

BASIC IDEAS OF CONFUCIANISM IN VIETNAM FROM THE 15th CENTURY TO THE FIRST HALF OF THE 19th CENTURY

IDEIAS BÁSICAS DO CONFUCIANISMO EM VIETNAME DO 15º SÉCULO AO PRIMEIRO SÉCULO DO 19º SÉCULO*

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Abstract: As the world is getting more integrated, competition takes the main forms of mind and "grey matter". Therefore, the educational reform in our country must be towards an open education, lifelong learning and learning society (Tuyet & Lan, 2021). In that context, it is needed to continue to inherit the values of Confucianism - the sociopolitical doctrines founded by Confucius in China during the Spring - Autumn and Warring States period and introduced to Vietnam about two thousand years ago - in the education of Vietnamese people. From a doctrine that prefers moral factors over law and establishes social order on the basis of education and teaching for people to have knowledge of the way of the sages and thus unconditionally adhere to the ruling class, Confucianism was used by the Chinese colonial government as a tool for colonial domination with the purpose of tightening the grip of the Han dynasty on our people. On the other hand, in that process of existence and acculturation, Confucianism had been transformed and participated in the formation of Vietnamese traditional values. In this article, the author only focuses on studying the perspective on education of some prominent Confucian scholars to clarify some statements regarding education of Confucianism.

Keywords: Confucius. Confucianism. Education. Vietnam.

Resumo: À medida que o mundo está ficando mais integrado, a competição assume as principais formas de mente e "matéria cinzenta". Portanto, a reforma educacional em nosso país deve ser no sentido de uma educação aberta, aprendizagem ao longo da vida e sociedade de aprendizagem (Tuyet & Lan, 2021). Nesse contexto, é necessário continuar herdando os valores do confucionismo - as doutrinas sociopolíticas fundadas por Confúcio na China durante o período da primavera - outono e estados em guerra e introduzidas no Vietnã há cerca de dois mil anos - na educação do povo vietnamita. De uma doutrina que prefere fatores morais à lei e estabelece a ordem social com base na educação e no ensino para que as pessoas tenham conhecimento do caminho dos sábios e assim adiram incondicionalmente à classe dominante, o confucionismo foi usado pelo governo colonial chinês como uma ferramenta para a dominação colonial com o objetivo de apertar o domínio da dinastia Han sobre nosso povo. Por outro lado, nesse processo de existência e aculturação, o confucionismo havia sido transformado e participado da formação dos valores tradicionais vietnamitas. Neste artigo, o autor se concentra apenas no estudo da perspectiva da educação de alguns proeminentes estudiosos do confucionismo para esclarecer algumas afirmações a respeito da educação do confucionismo.

Palavras-chave: Confucionismo. Confucionismo. Educação. Vietnã.

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1. Introduction

The ideology of Confucius was inherited and developed by Mencius in an idealistic manner. The contents of these ideologies were consistent with each other and became the Confucius' and Mencius' school of thought. This doctrine was later developed by Dong Zhongshu, and thanks to that, from the Han dynasty onwards, Confucianism served as the ideological platform for Chinese feudal centralized absolute dynasties. In the Warring States period, Xunzi developed Confucianism in a materialistic way, considering the origin of everything including human is vital energy [yin and yang], and that human nature is evil - a complete contrary to the view of Mencius that human nature is good.

