

Confucianism and Its Influence on Deng Xiaoping's Reforms

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Abstract—The paper studies the specifics of modern Confucianism, its relationship with Chinese Marxism and the influence of Confucianism on the reforms initiated in the 1970s by Deng Xiaoping. In China, since the beginning of civilization as the cumulative spiritual experience of society, the philosophical doctrines become the key normative component of human's mental and material activities and his relations with the state, social institutions and family. The most important philosophical teaching of China for two and a half millennia has been Confucianism, which includes philosophical, sociopolitical, ethical, and religious components. The modern People's Republic of China is a socialist state in which Marxism-Leninism as an ideology is harmoniously combined with the traditional philosophical doctrine - Confucianism.

Keywords—Confucianism; Marxism; Deng Xiaoping's reforms; ethics; religion; mentality; ideology; social harmony

I. INTRODUCTION

Spiritual beginning has played an important role in the development of mankind in all historical periods. It was the spiritual factor that became the main, system-forming part of the structure of Chinese civilization throughout its development. It is quite logical that in recent decades, the interest in the problems of Chinese tradition has focused on Chinese classical philosophy as a “mirror of Chinese civilization”.

One of the main reasons for the successes of the Chinese economy for the past 40 years is the fateful reforms that were started by Deng Xiaoping in 1978. Deng Xiaoping's ideas were not limited to economic reforms. He called upon scientists and the population of the country to “liberate mind”, to find a realistic approach to reality, to synthesize the Confucian doctrine of “correcting names” with Mao Zedong's ideas of the movement “for correcting the style”, so that instead of old dogmas, the mind was filled with new ideas. The key thesis was Mao Zedong's theoretical position that it is necessary that the «chinification» of Marxism turns into an idea of “socialism with Chinese characteristics”.

II. REFORMS OF DENG XIAOPING AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN CHINA

Since the reforms of Deng Xiaoping, the leaders of modern China are guided by the famous Confucius' thesis of “no matter what color is the cat, the what matters is that it catches mice” and are choosing purely pragmatic model, that doesn't emulate a specific model of economic development, but instead sets the task of the fastest raise of national consumption, economic growth and reinforcement of state power.

By putting forward the Confucian slogan of “practice is the measure of truth”, they gave up on the model of development that was imposed by International monetary fund and The World Bank. International experience told them, that the greatest success was achieved by countries with mixed economy, which combined active state policy and market with national traditions and customs. Deng Xiaoping had decided to talk to the people using language that was understandable and close to him, which is why it was decided to reanimate Confucianism. If under Mao Zedong Confucius was considered a “rat crossing a street”, that had to be finished off, then Deng Xiaoping had turned this “rat” into ideological «key» with which the hearts of ordinary Chinese people were opened.

Without renouncing Marxism with its atheistic ideas, Deng Xiaoping brought the country to Confucian rails, turning to historical memory of the population, as he understood that for many centuries Confucianism helped to form the Chinese mentality. Moreover, he clearly understood that Confucius' ideas constitute the fundamental values of Chinese civilization. In Confucianism, five virtues could be distinguished: Humaneness (Ren), Justice (Yi), Proper Rite (Li), Knowledge (Zi) and Integrity (Xin). Confucianism always helped with reinforcement and centralization of power, raised public discipline in China, promoted subordination of the younger to the elder, unquestioned execution of orders of senior officials, helped to remove lazy and unenterprising people from the power structure, as well as extirpation of corruption as a large-scale phenomenon. [1]

In the era of Deng Xiaoping, a national idea that mobilized all forces of the country had formed, and it was specified as a program of four modernizations: industry,

agriculture, science and technology, education and national defense. Deng Xiaoping remembers the Confucius' covenant that before teaching people and urging them to something, they first have to be "clothed and fed" so that they can reach the necessary level of "warmth and satiety" so that their urgent needs are met.

So for 40 years since the beginning of the reforms of Deng Xiaoping, the annual growth of country's GDP in some years raised by 14% (for example, in 2007). Because of that, Chinese economy became the second in the world after USA economy. In 2016, the volume of nominal GDP of China was 11,2 trillion dollars, while USA in the same period – 18,57 trillion dollars. By Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), since 2014 China began to outpace USA. Since 2010 China's economic growth rates began to decline from 10,6% in 2010 to 6,7 in 2016, therefore average growth of Chinese GDP since the beginning of 1980th is about 10% per year.

