

The Evolution of the Management Thoughts of Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism in Zhongnan Area

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Abstract: Mountain Zhongnan, located in the middle of Qinling mountains, is a natural boundary between the southern and northern China. Characterized by magnificent landscape and strategic meaning, it is a place adored by rulers. As early as the very beginning of Zhou dynasty, in the east of Zhongnan mountainous area, *Feng jing* and *Hao jing* ('hao' means brightness) was successively established alongside Feng River (one of the eight major rivers of Xi'an city, also known as the branch of *Wei River*). In spite of the vicissitudes of dynasties and ruling governments, this area had remained close to the heart of dynasties, such as Qin, Han, Sui and Tang. Thanks to its unique geographical condition, Mountain Zhongnan is not only the convergence of three main thoughts in China's history, namely Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism, but also the sacred palace where the China's ancient Ruling thoughts and ethic morals came into being. Zhongnan culture is a crystallization of Chinese material cultures and spiritual cultures. It integrated Nomadic Farming civilization of south China with the agriculture civilization of central China, the Rule of Ritual of Zhou Dynasty (1046-256 BC) with the Rule of Law of Qin Dynasty (221-207BC), the Ba Wang Dao (The Rule of justice and penalty, founded by Emperor Xuan) of Han Dynasty with Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism of Sui (581-618) and Tang dynasties (618-907). Then, in Song Dynasty (960-1279), it evolved into Zhongnan Xue or Guan Xue. Ever since then, Guan Xue, continuously refreshing itself as the time past, has left deep impact on the Ruling of royal governments and gradually become the symbol of the local culture.

Mountain Zhongnan (also known as Mountain zhongnan or Mountain Taiyi) is located in the middle of Qinling mountains, bordering Wu Gong (a county in east Xian Yang city) in west and Lan Tian (in today's south suburb of Xi'an City, including Chang'an district, Zhouzhi county and Hu county) in east, it is the natural boundary between the southern and northern China. Characterized by magnificent landscape and strategic meaning, it is a place adored by rulers. As early as the very beginning of Zhou dynasty, in the east of Zhongnan mountainous area, *Feng jing* and *Hao jing* ('Hao' means brightness) was successively established alongside Feng River (one of the eight major rivers of Xi'an city, also known as the branch of *Wei River*). In spite of the vicissitudes of dynasties and ruling governments, this area had remained close to the heart of dynasties, such as Qin, Han, Sui and Tang. Zhongnan culture is a crystallization of Chinese material cultures and spiritual cultures. It integrated Nomadic Farming civilization of south China with the agriculture civilization of central China, the Rule of Ritual of Zhou dynasty with the Rule of Law of Qin dynasty, the Ba Wang Dao (The Rule of justice and penalty, founded by Emperor Xuan) of Han dynasty with Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism of Sui and Tang dynasties.

It is at the foot of this mountain where Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism converged, which then formed the basis of ancient China's ruling ideology and morality principles.

Introduction

As King Wen of Zhou(also known as Ji Chang, the founder of Zhou Dynasty and also the author of the *Book of Changes*) once said: “*a old principality as the Zhou is, it’s our destiny to reform and innovate*”. Several years later, in order to systematize all sections of the superstructure, Zhou Gongdan (the fourth of King Wen of Zhou) established patriarchal system, which consists hereditary system, feudatory system and . Meanwhile, he came up with the System of Rite and Music as ways to strictly implement hierarchy and strengthen the unity among people especially who is from lower levels.

A major doctrine of the Zhou’s Rite is “*Qin Qin*”(means stay close to your family members) ,which was believed helpful to the Principle of Blood Relationship. The second content of the Rite calls “*Zun Zun*”(means respect people of higher level than you), it served as a rank principle on which political relationship were built and kept. The ceremony of the Rite is “*Yi*”(means ritual), which embraces kinds of rituals including worshipping ancestors, using troops, *Chaopin*(a code of time for kings to meet the governor), marriage and funerals. Aiming to “*differentiate the noble from ordinary civilians and put various levels in order*”, the Rite was applied to make sure that “*there is only one sun in sky, one lord of a soldier, one king of a country and one master of a family, and the ruler of a country is one and only*”(the *Book of Rite-49th Chapter*). Wang Guowei(1877- 1927), a master of Chinese culture, once praised the Rite as “*the Essence of the governing philosophies of King Wen, King Wu and Zhou Gongdan*” (the *Discussion on the System of Yin and Zhou*) . Decades later, Confucius (551-479 BC, known in China as Kongzi, a great thinker, educator and philosopher) adopted and developed Zhou’s rite, then he gave the birth to Confucianism. As such, we can proudly say that Zhongnan area is the home to Confucianism.