In "The Contention of Hundred Schools of Thought" during the Warring States period, more and more schools of philosophy, politics and society, etc. had emerged; however, the four schools of thought that had significant influence on ancient Chinese social life were Confucianism, Taoism, Mohism and Legalism. Among them, Confucianism and Legalism have the strongest influence, and at the same time conflicting views on the direction of country ruling. Although most scholars of Legalism used to be students of Confucianism, they did not believe in the benevolent way of ruling proposed by Confucius and Mencius, and even thought of Confucian doctrine of goodness as the source of all crimes. From there, they proposed the option of applying law in an extreme manner to rule the country, and demanded a ban on other doctrines, especially Confucianism, in ancient Chinese society. That explains why, after reuniting China (21 BC), Qin Shi Huang issued many harsh decrees to eliminate the influence of Confucianism and other doctrines and hold supremacy of Legalism. Confucianism thus experienced a dark period in its history due to the burning of books and burying of scholars purported by Emperor Qin. Confucianism is a social philosophical doctrine; however, the doctrine itself is less interested in the relationship between man and nature and mainly defines its criteria as society, i.e. the stratification and human relationships in society (Thuy, 2018). Recognizing the inevitable existence of social caste, Confucianism asserts that its role is an argument for inevitability, and offers a method to maintain a stable society in the context of social caste, forcing people to accept it through a series of inalienable moral norms. (Lan, 2016; Quyet, 2019). Confucianism was founded in China and has had profound

influence on the entire social life of the country over its thousands of years of history. However, Confucian scholars through the ages had different points of view; their doctrines went through many ups and downs and even were subject to many changes, sometimes bought to cloud nine and sometimes severely criticized. In recent decades, some formerly Confucian countries have experienced rapid economic, social, scientific and technical development.

The nucleuses of Confucianism are "benevolence" (love people) and "righteousness" (do the right and the good things for people and society). Confucianism considers "benevolence" and "righteousness" the root of human personality. Accordingly, the implied sense of responsibility of Confucian morality is to love and do good things for people: "one who is humane loves other people" (loving others like loving oneself), "do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself". From that, benevolence and righteousness in Confucianism are developed and expanded into a system of five constant virtues (benevolence, righteousness, propriety, knowledge and truthfulness) or four beginnings (benevolence, righteousness, propriety and knowledge) (Tho, 2014). On the way of development, Vietnamese society has inherited many good traditions of the nation, including the contribution of Confucianism (Binh, 2016). Within the scope of this article, the author only delves into researching and learning about *"the basic ideas of Confucianism from the 15th century to the first half of the 19th century"*.

2. Research methodology

In this article, the research methods mainly used by the author include: historical and logical method; analysis and synthesis; systematic approach, comparison, combination of theory and practice, etc. in order to clarify the basic ideas of Confucianism from the 15th century to the first half of the 19th century.

This article refines research works with the principles of a comprehensive and historically specific method of argument. In addition, it also carries out a form of quantitative research. Through the presentation and analysis of some basic categories and principles of Confucianism in its formation and development, the author recognizes that Confucianism is not only a sociopolitical and moral doctrine, but also a philosophical one. Especially, it appreciates the positive factors of Confucianism, considering Confucian

morality as having a great role in educating and perfecting human morality as well as stabilizing social order and discipline.

The article uses a comprehensive approach to consider the importance of Confucianism in terms of education. Confucius was the founder of Confucianism and the first Chinese to provide academic education to the masses, to take education as a profession, and to expand the movement of teaching and travelling during the Warring States period. In general, Confucianism gives priority to teaching and education, and all great Confucian thinkers appreciate the ruler and value the important role of people in maintaining a stable social order.

The article also uses methods of analysis and synthesis to clarify humanity in education and thereby the basic ideas of Confucianism from the 15th century to the first half of the 19th century, in order to affirm that Confucianism is a doctrine that discusses a lot about social man and wishes to build society through the rule of propriety, virtue and literature. Therefore, the role of Confucianism in building such society is very important. Confucianism has the effect of stabilizing social order and bringing along a healthy and prosperous life to contribute to ensuring social security.

The article uses specific historical principles. It is understood that the focus on studying the educational content of Confucianism stems from the specific condition that Vietnamese Confucianism is completely identical to Chinese Confucianism, as Vietnamese people and families have many similarities to their Chinese counterparts. When Chinese Confucianism was introduced to Vietnam, it was "restructured" and "refracted", which led to the emergence of differences between Vietnamese Confucianism and Chinese Confucianism. Along with the development of Vietnamese feudalism, Confucianism gradually asserted its position in feudal society. More and more, Confucianism has proved its superiority over many other streams of thought in building the feudal state and maintaining social stability and order. The development of Confucianism has been associated with changes in all areas of Vietnamese feudal social life in history.

