



Confucius: A Philosophy of Life in Chinese Society

Hemas Mutia Rasyid^{1*}; Fitri Khairunisa Lestari²

Faculty of Cultural Science, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia
Email: hemasrasyid14u@student.uns.ac.id; fitrikhairunisa2334@student.uns.ac.id

Abstract

The country of China is the birthplace of the leading philosophers, one of whom is Kong Zi, better known as Confucius. By his wisdom, he was entrusted as Minister of Public Works, Commissioner of Police, and Minister of Justice by the king during the Zhou Dynasty when he was 35 to 60. This research aims to explain Kong Zi's philosophy of life as profoundly as possible using data collection that has been studied. The analysis is written using a qualitative method of data collection. After Kong Zi did not serve in government, he wrote a lot and published books about poetry and poetry. This great philosopher also often takes time to share knowledge with his disciples. Kong Zi teaches his pupils first to understand life and relations with fellow human beings. The Confucian view of life emphasizes life in the world by not involving mystical things, and advancing critical thinking makes Confucius look more modern. The popularity of the philosophy of life by the Confucian to this day is still widely used by many people.

Keywords: Confucius; Philosophy; Wisdom; Aligned; Chinese Society

Introduction

China is a country of high morality. The Chinese civilization, starting with the system of law, rules, moral ethics, and decency, as well as the systems of society and behaviour in social and national life, began to be applied in the era of the Zhou Dynasty (1027-256 SM). Many philosophers were born during the Zhou dynasty. One of the philosophers born and whose teachings remain guidelines to this day is Confucius or Kong Zi. He developed a moral philosophy. Ethics and morality are the core of Confucian teachings regulating human relations. In the Confucian society, "don't do anything to others that you don't want them to do." Confucius's moral doctrine has elements of human wisdom, justice, rules of conduct, knowledge, integrity, loyalty, respect for parents, courage, shame, honour, dignity, honesty, forgiveness, hygiene, and a knightly attitude. With the guidelines above, we will have a quiet and orderly society.

Every individual must have trust in their daily lives. According to Prof. Syamsudin Nasution, trust is recognizing someone's honesty and ability to meet expectations truly. Trust is a belief in a person to occupy a particular position because it is recognized that he has the ability and honesty to assume the position so that it can genuinely meet expectations.

Confucius, or Confucianism, is a central figure in Chinese history who lived between the 6th and 5th centuries BC. A philosopher and moral thinker, his teachings became the foundation of Confucian ethics and influenced many aspects of social, political, and cultural life. In his profound outlook on life, Confucius emphasized the importance of ethics, morals, and values as the cornerstone of a harmonious society.

Explore the life and intellectual legacy of a man who left a significant mark on the history of Chinese thought.

Research Methods

This research uses a qualitative-descriptive method. We are utilising various literature sources, both online and in print, including books, journals and other related articles. By emphasising understanding a phenomenon, the advantage of this qualitative approach is that it can capture the nuances, feelings, and subjective perceptions of individuals and groups towards an issue or phenomenon that occurs in society. This is relevant to the topic under study, which is related to the value of the Chinese philosophy of life-based on the thoughts and moral values of Confucius' teachings.

Results and Discussion

Origin of The Kong Zi Family

Confucius' lineage dates back to Duke Xiang of Song, a member of the Song nobility. Zhengkao, Confucius' ancestor seven generations ago, assisted the Grand Duke, Duke Wu, and Duke Xuan of the Song Dynasty for many years. He was known by many as a cautious and frugal person. Kong Fujia, the son of Zhengkao, Confucius' ancestor six generations earlier, supported Duke Mu of Song, who, before his death, made a will to Kong Fujia to keep Prince Yuyi, later known as the Duke of Song. While serving the Duke of Song, Kong Fujia started a war against the state of Wei in Zheng but was defeated. The courtyard of the Confucius Palace was then located in Qufu, Shandong province. The Song people were dissatisfied with this defeat. Capitalizing on their discontent, Hua Fudu, another nobleman in charge, led a rebellion and killed Kong Fujia and the Duke of Song. Kong Fujia's son, Mujin, fled to the state of Lu, and his family became citizens of the state of Lu. Confucius' father, Shuliang He, was a powerful man and was made a Zouyi noble in Lu state because of his military service.

Shuliang He's wife, Lady Ge, had nine daughters but no sons. In ancient China, not having a male heir meant the end of the bloodline, which was the most unforgivable act of filial piety. Shuliang He then married a concubine, who gave birth to his eldest son, Mengpi, but Mengpi was born with a non-functioning leg, so he could not be a legal heir. Shuliang He then proposed to Mrs. Yan, saying he intended to marry one of her three daughters. However, thinking himself old and vile, he asked his three daughters for consent. Two of them were unwilling to do so, but the youngest, Yan Zhengzai, agreed. Yan Zhengzai was not yet 20, and Shuliang was over 70. The difference in their ages was huge. Zhou Dynasty's manners stipulated that it was a breach of ways to marry after age 64, so historians noted it.