Hundreds of year later, Confucianism have become the core of ruling thoughts since the founding of Han dynasty, regulating the morality principle of ancient Chinese people for thousands years.

Also in Spring and Autumn period(770-476 BC), a recluse called *Laozi* or *Lao Dan* (another great philosopher of ancient China) wrote the book *Laozi* or *Classic of the Way and Virtue* based on the lifetime of his observation, understanding of universe and society in *Louguantai Platform*. His philosophy of naturalness and non-action was inherited and completed by *Zhuangzi* (396-275 BC) who finally formed Daoism, the school of philosophy parallel to Confucianism in ancient China.

In the Pre-Qin Period, Confucianism and Daoism opposed yet reinforced each other, with their codes of spiritual disposition, attitudes and lifestyles exerting a direct impact on the spiritual life, personality moulding and patterns of thinking and act. Moreover, the artistic spirits and aesthetic pursuits of Confucianism and Daoism represent the highest goals of China’s art spirit and also the soul of the mainstream of China’s art section.

The Rule of Law and the rise and fall of Qin dynasty

As descendants of nomad tribes, Qin people (in present-day west of Gansu province) was appointed for breeding horse for the court of Zhou. After moving into Guanzhong area(present-day Shaanxi province), they kept the ancestral aggressiveness as well as backward and brutal customs. In instance, when human sacrifice were abolished and man-like figure sacrifice was hated by Confucius, human sacrifice still appeared on the funeral of Lord Mu of Qin(681-621 BC, one of the *Five Hegemonies in Spring and Autumn period*), the rage and fury can still be seen read from *The Book of Songs*. Worse still, in the course of Qin unifying the other six states, millions of surrendered armies were slaughtered. After the unification, being disagreed with the authority, numerous

Confucian scholars were buried alive.

In this connection, Qin people showed special preference for the Theory of Legalists. In spite of failed reform in other six states, *Lord Xiao of Qin*(381- 338 BC) who was yearning for turning Qin into a powerful kingdom, risked recruiting *Shang Yang*(or *Gongsun Yang*, 395-338 BC, a famous politician, thinker and the representative scholar of Legalists in Warring States Period) to enact an overall reform in his country.

With prefecture system, officials in counties and prefectures were strictly administered. With improved administrative transparency in lower levels, the central control of *Lord Xiao* over local governments was greatly strengthened. In order to accelerate the growth of Qin's power, *Shang Yang* launched a host of policies: First of all, he abolished *Jing Tian Zhi*(Nine-square Field System) to encourage reclaiming non-arable land; Secondly, he made further efforts to prospering agriculture while obstructing business in an effort to assure the interest of central governors; Finally, he attached great importance to military reward system under which soldiers were strictly tested, as a result, the fighting ability of Qin's army had been greatly boosted.

Shang Yang's reform has laid a solid foundation for the later development of Qin. Thanks to the tremendously improvement in the period of *King Huiwen*(356-311 BC), Qin army made its way to crush down the other six states and ultimately unified China.

Ten years after the reform, Qin people became bold in wars without any infighting, each of the townships and villages were in perfect order. Although being executed for internal conflicts within royal family, *Shang's* amazing reform turned a new page for this ambitious empire. Years later, *Li Si*(284-208 BC, a famous activist of Legalism), *Han Fei*(280-233 BC, a great theorist of Legalism) went to Qin on invitation by court, under the three doctrines of Legalism, namely *Fa*(means a sound legal system), *Shu*(means strategy) and *Shi*(means the absolute power of the king), they continued to implement the policy which gave top priority on agriculture, wars, rewards and punishment.

The rigorous law system led to a fast rise of Qin but as well as a quick collapse in just 14 years after its unifying China. As a result, *li* (means rituals)was added to *the Rule of Law* by governors of Han dynasty so as to rectify the Legalism thoughts. Given the successful practice, from the *Northern and Southern dynasties*(420-589) to *Sui and Tang dynasties*, ruling classes made a good use of the crystallization of kinds of wisdoms, such as *Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism, the Rule of Law* and *li*.