The article begins with a description of the basic contents of Confucianism in Vietnam from the 15th century to the first half of the 19th century. During this period, in addition to focusing on stabilizing the country, Confucianism also paid attention to education for country development and stability of dynasties.

3. Research findings and discussion

3.1 The birth and basic historical periods of Confucianism

Confucianism was founded by Confucius (551 – 479 BC) in around the 6th century BC during the Spring -Autumn period. After Confucius' death, Confucianism was divided into eight sects; particularly, in the Warring States period, two sects with different views were those of Mencius (327 - 389 BC) and Xunzi (313 – 238 BC). Confucianism was born in the context of chaotic Chinese society. The disruption of social order that had been established since the Western Zhou dynasty in the form of management and administration of bureaucracy by the Rites of Zhou led to the disobedience of vassal states against the Zhou dynasty and also caused bloody civil wars. In such a situation, the emergence of philosophical, sociopolitical and moral doctrines from disorder reflects an objective need for a theoretical basis to establish social order in China at that time.

After the collapse of the Qin dynasty, followed by the fall of the "rule of law" policy, Confucianism had a chance to be revived. Especially, under the reign of Emperor Wu of Han (140 – 87 BC), attention had been paid to Confucianism and since then it became the ideological pedestal for Chinese feudalism. However, the fact that the Han dynasty put Confucianism as the ideological pillar does not mean that it had completely broke up with legalist ideology, because a country cannot be governed without the law. Therefore, Dong Zhongshu (179 – 104 BC), the outstanding thinker who was honored as Confucius of the Han dynasty proposed the thought on ruling the country taking Confucianism as the center, while the law is implemented under the guise of theocracy. The combination of rule of virtue and theocracy is the personification of the symbol of "heaven", claiming that heaven was born to be the lord of all, among which human is the most noble. Based on that, Dong Zhongshu believed that to understand the affairs of heaven, human affairs must be considered. Between heaven and human there is a mystical connection, i.e. heaven knows whatever human does through the so-called "mutual participation of heaven and human". The power of heaven is in the reward and punishment through heavenly omens and spontaneous phenomena.

From the Song dynasty onwards, due to the influence of Buddhism and Taoism, Confucianism itself had to change academically so as not to lag behind the other two doctrines; however, despite the emergence of many schools of thought, among them still

contains the general policy, which is to find a way to understand the ideas of Confucianism, thereby the issues of ontology and epistemology are raised to explain the moral principles of this doctrine. From the Song dynasty onwards, Confucianism is known as Neo-Confucianism, including: Song Confucianism, represented by Shao Yong (1011-1077), Lu Jiuyuan (1139-1193), Zhang Zai (1020-1078), Cheng Hao (1032-1085), Cheng Yi (1033-1107), and the most accomplished of this sect, Zhu Xi (1130-1200); Ming Confucianism with the Doctrine of Mind by Wang Yangming (1472-1529), who inherited the ideology of Lu Jiuyuan from the Song dynasty to form the Lu-Wang school of thought and some other scholars; Qing Confucianism with famous thinkers including Yan Yuan (1635-1704) and Dai Zhen (1723-1777) who gave many critical views on Lu-Wang school of thought, epistemology of Song Confucianism, etc.