Confucian family member Sima Qian uses "forbidden" to describe marriage. Shuliang He and his wife, Yan Zhengzai, lived on Mount Ni. In the 22nd year of Lu Xianggong (551 Before Christ), she gave birth to Confucius. Legend says that Confucius was born with a protruding skull and was named Qiu (literally "hill"). Before Confucius was born, Yan Zhengzai prayed at Mount Ni. Confucius was the second child, so his courtesy name was Zhongni (meaning second child). When Confucius was three years old, his father, Yan Zhengzai, died. His mother, Yan Zhengzai, left the Kong family to raise Confucius alone.

Kong Zi

Kong Fu Zi is known as Kong Zi, and Westerners call him Confucius. Kong Zi was born in 551 Before Christ in Zouyi, Lu State (now Qufu, Shandong Province). As a child, he had the nickname Qiu or Zhongni. By the time he was 15 years old, Kong Zi

had studied various textbooks. As a young man, he was known to be wise, courteous, and intellectual. With his tenacity and wisdom, Kongzi was appointed prime minister and minister of justice at the age of 36 until the age of 60. After retiring from government service, he published books on poetry verse and compiled ancient manners.

Kong Zi also taught and shared his knowledge and experience with his students. He accepted anyone who wanted to be his student indiscriminately. Kong Zi taught his students first to understand life and relationships with fellow human beings because he taught that humans are social beings who need each other. He always encouraged people to do good. Confucius advised, "Love your neighbour; do not do things to others if you do not like to be done to them." Confucius was a great ancient Chinese thinker, statesman, educator, and the founder of Confucianism. From the early Han Dynasty, Confucianism became the norm in Chinese society, and Confucius became the spokesman of Chinese culture. Later rulers revered him as "the greatest sage" or "the last great teacher." People praised Confucius by saying: "If Confucius had not been born, the world would have been in darkness forever."

Kong Zi's thought profoundly influenced many aspects of Chinese culture. However, all of his existence came after his death. Although he was a politician with exceptional management skills, he was beset by bad luck and disappointment in his political career, failing to realize his political ambition to govern and stabilize the country. He travelled to various states, organizing dukes in the hope that they would carry out his political ideals, but was ignored. In his later years, he returned to his hometown of Luzhou to compile historical documents and teach. At age 67, he returned to his hometown to teach ancient traditions in written form. Kong Zi died in 472 Before Christ at the age of 73. He bequeathed six arts to his 72 disciples. Kong Zi's philosophical teachings are called Rujia.

Confucius showed great interest and love for rituals and music. As a child, he often imitated sacrificial rituals and prepared sacrificial instruments to practice salvation. Confucius, therefore, cultivated the habit of diligence and respect from an early age. Confucius said that he had been dedicated to learning since the age of fifteen and was always willing to learn from the strengths of others. He said: "When I am with two people, they can be my teachers. I will appreciate their merits, I will follow them, I will find their faults, and I will leave."

After his political career in Lu ended, Confucius led his disciples Yan Hui, Zilu, Zigong, Ziyou, and Zixia on a fourteen-year journey throughout the state, spreading upright ideals. His reign was to restore the rituals of the Zhou Dynasty. He first went to Wei and stayed there for ten months. She then went to the state of Chen because Duke Ling of Wei suspected her. Passing through Kuang, he was surrounded by people there. After being rescued, he went to Prussia, where he returned to Wei. After that, he went to the Song Dynasty through Cao. Huan Tui, the Song Dynasty's Minister of War, intended to harm him, so he had to leave Song in favour of Chen to go to Zhen. For three years, he lived in Chen, an area that was frequently attacked by significant powers such as Jin, Chu, and Wu. He learned much about life and the importance of good relations between people and his travelling disciples. Kong Zi explained to his students, "While your parents are alive, observe the customs of loving them; after they die, observe the customs of burying them; observe the customs of making offerings to them." Kong Zi also discusses customs. Because they are a critical link in cultivating virtue. Why is the classic work that records the words and deeds of Confucius and his disciples called "Analects"? People often think that the Analects (Lunyu) is a collection

of Confucius' responses to his disciples and contemporaries and dialogues between his disciples.

Many disciples recounted Confucius' words and deeds. After Confucius' death, his disciples collected and compared their notes and compiled them into a book, hence the title "Analects (Lamyu)." Ban Gu said, "lun." was completed after Zengzi's death. Zengzi died forty to fifty years after Confucius' death, and probably Zengzi's disciples finished the book. In addition, Zengzi is referred to as a "teacher" in the book, whereas Confucius' other disciples are rarely referred to as such. Their names often call them. This proves that most of the editors were disciples of Zeng Tzu. As the most crucial Confucian classic, the Analects has received much attention and research by many generations of scholars. They have reasoned and explained from different perspectives depending on their thinking and understanding, giving rise to many ways of understanding the Analects. Statistics show the number of comments on The Analects exceeds 3,000.