One of the reasons of high growth of GDP is due to cheap labor and huge investments into country's internal infrastructure and industry. Starting 2009, PRC becomes the main exporter in the world. In 2016, according to WTO, PRC's share in global export was 2, 1 trillion dollars, while the share of USA was only 1,45 trillion dollars.

In October 2015, the CPC Central Committee had decided that by 2020, it is necessary to double GDP per capita of the country's population compared to 2010.

III. CONFUCIANISM AS THE FOUNDATION OF CHINESE CIVILIZATION

It is important to note, that according to Confucian ethics every Chinese must combine achievements of personal success and profit with the interests of their country, reinforce its prestige, contribute to harmonic synthesis of traditions and modernizations.

In his speeches, the leader of PRC Deng Xiaoping liked to remember Confucius' ideas about three types of state, successes of development of which depended on professional and moral aspects of the ruler. These ideas are topical even today:

- A well-governed state – is a state that helps a man to fully realize his abilities. Only a lazy man would be poor in such a state;
- A poorly governed state – is a state without morals. It is governed by amoral leaders, so decent and honest become poor;
- A state that is not governed – is a state in which iniquity and chaos rule.

Confucius noted that in the first type of state it is shameful to be poor, in the second type of state it is shameful to be rich, and in the third – people do not live.

Deep traditions of interethnic solidarity, the feeling of belonging to the great, and the most ancient Chinese civilization are the conditions of self-esteem and identity of absolute majority of Chinese people.

Every Chinese, wherever he lives, having achieved an outstanding success in any area, is only imbued with self-esteem when his personal achievement is acknowledged on his historic homeland. It is not by chance all outstanding Chinese scientists and public figures, after achieving some degree of success in USA, France or Russia, rush to their historic homeland to present their personal achievements to their fellow countrymen.

Speaking of "socialism with Chinese characteristics", the leaders of the country as their main priority view the building of "moderately prosperous society" (xiaokangshehui). This society implies a significant growth in living standards of the population and evolutionary transition from the status of economically developing country to the status of economically developed one.

The concept of Deng Xiaoping had kept its leading role in public sector, yet envisioned the development of multi-sectoral economy, the economic independence of enterprises and irregular growth of living standards of different population groups. The central role was assigned to self-reliance, and first of all, the development of education, science, technology, as well as educational work among the youth.

The main method of realization of reforms was in "acting with both hands": "one hand" for the reforms and openness, the other – to prevent economic crimes and reinforce monocracy; 'one hand' - to develop material culture, other – spiritual one.

The main goals set by Deng Xiaoping – maximized growth of productive forces, elimination of large polarization of population, increase of general prosperity. These goals at the initial stage were the essence of "socialism with Chinese characteristics". Herewith, Deng Xiaoping viewed political stability as the foundation for "bold actions" in development of reforms and openness. Deng Xiaoping put forward the slogan "Get rich!".

The idea of resurgence of China became a nationwide idea. The developments of productive forces were viewed as the main goal by the leader of China. Class struggle was rejected by the leadership of China in the name of consolidation of the entire population and the building of harmonic society. Moreover, economic transformations had happened evolutionary, gradually, without sudden surges. At first they were perfected in the special economic zones in order to test their efficiency. Deng Xiaoping called to follow the principles "practice is the measure of truth" and «no matter what color the cat, what matters is is that it catches mice»; set the task to proceed based on the national characteristics of the county.

In foreign affairs, Deng Xiaoping bequeathed to his followers a certain style of interactions with foreign countries. He advised the future leaders of China to "calmly observe, acting like a monkey that watches a battle of two tigers from the mountain", strengthen international positions, while staying in the shadow, without attracting attention; defending their own views, by no means going for the first place and always creating something real.

The West had met the changes in China with caution, assuming that the country is trying to buy time and is waiting for an opportune time to strike the enemy. However, with the rise of Xi Jinping the policy of “staying in the shadow without attracting attention” had moved aside. The modern, powerful China advances its interests far beyond the borders of its country.