Huang & Lao Studies and the Study of Confucian Classics in Han dynasty

In the early years of Han dynasty, *Huang & Lao Studies* were adopted and advocated by ruling class. With tax alleviation and corvee and peaceful foreign policy, the Studies finally led to an unprecedented enrichment in society during the *Wen and Jing Period* (also known as *the Rule of Wen and Jing*), “storehouses of cities and villages are full of grain”, “so much money piled in treasury that the string is rotten”. Later in the period of *Emperor Zhao and Xuan* (87-48 BC), another round of rapid development was registered in all sections of China because of the comeback of the studies (also known as the *Zhao and Xuan Resurgence*).

The period of *Emperor Wu*(156-87 BC) witnessed the heyday of Han, also at that time the prime minister *Dong Zhongshu*(a famous Confucian theorist in Han dynasty) submitted to *Emperor Wu* “rejecting a hundred of schools but Confucianism”. With the approval of the governor, *the Books of Poetry, History, Li, Changes and Chun Qiu* was venerated as *Five classics*, alongside that, the official position *Wu JingBoshi*(means scholar) who was in charge of lecturing and compiling those authoritative philosophy reappeared, and the official-selection system which is based on the study of classics was carried out. These policies necessarily entailed the trend of studying classics and the

monopoly of Confucian Classic in policy making, thoughts and culture.

However, a Confucianism worshipper as the *Emperor Wu* may be, he appointed a good many cruel officials in his later years. At the same time, he sacrificed the *God Taiyi*(also known as Zhongnan) in *Taiyi Temple* at the foot of Mountain Cuihua. As such, *Emperor Xuan* concluded the Thoughts of Han's policies as "*the quintessence of Ba(justice), Wang(penalty) and Daoism*" (*Han Shu-Emperor Yuan*).

In the course of Han dynasty, Confucianism, Daoism and Legalism reinforced each other, which formed a unique cultural type which coincided with the China's feudal landlord economy and patriarchal monarchism. And this kind of cultural type lasted for two thousand years until Qing dynasty(1644-1911).

***Yi Shu*, the Translation Study of Buddhist Scriptures and the Hermit Fashion in Tang Dynasty**

After comparing the cultural psychology of Medieval Europe with the one of Tang dynasty, H.G Wells wrote in *A Short History of the World* that "*When westerners got entangled in the darkness of Medieval Theology, Chinese people were open-minded, pleased to explore and embrace all cultures*". Tang people welcomed an eclectic variety of different cultures, which was mainly reflected on their inclusive cultural spirit, the parallel policies of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism together with the *Yi Shu*, Translation Studies of Buddhist Classics and Hermit Fashion. And this inclusive spirit, invariably anchored in a powerful country, manifested a fearless and unreserved style by the vigorous young intellectuals of traditional landlord class. With unparalleled achievement in art, unprecedented unity, prosperity, inclusiveness and widely intake from other cultures, Tang turned China into a splendid word of art. The poetry, calligraphy and drawing also reached their apogee in this period. To most of the philosophers in ancient China, Tang was always synonymous with "*Era of Glory and Enrichment*".

In 666, *Emperor Gaozong* (r.649-683) recognized Laozi (Li Er) as the ancestor of the Royal family and conferred to him the title of "*Tai Shang Xuan Yuan Emperor*". In 602, *Emperor Taizong*(r.627-649) appointed *Kong Yingda*(574-648)to compile *Wu Jing Yi Xun*(means the Five Classics with many explanatory notes). Under the guideline of "*balancing Shu(refers to dredging the meaning of a sentence) and Zhu(means note of single words)*", Kong accomplished the book with philosophies from Buddhism and Daoism. In the middle of Tang, *Liu Zongyuan*(a famous poet and thinker) called for "*No interference of Tian(means the nature) in people's affairs* " while Han Yu put forward "*Dao Tong*"(consistent in Confucianism and that is different from Daoism). In the late Tang dynasty, *Li Ao* (a famous thinker) stood for "*the Resurgence of Confucianism*" in an effort to revitalize Confucianism.