The Philosophy of Life by Kong Zi

The teachings of Kong zi, also known as Confucianism, became one of the most critical things in Chinese civilization and a symbol of the highest goodness of character in Chinese society. If rulers were loyal to Confucianism and could implement its principles, they would be considered reasonable. Even in China itself, Confucian doctrine was used as a tool to select court officials. A person who passed a test on Confucian teachings would be accepted as a state employee. Confucius' methods are rarely argumentative, conveying his ideas through allusions, satire, and even tautology. Everyone knows that in Chinese society, the kinship system is patriarchal, and the head of the family (jia zhang 家长) plays a critical role in social life. Confucianism is no longer necessary in this modern era, as many modern schools and education in China, especially in big cities, abandon the traditional family system and clan structure. The Confucian system cannot be maintained at this level due to societal changes such as the emancipation of women through economic freedom and employment opportunities. That everyone can become a "saint", according to Confucian moral concepts, shows that everyone has equal potential and is similar. Therefore, no power system can eliminate or weaken this positive aspect of Confucianism.

In an evolving and contemporary China, this state of affairs will remain. As the components of Confucianism have been passed down and passed on until today, Confucianism cannot be separated from contemporary China. Today, Confucianism is not an ideology. Confucianism in China today is only visible on a personal or private level and a bureaucratic level. The current resurgence of Confucianism is not about restoring old traditions and reviving ancient teachings and practices but because Confucian values have been rooted in the lives of Chinese people for generations. Confucian moral and spiritual values that focus on moral responsibility and human understanding of life are believed to survive in the future and not be eroded by the rapid pace of globalization.

Conclusion

From the above, it can be concluded that Confucius and Confucianism have contributed to modern society regarding moral emotions and life values. Confucian ethics, which emphasises the individual or self as the centre of all relationships (Wulun), does not emphasise the personal rights of individuals but rather the responsibilities of individuals in society. The Confucian tradition can make a significant

contribution to world unity and harmony (天下一家) tian xia yi jia. The current revival of Confucianism is not aimed at restoring ancient traditions and reviving teachings and practices that have existed since ancient times, but rather because Confucian values, passed down through generations, have been deeply rooted in the lives of Chinese people. Confucian moral and spiritual values emphasise moral responsibility, an understanding of human life believed to remain in the future and not be eroded by globalisation.

References

- Chou, M. J., Tu, Y. C., & Huang, K. P. (2013). Confucianism and character education: a Chinese view. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 9(2), 59.
- Covell, R. (2004). *Confucius, the Buddha, and Christ: A history of the Gospel in Chinese* (Vol. 11). Wipf and Stock Publishers.
- Hartati, C. D., & Rudyansjah, T. (2021). Transformation of the sacred and the profane in space and time case study Chinese ritual in Chinese temple in Bekasi, West Java, Indonesia. *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences*, 42(1), 43-48.
- Hartati, D. (2016). Konfusianisme dalam kebudayaan Cina modern. *Paradigma: Jurnal Kajian Budaya*, 2(2), 13.
- Hartig, F. (2012). Confucius Institutes and the rise of China. *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, 17, 53-76.
- Jensen, L. M. (1997). *Manufacturing Confucianism: Chinese traditions & universal civilization*. Duke University Press.
- Kuo, Y. P. (2013). 'Christian Civilization' and the Confucian Church: The Origin of Secularist Politics in Modern China. *Past & Present*, 218(1), 235-264.
- Lasiyo, L. (2007). Unsur-unsur Filsafat Manusia yang Terkandung dalam Pemikiran Filsafat Cina dan Manfaatnya bagi Peningkatan Sumber Daya Insani. *Jurnal Filsafat*, 1(1), 9-18.
- Tan, C. (2015). Beyond rote-memorisation: Confucius' concept of thinking. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 47(5), 428-439.
- Tsai, D. (2005). The bioethical principles and Confucius' moral philosophy. *Journal of medical ethics*, 31(3), 159.
- Wang, X. (2021). The tradition of confucianism and the positioning of Chinese philosophy in the development of the new century. *Advances in Educational Technology and Psychology*, 5(10), 32-38.
- Woods, P. R., & Lamond, D. A. (2011). What would Confucius do?—Confucian ethics and self-regulation in management. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 102, 669-683.
- Wright, A. F. (1975). *Confucianism and Chinese civilization* (Vol. 138). Stanford University Press.
- Yao, X. (2000). *An introduction to Confucianism*. Cambridge University Press.
- Zhang, T., & Schwartz, B. (1997). Confucius and the Cultural Revolution: a study in collective memory. *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 189-212.