3.2 Basic ideological contents of Confucianism

Confucian classics that we often know today include the *Four Books* and *Five Classics*. The *Four Books* consists of *Great Learning*, *Doctrine of the Mean*, *Analects* and *Mencius*. The *Five Classics* consist of: *Classic of Poetry*, *Book of Documents*, *Book of Rites*, *Book of Changes* and *Spring and Autumn Annal*. Such classics underwent a long historical process to shape other books such as the *Thirteen Classics* and were either lost or extracted into other documents, such as the *Great Learning* and *Doctrine of the Mean* were extracted from *Book of Rites*, and were put into the *Four Classics* by Zhu Xi of the Song dynasty. The common point of these classics is their philosophical, political, social and moral content, reflecting the core ideas of Confucianism. The basic ideology contents of Confucianism can be summarized in the following aspects:

First, about heaven and mandate of heaven

Talking about to issues related to the natural world, Confucius often used the concepts of "heaven" and "mandate of heaven"; however, there is a supernatural nuance in these. Therefore, when it comes to discerning the academic content of Confucianism, people often perceive the worldview of Confucianism as dualism, because he said "Heaven does not speak; yet the four seasons run their course thereby", but when talking about human nature and condition, he believed that everything was predestined by heaven: "Heaven decides human characters and destiny".

Believing in the predestination by heaven, Confucius did not want to talk about "strange things, feats of strength, disorder, and spiritual beings", and advised people to focus on human affairs rather than spiritual ones. However, it is not by chance that Confucius emphasized the idea of "mandate of heaven". The origin of this ideology, in our opinion, is from the oldest Chinese classic, *Book of Changes* which academically discusses the origin and evolution of the world and the changes of phenomena in nature and society. Such changes are the driving force for the existence and development of each and all things. Confucius realized that the universe is constantly changing, and man himself is under the influence of that mysterious change, which he called "mandate of heaven". From there, he came to affirm that heaven has a will which governs the entire universe and human beings, and at the same time believed that understanding mandate of heaven is the condition to become a gentleman (Lan, 2021).

Not only affirming that a rational person understands heaven's will at the age of 50, Confucius also said that the gentleman must be afraid of it. He said: "The gentleman reveres three things: the mandate of Heaven; great people; and the words of the sages" (Lan, 1998). The concept of "mandate of heaven" by Confucius was systematized by Mencius and built into an idealistic philosophical content in the philosophical thought of Confucianism (Ho Chi Minh City Institute of Social Sciences, 1992).

Second, about people and society

Confucianism is first and foremost a sociopolitical doctrine; however, to achieve political purposes, the founders of this doctrine consider morality as the basic tool. Therefore, it can be said that human is a central issue in Confucianism. Although Confucianism does not focus on the origin of human physiology, it does question human nature, human relationships and human education.

Mencius continued to develop Confucius' idea of mandate of heaven and unequivocally asserted that human nature is inherently good. He said: "The tendency of human nature to do good is like that of water to flow downward." (Lan, 1998). That good nature is also endowed by heaven, and received by human with the pure heart of a child. However, whether that good nature is promoted depends entirely to the subjective will of human to "cultivate the heart and morally improve oneself", i.e. keeping to their originally good nature and cultivate it to become good-natured people.

Xunzi, on the contrary, believed that human nature is evil. He said: "Human nature is evil; goodness derives from conscious activity. Now it is human nature to be born with a

fondness for profit. Indulging this leads to contention and strife, and the sense of modesty and yielding with which one was born disappears. One is born with feelings of envy and hate, and, by indulging these, one is led into banditry and theft, so that the sense of loyalty and good faith with which one was born disappears. One is born with the desires of the ears and eyes and with a fondness for beautiful sights and sounds, and, by indulging these, one is led to licentiousness and chaos, so that the sense of ritual, rightness, refinement, and principle with which one was born is lost" (Gian Chi and Nguyen Hien Le, 1992). Thus, Xunzi believed that the goodness of human is thanks to "cultivating good and eliminating evil". Therefore, he advocated that: "the principle of governing the country is propriety and righteousness in combination with punishment" (Xunzi, *Working Songs*). In the thought of respecting the law, Xunzi always attaches great importance to both rewards and punishments" (Cac, 1994). Xunzi criticized the brutal way of ruling country and thought that propriety must be relied on to govern the country and educate people.