Deng Xiaoping understood that Confucianism is based on fundamental values of Chinese civilization. The teachings of Confucius – is quite a flexible system that is capable of constant renewal. The social technologies, with which bureaucracy controlled the society and tried to smooth out the social conflicts and contradictions were based on these teachings.

IV. SPECIFICITY OF THE CHINESE TYPE OF MENTALITY

Deng Xiaoping intuitively understood the importance of Confucianism as an ideology for the ordinary people, as a special type of mentality. In this regard, it is appropriate to recall the ideas of C. Jung.

As a result of the research of the human psyche, C. Jung came to the conclusion that in the structure of the spiritual world of a human being, aside from personal unconscious, exists a deeper stratum of the psyche – collective unconscious, which has a universal, supra-personal nature. The collective unconscious holds the concentrated memory of humanity, keeps thoughts and feelings that are universal for all human beings and are the result of our emotional past. Jung views collective unconscious as a base structure of a human psyche, as a vault of universal wisdom, some sort of universal mentality [2] [3].

Mentality as collective-personal formation is steady spiritual values, deep axiological installations, skills, automatisms, latent habits, long-term stereotypes, viewed in set spatial-temporal borders, that is the basis of behavior, way of life and conscious perception of certain aspects of reality. In its essence mentality is a historically processed archetypal representations, through the prism of which the perception of the basic aspects of reality occurs: space, time, art, policy, economics, culture, civilization, religion.

Contemplation of mental properties of mind of one or another social group allows to find the way into “hidden” layer of social mind, that deeper and more objectively transfers and reproduces the mentality of the era, to dissect the deeply rooted and hidden behind an ideology slice of reality – images, representations, perceptions – which in most cases keeps unaltered even with a shift from one ideology to another. This is explained with a higher, compared to an ideology, stability of mental structures.

National mentality is of a particular interest. In this case mentality or mindset is a centuries old survival experience of an ethos. It is not mind, not a mental activity of people; it lies in collective unconscious. Mentality here is closer to survival instinct, but unlike an animal instinct, it has a social nature. Ethos mentality is preserved for centuries; it can't be influenced by education, preaching or propaganda.

In the framework of Jung's study of mentality as a deep foundation of spirituality, its dominant core, it is important to note, that combination of archetypes occurs as a generalization and condensation of experience of preceding generations, that is inherited by the new generations, in their psyche.

The question arises: in which way do these latent, archaic, unconscious spiritual structures that record the experience of human history, are transmitted, how invariants of psychic qualities and behavioral reactions are saved in spirituality of each new generation? There are three possible answers for this question.

The first answer is connected to the definition of mentality as such content of the psyche that is coded in the structures of the brain, is consolidated in the course of evolutionary-historical development of a human and is transmitted genetically as a biological inheritance of certain brain structures. The second line of reasoning, in search of an answer to this question, is very traditional and defines mentality as a result of socialization of a human, acceptance of social norms, rules, stereotypes of behavior in a certain society. The third type of answer to the question of transmission channels of mental contains of spirituality peculiarly combines biological and social aspects: translation of historical experience is done through education (i.e. social way), but only through blood relations – from parents to children (here, the biological aspect is involved).

The reforms of Deng Xiaoping well fit the Confucianism “eight principal virtues and eight principal vices” of a man. The “principal virtues” are: love of Homeland, service to the people, diligence, aspiration to science, mutual support, honesty, lawfulness. The “principal vices” are: damage to the Homeland, betrayal of the people, ignorance, laziness, egoism, dishonesty, life for pleasure, violation of laws.

Confucius believed in almost limitless capabilities of a human being and, based on this belief, always sought to further the spread of knowledge. He thought that with the people's aspiration to education it is unacceptable to make any kind of differentiation. Proclaiming the principle of equal capabilities in education, Confucius theoretically opened the access to bureaucratic posts to any Chinese. This principle played a revolutionary role in the system of China's state structure.

Reasoning about the behavior of a learned man, Confucius lists seventeen characteristic displays, inherent to said man, among them: scientist's self-establishment process, looks, communicability, his dedication to his principles even in the face of death, breadth of the scientist's soul, ability to support talented, independence, respectfulness etc. Possession of an academic degree was prestigious, gave a lot of benefits and hastened career advancement in China for many centuries. So the educated elite of office-holders were created.

