., 2010. 283

⁵⁷ Wen Haiming. *Chinese philosophy*. China Intercontinental press., 2010. 21

⁵⁸ FunYu-Lan. *A short History of Chinese Philosophy*. Edited by Derk Bodde. NY., 1976. 38

⁵⁹ 春秋/This Spring and Autumn state existed from 770BC to 476BC and first Kongzi noted about this country period in own some foundational books. Following years, his one of the Five classics named with this State, his disciples explained that state situation.

50, he became Minister of Justice and did the job of prime minister. But, as a result of political intrigue, he was soon forced to resign his position. For the following 13 years he wandered, accompanied by his disciples from state to state, publicizing his theories and trying in vain to find a position suitable for his talent. Finally he returned to his native town where he spent his remaining years in teaching his disciples, codifying and editing ancient books⁶⁰. Kongzi was the first person in Chinese history thus to teach large numbers of students in a private capacity, by whom he was accompanied during his travels in different states.⁶¹

Even today, Kongzi's books are a basic wide researched object in philosophy, politics and social sciences. Many scholars still work at translating on these books from ancient Chinese to modern Chinese and writing explanations on their meanings.

The main books, written by Kongzi, undoubtedly, a collection of scattered sayings which was compiled by some of his disciples are named *Four books* and *Five classics* (四书五经), passed down to the next generation for further research. The books in Four books (四书) contains The Analects (论语), Menzi (孟子), The Great Learning (大学) and The Doctrine of the Mean (中庸). Definitely, these are the main set of books content not only some of philosophical, political and methodological ideas but this compilation is most definitely also, ethical and epistemological ideas.

Kongzi's *The Five Classics* (五经) contains The Book of History(尚书), The Book of Poetry(诗经), The Records of the Rites (礼记) and Summer and Autumn Annals (春秋), 易经 or otherwise called The Classic of Changes (周易). His works, in *The Five Classics*, were written in a way which different researchers could deduce different meaning. Writing on such ideas as the nature-philosophy, history, culture, legalism and stories of the Warring States period, were generally written in poetry.

During the period of Spring and Autumn State, even though he focused on some kind of idealism, his basic attitude contained elements of empirism and materialism properly. In the epistemological thought, clear ideas of empirism and materialism, exist exempling in "Recognizing of the man depends on hearing a lot and watching a lot".

Through the main content, related to this academic paper: The man, first revealed idea of the human nature in history of Chinese philosophy is philosopher Kongzi. As he said, the general meaning of this thought "性相近也，习相远也"⁶² means "The real nature of the man is very similar but because of different habits and environments; it becomes dissimilar mutually so it comes gradually differences". It is a distinct acknowledge of how to express about human nature.

⁶⁰ GuoShangxing. *A Chinese-English Dictionary of Chinese Philosophy*. Shanghai., 2010.283

⁶¹ FunYu-Lan. *A short History of Chinese Philosophy*. Edited by Derk Bodde. NY., 1976. 39

⁶² 四书五经. 论语-阳货篇十七. 外文出版社北京., 2012. 97

In Western, especially, one book “Ancient Chinese Philosophy”/”Древнекитайская Философия”/, translated to Russian, is cited that “(People) are naturally similar each other, further (people) differentiated each other depending on habit and custom”⁶³.

Such a said that “性相近也，习相远也”-“The real nature of the man is very similar but because of different habits and environments; it becomes dissimilar mutually so it comes gradually differences”, it is his first basic argument, taught of human nature. On the scale of this problem, many Chinese philosophers have given wide versioned explanation just on it. For instance: Scholar FuYunLon (傅云龙) gives and concludes that Kongzi himself said is so scanty. As his one disciple said, “Whoever wisdoms cannot receive the Heaven law and the nature”, also it is not possible to be revealed. But, the meaning of this citation expresses itself, as Kongzi explained; it is so close natural feature for human life. Definitely, the question of what so close natural feature in human life had not been answered by Kongzi himself clearly⁶⁴.

Moreover, the thought, said by Kongzi “性相近也，习相远也”-“The real nature of the man is very similar but because of different habits and environments; it becomes dissimilar mutually so it comes gradually differences” was analyzed, these both of understanding “Human nature (人性)” and” Studying (习)” were discussed differently and it faced to some problems between differences of the normal man and the general man, expecting tradition of ethics.

The origin of citation “性相近也，习相远也”-“The real nature of the man is very similar but because of different habits and environments; it becomes dissimilar mutually so it comes gradually differences” said by Kongzi, is not incidentally revealed. Konzi’s this saying “子不语怪，力，乱，神”⁶⁵-“Strange, Power, Confusion, Gods and Demons” can be interpreted so.