In the Han dynasty, Dong Zhongshu said that human nature is endowed by heaven, but he did not agree with Mencius' idea of the dominance of good nature and thus divided human into three types: above average, average and below average, called "Three Grades of Human Nature". Accordingly, the "above average" ones are innately good-natured; the "average" ones have the possibility of becoming either good or bad, and education will help in turning them into good people; while the "below average" have little talent, lustful, difficult to transform and only do evil. According to Doan Chinh, Dong Zhongshu's theory of "Three Grades of Human Nature" is the inheritance and exaggeration of the negative side of the theory of "Only the wisest and the most foolish do not change" by Confucius. It is the theoretical basis to justify the rationality of the feudal caste system (Chinh, 2012).

Thus, each founder of Confucianism has a different concept of human nature; however, they agree that for human to have good nature, various means of education and character cultivation are necessary.

About education and training of people

In cognitive reasoning, Confucius and his disciples always promoted the understanding of human world (society), i.e. social relations and moral behaviors corresponding to such relations. Therefore, according to Confucius, to love people, first and foremost, it is necessary to understand people (an intelligent man understands others).

Intelligence refers to the capability to think, while *understanding* refers to the ability to recognize and understand the subject as a whole and in general. In relation to others, Confucius introduced the principle of uniformity between *intelligence* and *understanding*.

Confucius said that, implementing the "Rectification of Names" is the basic in governing the country to bring a "dysfunctional" society back to being "controlled". He said, a king's nature is the ideal characteristics possessed by the king that are suitable for the "benevolent rule". A benevolent king is a true king whose name is rectified. If a king does not implement a benevolent way of ruling, he is no longer king, even if people still consider him so. Thus, in society, each name implies a number of responsibilities and duties for which the individual bearing it must carry out. That is the meaning of Confucius' doctrine of Rectification of Names (Lan, 2021)

About moral conduct through human relationships

Fan Chi, a disciple of Confucius, asked his teacher "about *Benevolence*", and Confucius said, "Cherish people" (Lan, 1998). However, according to Confucius, the love for people must be justified, thus he required to use reasoning to distinguish people, i.e. to know people: "Asked about knowledge, Confucius said: "Know people" (Lan, 1998). The love for people must be decent and for the right ones. Confucius brought this to the forefront in the connotation of *Benevolence*.

Next, another connotation of Benevolence which Confucius saw as the thing that made his way clear and consistent is *loyalty* and *reciprocity*. *Loyalty* means being wholehearted and sincere, while *reciprocity* means behaving the same way to help each other (Lan, 1998). That means loving others as loving yourself in the spirit of "Do not do unto others what you don't want done unto you" (Lan, 1998). This is the noble humanistic thought left by Confucius for us to contemplate and remember.

Finally, in order to be a person with *Benevolence*, according to Confucius, anyone must "overcome selfishness and keep to propriety" in his personal cultivation of moral character. Confucius asserted that his doctrine is only "reporting the words of the ancient sages without adding anything". In addition to "reporting", in all his thoughts and actions, he was consistent with the rites of the Zhou dynasty. He wrote: "I want to talk about the rites of the Xia Dynasty, but those of the state of Qi is not enough to be evidence. I want to learn about the rites of the Yin dynasty, but the state of Song is still there (although corrupted). I want to learn about the rites of the Zhou dynasty, which is currently being

applied, so I follow them” (Lan, 1998). Overcoming selfishness, according to Confucius, is controlling oneself to achieve the Way, that is, to cultivate the Way. Cultivating the Way is also cultivating oneself in order to "regulate the family, govern the state, then harmonize the world". The meaning of self-cultivation is so great that the book of *Great Learning* wrote as follows: “From the Son of Heaven down to the mass of the people, all must consider the cultivation of the person the root of everything” (Lan, 1998).

Self-cultivation is the basic step from which human gradually progresses to higher levels. Confucianism does not use the concept of "commitment", because along with promotion comes benefits, although in essence, progress in sociopolitical activities is also synonymous with commitment. The *Great Learning* also wrote: “Only after one’s person is refined may one’s household be aligned” (Lan, 1998).