Confucius' idea was effectively used by the leaders of China who followed Deng Xiaoping – Jiang Zeeman and Hu Jintao. Hu Jintao often liked to use Confucius' thesis in his

speeches that «aspiration to unity through dissidence is the most valuable».

In modern China, Western worldview and technologies play a huge impact on the life of the society. And yet, thanks to the particular qualities of Chinese mentality, Western worldview and technologies, clashing with Chinese values and Chinese worldview, don't misplace them, instead forming a symbiotic conglomerate in mass consciousness. Classic Chinese worldview is kept, since Chinese, while passing Western knowledge and Western worldview through themselves, take from them only what accords their spirit and understanding. All of this is characteristic of the psychology of an ordinary Chinese, whose worldview is formed and exists through the structure of their language, through ideas of values, through metaphorical system and sayings. It is not by accident that Chinese thinker Zhan Zhidong liked to say: "Chinese knowledge is the essence; Western knowledge is the tool".

This unprecedented by the length of its accumulation time and diversity of forms spiritual experience is able to become the productive force and transform into social matter. Our native researcher A. Kobzev in his interview to "Literary Newspaper" makes a bold assumption that "modern post-Christian West, in its rebuking of ascetic idealism of Platonists and Fathers of the Church, reorienting from otherworldly values to all-around values, automatically took the path of signification, since the path of Chinese worldview consists of a naturalistic view of reality, pragmatism and the priority of vital values" [4].

In 1970-1980s with the initiative of Deng Xiaoping, an ideological campaign for the research of philosophy took place. At its center stood installations "free the mind", "follow realistic approach", "practice is the measure of truth", "no matter what color is the cat, the what matters is that it catches mice", "while crossing the river, look for the stones".

The thesis of "freeing the mind" meant fundamental reevaluation of understandings of socialism that were put forward by classical Marxism. The idea of the leading social force of social-economic reforms is changed. Now it's not proletariat, but the working class that includes intelligentsia.

Chinese leadership, led by Hu Zingtao, gave special significance to the principle of "hexie" (harmony, accordance). This term is one of the central terms of ethical-political doctrine of Confucianism. According to its newest interpretation, it means tolerance, leniency, and peacefulness. Because of this, outside the country – thesis of peaceful development of China is put forward, while inside it exists the message of friendly affairs between people. This usage of ethical principles indicates the seriousness of Chinese leadership towards providing societal stability.

Confucian concept of social harmony was declared tone an important part of "socialism with Chinese characteristics". The basic principles of harmony are the combinations of the future and the past, diversity and unity, justice and efficiency etc. Harmony is one of the fundamental aspects of being and implies cooperation, conjoined evolution, synthesis. Harmony is not nor a static but a dynamic notion, hence

harmony as an image of dynamic balance can be viewed as a premise for the successful development of China for the last forty years.

V. CONCLUSION

As a result of deepening globalization and political openness, the tendency of westernization and liberalization of all spheres of China's social life is strengthening. "Davos" and mass cultures increasingly infiltrate the social consciousness. Due to these and other tendencies in Chinese society, a particular reorientation of Chinese propaganda is happening: along with continuous emphasis on socialistic ideals the tendency of appealing to traditional Chinese values, most of all Confucianism, is being reinforced.

Thinking in a Chinese way means thinking in metaphors, typical situations, which are located in consciousness in the form of proverbs, sayings and stable word-formations, which in their majority rise to the historical experience. Mentality of a regular Chinese is manifested in that he's unhurried in his judgments, conclusions, tries to control his consciousness and not to look for an easy way, has a strong sense of duty. He pays more attention to reason, not to feelings.

According to Sinologist A. Kobzev, "no economic growth in such a huge, diverse and complex country, which is comparable to an entire continent, and has a lot of problems accumulated in a course of a century and a half of continuous and crushing disasters, could exist without special forces that go far beyond the boundaries of economics" [5]. This is about a colossal cultural-historical potential of China, which has no analogues among all countries in the modern world.

"Socialism with Chinese characteristics" can be viewed as mastering the worldwide social experience of management and development. This is a new attempt to breathe life into the ideas of socialism. As such, China became the successor of the new model of socialist civilization.

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