The Translation Study of Buddhist Scriptures began in Eastern Jing dynasty (317-420). In 402, *Kumarajima*(an eminent monk in ancient China)set up *Caotang Temple* (means humble cottage) at the foot of Mountain Guifeng and summoned 3000 of his students to translate Buddhist scriptures. In his last twelve years, the master of Buddhism and his students have translated more than 35 sets of scriptures in 294 volumes, including *The Heart Sutra*, *The Lotus Sutra*, *The Diamond Sutra*, *The Vimalakirti Sutra*. Two hundred years later in early Tang dynasty, *Xuanzang*(602-664) with more than 50 learned monks translated 75 sets of scriptures in 1335 volumes he brought back from Magadha(present-day central-north India).As the founder of Vijnaptimatratra School(also known as the Consciousness-only School), *Xuanzang*had only contributed famous scriptures such as *Yogacarabhumi* and *Vijnaptimatratrasiddhi*, but also translated and introduced to India the Sanskrit version of *Classic of the Way and Virtue* and *Awakening of Mahayana Faith*. And his remains were

interred in *The Great Xingjiaosi Temple* in Mountain Zhongnan.

Also at that time, hermit fashion was very popular among scholars and intellectuals. Many of them settled in Mountain Zhongnan waiting for good time while others who already have positions in court came here in search of pleasures of traveling. Wang Wei, “*the Buddha of Poetry*”, spent days sitting in meditation and reciting Buddhist scriptures at his *Wang Chuan* cottage in *Lan Tian* (present-day Lan Tian county). Meanwhile, he built a spiritual system which held *Ben Kong* as his world view, confirming to nature as life philosophy and freedom from dull routines as life enjoyment.

Guan Xue after Song dynasty

In Song, Zhang Zai(1020-1077) set up *Heng Qu Academy* in his hometown Mei county. Bearing traditional Confucian thoughts in mind, Zhang dedicated his whole life for his dream, namely “*to establish a system of spiritual value centered on Ren and Filial Piety, to assure ideal occupations for every man, to carry forward the great Confucianism and to open an everlasting prosperous and flourishing age for offspring*”. Based on the epistemology of “*Go into Details of Every Trivial Changes*” and the cultivation theory of “*studying the principles of the nature to analyze instincts of human beings*”, he established an academic system featuring “*the Book of Changes as principle, the Doctrine of the Mean(Zhongyong) as aim, the Book of Rite as body and the Confucianism of Confucius and Mencius as law*”. Besides that, he noted that “*by Taixu, there were heaven; by transformation of material force, the name of proper way; combined of virtual and gas, the name of nature; together with perception of the determination of name.*” Based on this thesis, he founded the Guan Xue.

At the beginning of Qing (1644-1911), After combining Guan Xue with Yangming’s Philosophy and Neo-Confucianism, Zhouzhi scholar Li Yong(1627-1705), with emphasis on theory and practice, he called for “*a wide-ranged study contains both philosophies of Cheng(Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi), Zhu(Zhu Xi), Lu(Lu Jiuyuan) and Wang(Wang Yangming) and applied learning*” In spite of poverty throughout his lifetime, Li successfully carried forward the *Dao Tong of Confucianism* and strictly upheld his integrity. For his great achievement, Li, with Li Yindu(1632-1692) of Fu Ping county and Li Bai(1630-1700) of Mei county, was called *One of Three Li in Guan Zhong*. Ever since then, Guan Xue developed along the path of combined theory and practice of Li Yong.

After the First Opium War in 1840, Guan Xue scholars such as Liu Guyu(1843-1903), under the guidance of *Lasting and Practical* of Guan Xue, switched from the study of western science and technology to the analysis of western political and education system, the critique of system to rethink of culture. They introduced western natural science and sociology into Guan Zhong area, which integrated Guan Xue into the academic ocean of modern China. On behalf of Liu’s students, Li Yizhi(1882-1938) and Wu Mi(1894-1978) actively devoted themselves to the study of new disciplines and technologies and eventually made prominent contribution to the development of China’s social science and natural science.

Above all, amid thousands years of conflicts and argument, Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism consistently derived nourishment from each other, which finally led to a culture rich in diversity, inclusiveness, compatibility. And the Zhongnan culture have also eternally renewed itself and revealed its strong vigor over thousands of years.

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