"Confucianism always considers the "five constant virtues" as something each person should have. Based on faith, trust, morality, sincerity, wholeheartedness and wisdom, there is no discerning of age, caste, title or profession. Father - son, wife - husband, superior - subordinate, etc. must have trust for each other, which is expressed through each specific relationship” (Binh, 2016). Mencius stated the five (equal and reciprocal) relationships between humans; accordingly, the relationship between father and son must be based on kinship; between ruler and minister, obligations; between husband and wife, difference; between older and younger brothers, respect; and between friends, trust. Dong Zhongshu stated the three bonds (ruler-minister, father-son, husband-wife) according to the principle of yin and yang: the ruler, the father and the husband are consecutively the support of the minister, the son and the wife; on the other hand, the minister, the son and the wife consecutively depends on the ruler, the father and the husband as yin depends on yang). It is worth noting that whether there are three or five relationships, family relationships always account for the most part (3 out of 5 or 2 out of 3). Thereby, it is proved that family relationships are given more attention by Confucianism. The *Great Learning* wrote: “Those who wished to order their states first aligned their households”, which means: it is impossible to regulate others when you cannot even regulate your family members. Therefore, a gentleman should not separate regulating the family from ruling the country: being filial to his parents, respecting his older brother and being merciful to his children are similar to being loyal to the king, respecting his superiors, and being merciful to people." (Lan, 1998).

Confucius talked a lot about *Benevolence*: in *Analects*, it was mentioned 104 times, but each time with a different and appropriate definition depending on the context and who Confucius was conversing with. Meanwhile, for Mencius, *Benevolence* and *Righteousness* always go together to form a double category. Confucius rarely talked about *Righteousness*, he saw it as the criterion for people to earn benefits: *think of righteousness in the view of gain*. Meanwhile, Mencius' *Benevolence* and *Righteousness* were elevated to a philosophy of humane governance of the country with the core content of being close to people, responsible for people and even bearing nuances of democratic ideology.

The category of *Benevolence* in the time of Dong Zhongshu was considered as one of the five personal moral standards (five constant virtues). In terms of the Five Elements, *Benevolence* corresponds to Wood, indicating goodness and the ability to be shaped in the cultivation of human character. In the thought of Dong Zhongshu, the "three bonds" belong to social morality, while the "five constant virtues" are immutable personal moral standards. The combination of "bonds and virtues" is always mentioned in social moral relations, and at the same time creates an imprint on the influence of Confucianism on the moral behavior of Vietnamese people.

In summary, the basic moral content of Confucianism is expressed through the system of moral categories. The Five Constant Virtues (*Benevolence*, *Righteousness*, *Propriety*, *Knowledge* and *Truthfulness*) are categories that play as standards in moral relations, or rather, in human moral behavior to achieve the ultimate political goal of Confucianism, which is to establish social order and build or reconstruct an ideal social model. The means to achieve those ends is morality, and the method is *Rectification of Names*, i.e. the socialization of personality by *Propriety*.

In all doctrines of Confucian scholars, from the founder Confucius onwards, "There is no complete opposition between material benefits and morality, no disdain of getting rich, no denial of the positive role of economic development towards human perfection and social stability". (Binh, 2000).

In the research on Confucianism, Vietnamese scholars mainly focus on moral and sociopolitical education. Some believe that: "Confucianism contrasts morality with interests, especially material ones" (Lai, 1982). Author Nguyen Tai Thu made a general

comment on Confucianism as follows: “Vietnamese researchers generally deny the role of Confucianism in economic development” (Thu, 1982)