Moreover, the saying “The man, not received respectfull, how to express demons. The man, not recognized the meaning of what the life is, how to comprehend death”⁶⁶ so there is obviously the idea of studying. Thus he initiated the idea, related to “The man of Heaven” and performed with the idea of Humanity (仁) to the policy of Spring and Autumn State. That is why; he emphasized that being Humanity (仁) was initially contrary understandings to “Strange, Power, Doubt, Gods and Demons”. So it is necessary reflected to the attitude of the way of property and the way of the heaven (天道自然观) in his basic idea.

Scholar FuYunLon(傅云龙) emphasized that this saying of “The real nature of the man is very similar but because of different habits and environments; it becomes dissimilar mutually so it

⁶³ Древнекитайская философия. М., 1994. 171

⁶⁴ 傅云龙. 中国哲学史上的人性问题. 求实出版社, 1982. 7

⁶⁵ 四书五经. 论语-述而. 外文出版社北京, 2012. 59

⁶⁶ 张燕婴. 论语译注. 中华书局, 2011. 151

comes gradually differences” is the basic idea for ethics. Certainly, being “Humanity (仁) is the fundamental concept and discipline. To clear up, the concept of being “Humanity (仁) said by Kongzi, linked with relationship with the five kind of ethics feature of respective, generosity, belief, smarty and beneficiary between the man and general man. The connectivity of these five kinds of feature in ethics is certainly one of the important sides on the concepts of “Honesty (忠) and forgiveness (恕)”⁶⁷.

Mongolian scholar R.Darikhuu, on the idea of human nature by Kongzi, gives an explanation and concluded: “In Kongzi’s view, “People nature is initially similar, but people differentiated for the knowledge and morality”⁶⁸ and this view means that people are similar when they were born but further on the way of educating adjust with social, they differentiates for the knowledge and morality, and it becomes the reason of social stratification.

And as he noted: “Desiring to sustain oneself, one sustains others; desiring to develop oneself, one develops others”⁶⁹ and “The achievement, you want yourself, wish to others too”⁷⁰, and in his book *The Analects*: His one of the disciples asked; is there one word, helping someone’s life? He replied: Of course there is, it is forgiveness, is not it? Do not do to others what you do not wish yourself”⁷¹.

Furthermore, one of the main concepts of Kongzi’s view Heartedness (爱人), derived from Humanity (仁) also, became fundamental idea for his some of the basic understanding “The way of honesty and forgiveness (忠恕之道)”. The explanation of Heartedness (爱人) in his doctrine, he said: Young man ought to be generous at home with his parents, outside of home, ought to be respectful to elders, intimate behavioral and honest worded and being humanity to others and ought to love others equally. If follow the teaching, in next day’s life, you would be powerful. So let us learn culture!”⁷² If focusing on this teaching, the concept of “All-embracing love (泛爱众) and as he said in the “The real nature of the man is so close...”, so it is directly related to the basic nature, seeming to be closer human life.

As he said this saying of “Only the man, had knowledge and humanity, could be loved or could be disgusted one (唯仁者能好人，能恶人)”, “If the king lost own morality, so how to be loved by others”⁷³, can be discussed that “Humanity (仁) really means that giving the ultimate norm of difference of judging good or bad in fresh mind. So it is a deal with clearing the sayings of

⁶⁷ 傅云龙. 中国哲学史上的人性问题. 求实出版社, 1982. 7

⁶⁸ Р.Дарьхүү. Дорнын болон Өрнийн философи дахь хүний тухай асуудал. УБ., 1996

⁶⁹ Fun Yu-Lan. *A short History of Chinese Philosophy*. Edited by Derk Bodde. NY., 1976. 43

⁷⁰ 张燕婴. 论语译注. 中华书局, 2011. 83

⁷¹ 张燕婴. 论语译注. 中华书局, 2011. 241

⁷² 张燕婴. 论语译注. 中华书局, 2011. 4-5

⁷³ 张燕婴. 论语译注. 中华书局, 2011. 42

“The real nature of the man is so close..,” and as he coordinated with certain social class, it was blocking someone’s personal interest.

Along this explanation of human nature problem, the concepts of ”Human nature(人性)” and “studying (习)” became main method in distinction meaning, clearly, it has a feature of determinism that “The knowledge cannot be sustain under the foolish (惟上智下愚不移)”⁷⁴, in other side, he emphasized that paying attention for cultivating and ethics development and “Studying is so big relationship”.