Third, about politics with a focus on the way of ruling the country

In an orderly country, "The ruler is a ruler, the minister a minister, the father a father, and the son a son" (Lan, 1998). After the names are discerned, the next works require the ruler to have integrity. Ji Kangzi asked about government, and Confucius replied: “To ‘govern’ means to ‘rectify’. If you were to lead the people with correctness, who would not be rectified?” (Lan, 1998). That means, the ruler must set an example for the world. Confucius continued: “If you were desireless, they wouldn't steal from you, even if you were to offer them a reward to do so” (Lan, 1998). The power of the ruler setting a moral example lies in the transformation by education to the point where there is no need to resort to punishments or killing: “In doing government, what is the need of killing? If you desire good, the people will be good” (Lan, 1998).. He further expanded that philosophy as follows: “If the men in charge love propriety, the people can't stand to be disrespectful. If the men in charge love fairness, then the people can't stand not to follow them. If the men in charge love trust, then the people cannot stand not to respond with their emotions” (Lan, 1998). However, according to Confucius, people without Benevolence cannot use Propriety, so there is a close relationship between Benevolence and Propriety, which pave the way for the implementation of Rectification of Names.

"Propriety" is understood in a broad sense as the rites, statues, disciplines, order and respect of common life in the social community, including daily behaviors. Therefore, people have to learn to behave with propriety. Confucius taught that "to completely overcome selfishness and keep to propriety is humaneness"; "a man who knows no propriety has nothing to establish himself" (Lan, 1998). Confucius said: "A ruler should employ his minister according to according to the rules of propriety; and ministers should serve their ruler with faithfulness (Lan, 1998). Learning, understanding and gradually coming to favor propriety are the basic steps of the ruler, because "if the superior keeps to propriety, it would be easy for him to rule over his subordinates" (Lan, 1998).

In short, in the basic content of Confucianism, *Propriety* plays an important role: it not only socializes human personality through moral behaviors and standards and helps people to establish themselves and climb the ladder of fame, but also an important factor in alerting people to the supernatural world (worshiping heaven, gods and ancestors).

Therefore, according to Confucianism, *Propriety* in governing works is indispensable, and since then, *Propriety* is not only a component in the rule of Virtue, but also referred to as a relatively independent concept: *rule of Propriety*.

4. Conclusion

Society during the Spring -Autumn and the Warring States periods was extremely complicated, giving rise to sociopolitical issues that we can generalize into the following four aspects: *First*, the chaos of notions of caste and status. *Second*, the vassals invade and annex each other. *Third*, a bitter conflict between peasants and lords. *Fourth*, the moral deterioration of society. During the Spring - Autumn and the Warring States periods, there were many philosophical schools, each presents its own different way of governing people and the country, called "the way to rule" It is also called the "political path"; accordingly, from *the Contention of Hundred Schools of Thought*, different forms of governance were born, namely: "rule by virtue", "humane governance", "rule by propriety", "rule by law" and "governing without action". The "humane governance" proposed by Mencius in essence is an emphasis on the role of benevolence and virtues of the ruler, accordingly, the ruler must implement a "benevolent way", which is promoting the role and position of people (the most important is people, the country comes in the second place, and the king is the less important) and taking care of people's life so that they can live prosperously. In essence, there are only three basic tendencies, namely: rule by virtue, rule by law and "governing without action". The third way is an opposition to the former "active" ways. However, the conflict between forms of country ruling is not in the aspect of being "active" or "non-active", but in the means of establishing social order, which leads to the confrontation between rule by virtue and rule by law, i.e. between Confucianism and Legalism. One doctrine uses morality to reform and propriety to set examples, where the core measure to regulate human behavior is public opinion, while the other imposes law on people to comply. In other words, one is benevolent, the other is despotic. Researching Confucianism, we cannot ignore the basic contents of it as well as the views on education of Confucian scholars such as Confucius, Mencius and Xunzi. According to Confucian point of view, educational contents are unified and penetrate into different fields of social life. This can be claimed to be the most brilliant achievement for the philosophy of the

view of life. From the basic contents of Confucianism, we see the practical need and task posed for the feudal class are maintaining and stabilizing the order of the feudal state apparatus to manage society according to the feudal model and develop the country according to Confucian doctrine. The viewpoint on education of Confucian doctrine continues to be selectively inherited in today's social life. Therefore, the study of Confucianism is yet completed, but needs further attention and more in-depth research.

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