The scholar at Bohai university (渤海大学), Lihong (李宏) giving an explanation on the doctrine of “性相近也，习相远也”-“The real nature of the man is very similar but because of different habits and environments; it becomes dissimilar mutually so it comes gradually differences”. He explained that “In Mandarin Chinese, it means that man and people are similar by inner quality naturally, after next day, (as received environment influence) mutually differentiates due to every day habits”. In it, Nature(性) means human inner natural quality, studying(习) means following day habits and customs.

As Konzi said that inner natural quality differentiating is not so big and following day education and environment influence is main reason for the big differentiating⁷⁵ were explained so. As Lihong(李宏) noted that exampling from this saying of”习相远也”, Kongzi thought that “Man always desires developing, therefore, knowledge is too important”.

On basing on it above mentioned, by viewing this idea of human nature, connecting with human development concept and education concept, Lihong (李宏) explained that spending time for developing ourselves is naturally similar for all. Man keeps educating for own lifetime, so all kind of education is very important. Anywhere education falls and lacks, there may be an irregularity”⁷⁶.

Lihong (李宏) concluded that the sayings of“性相近也，习相远也”-“The real nature of the man is very similar but because of different habits and environments; it becomes dissimilar mutually so it comes gradually differences” is basic of theory of human development and educational concepts for Confucianism⁷⁷.

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⁷⁴ 傅云龙. 中国哲学史上的人性问題. 求实出版社, 1982. 8

⁷⁵ <http://cnki.net> 李宏“”从 性相近也,习相远也“管窥孔子教育思想”

⁷⁶ <http://cnki.net> 李宏“”从 性相近也,习相远也“管窥孔子教育思想”

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SUMMARY

Күнзийн хүний уг чанарын талаарх үзэл сургаалыг түүний эх зохиолдоо өгүүлсэн хэлцэнд тайлбар хийх, орчин үеийн Күнз судлалын судлаачдын үзэл сургаал болон Күнзийн шавь нарын үзэл сургаалтай харьцуулах замаар уг өгүүллийг бичлээ. Күнзийн сургаал дахь уг хэлцийн утга санаа нь олон хувилбарт утга санааг агуулсан болохын дээр бид өөрийн мөн чанарыг суралцах зам мөрөөр улам илүү ахиулах боломжтой гэсэн санаа нэн тэргүүнд буйг онцлон тэмдэглэх хэрэгтэй.

Жилин (Jilin)-ний Их Сургуулийн профессор ZhangLianLiang Күнзийн сургаал дахь энэхүү хүний уг чанарын тухай сургаалыг тайлбарлан, дүгнэхдээ: “性相近也, 习相远也” буюу “Хүн байгалиас уг чанараараа адилхан хэдий ч орчны нөлөөлөл, ялгаа бүхий зан заншлын улмаас амьдралын явцад өөр өөр болдог” гэх сургаал нь судалгааны маш өргөн утга агуулгатай юм. . “性相近也” гэх сургаалын энэ хэсэг нь хувь хүн бүр эхээс төрөхдөө, уг чанар нь нэгэн цогц мэт туйлын адилхан байдаг гэж тайлбарласан бол уг сургаал дахь “习相远也” энэ хэсэгийн утга нь, хойшдын өдрүүдэд хүн нь өсөж том болох явцадаа хүрээлэн буй орчин, амьдралын бусад хүчин зүйлийн нөлөөгөөр өөр өөр болох гэсэн утга хэдий ч, бусад судлаачдын үзсэн шиг суралцах боловсрох гэсэн утгыг бүрэн дүүрэн агуулдаггүй. Энэ сургаал дахь “习” буюу “суралцах” гэсэн үгийн утга нь хүний сайн болон муу зүйлийг сурах тэр үйлийг илэрхийлж буй болно. Суралцах үйл болгон сайн байх албагүй. Тэгэхээр бидэнд эхээс төрсөний дараах суралцах арга, суралцахдаа сайн үйлд суралцах арга, арга зүй эрхгүй шаардагдана. Иймээс Күнз өөрийн дараа дараагийн философийн зохиолууддаа ёс зүйн болон боловсролын талаарх сургаалаа багтаасан байдаг. Энэ нь зөвхөн энэ асуудалтай холбогдоод зогсохгүй ёс зүйн үндсэн эх сургаал руу хөтлөх үндсэн дөтлүүр сургаал юм. Цаашилаад Күнзийн энэхүү сургаал нь Өрнийн философи дахь хүний уг чанарын талаарх үзэл сургаалтай харьцуулагдах өргөн талбар юм.