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POLITICAL-SOCIAL VIEWPOINTS IN THE PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT OF XUNZI¹

Pontos de vista social e político no pensamento filosófico de Xunzi

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Abstract: Xunzi's socio-political views were created during the Spring and Autumn period (Sheng-Hsi, C. 1975). Xunzi's Philosophical thought was born with the aim of transforming society from chaos to prosperity through improving people's awareness. Xunzi's views also had certain influences on the social period in which he was living with certain contributions. In this article, the author will focus on clarifying the socio-political views of Xunzi through such issues as identity point of view; views on human nature, and views on society from the perspective of history and philosophy.

Keywords: socio-political viewpoints; philosophical thought; Xunzi.

Resumo: As visões sócio-políticas de Xunzi foram criadas durante o período da primavera e outono. O pensamento filosófico de Xunzi nasceu com a pretensão de transformar a sociedade, do caos à prosperidade, através da melhoria da consciência do povo. As visões de Xunzi também tiveram certas influências no período social no qual ele viveu com algumas contribuições. Neste artigo, o autor focará em esclarecer as visões políticas e sociais de Xunzi através de questões como o ponto de vista da identidade, visões sobre a natureza humana e visões sobre a sociedade a partir da perspectiva da história e da filosofia.

1. Introduction

Xunzi is a great man in the history of Chinese culture, philosophy and Confucianism, with outstanding contributions and far-reaching influence (Wang, X. 2021). He is also considered to be the last representative of Confucian thought in the Confucian period, with the preservation of typical works of Confucian doctrine (Yates, R. D. 2016). In his works, he critically summed up the ideological results of the thinkers of the Pre-Qin period to create a fusion of Confucianism, Legalism and other ideologies that upheld Confucianism. (Knapp, K. N. 2010). That fusion made Xunzi one of the founders of materialism at that time (Jiyu, R. 2010). The philosophy of Xunzi was deeply influenced by the materialism of the Spring and Autumn period - Warring States period. Throughout his philosophical system, Xunzi was very skillful and ingenious when effectively inheriting materialistic and dialectical views, bringing a new nuance to the Chinese philosophical system during the ancient Chinese period in general and his time in particular.

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Despite advocating “ritual”, the content of the ritual of Xunzi is much different from the ritual of Confucius. If Confucius demanded that the ceremony be derived from the inner self-consciousness, then the ritual of Xunzi is a mandatory and coercive requirement in social relationships (Guying, C. 2018). The ceremony of Confucius is to serve the superior, while the ceremony of Xunzi is “*Cut the long to make up for the short, make up for the shortage in the excess*”. This ideology of Xunzi has many similarities with the Legalist, so many people consider him to be the form of Confucianism but the content is the Law (McLeod, A. (2018). His theory became the weapons of the new feudal landlord class to establish a new order (Harris, E. L. 2016) However, he also had progressive views such as: Recognizing the important role of the people (king is the boat, people are waters. Waters carry boats, waters also capsize boats), he opposes the collective system, opposes using the wealthy to make impeachment heavy or light (Harris, E. L. 2013). Thus, we see that Xunzi did not perceive all of Confucius's ideas in a dogmatic, mechanical, and book-like manner, but understood it in a creative spirit. to better suit the Chinese society in the Warring States period.

2. Research Methods

The article aims to clarify the socio-political views in the philosophical thought of Xunzi and provide discussions on these issues. To achieve the goal, the article will focus on clarifying issues such as: identity point of view; views on human nature and views on society from the perspective of history and philosophy.

In order to perform well the research objectives and tasks, the article must implement historical rigor, comprehensiveness, multi-dimensionality, consider socio-political views in the philosophical thought of Xunzi in relationships with thinkers of the same time for accurate comparison and discussion.

When studying the socio-political views in the philosophical thought of Xunzi, the author approaches the research problem from the perspective of dialectical philosophy; philosophy in politics; Philosophical history to analyze and interpret the contents.

Also use the following specific methods:

Historical - logical method (Peña-Hernández, N. M. 2023): The article uses this method to consider and evaluate socio-political views in the philosophical thought of Xunzi in the era in which it was born, in order to string the series of scientific problems that the article achieves. On the basis of historical data, the author will draw the regularity of its movement and development.

Methods of collecting information (HR, G., & Aithal, P. S. 2022) and documents: The author collects documents such as books, newspapers, magazines in Vietnam and other countries about socio-political views in the philosophical thought of Xunzi to prove their statements.

Analytical and synthesis method (Kong, H., et al. 2022): This article uses this method to analyze the relationship of socio-political viewpoints in the philosophical thought of Xunzi. On that basis, the author will generalize and synthesize to have the evaluations.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Nominal point of view

When it comes to socio-political views in Xunzi's philosophical thought, we can't help but mention the theory of rectification of names. This theory has been mentioned since the time of Confucius about issues of morality, but by the time of Xunzi, this theory had developed to a new level. Xunzi developed the theory of rectification of names of Confucius when he said, let the ruler be ruler, the subject be subject; let the father be father, and the son be son (Staal, Frits. 1979). Xunzi said that, when society was still dominated by theocracy, people did not recognize the name of an object associated with its function, but assumed that the name of the object was created by a supernatural

being. From the point of view of simple materialism, Xunzi believes that name is always associated with reality. Thanks to the established name, it is possible to distinguish the name and the things so that they are not confused with each other. Xunzi went as far as to develop the rectification into a system of logic (Tsai, C. H. 2014).

Continuing to develop the logical views of the previous philosophical schools, Xunzi pointed out the effect of the name and the basis for making the name. From the point of view that people cannot distinguish the name of each thing, there is confusion between things. Things are different, so the names are confused, the precious is not clear, the homogeneity is indistinguishable. There will be things of not understanding, and the work that leads to errors is an inevitable thing. Therefore, the intelligent person must clearly distinguish the name of each thing in order to name it to clearly understand its use. The purpose of naming each thing is to clearly distinguish thing and person. Each person, each thing has a name and indicates the different will help people see things easily. The creation of "name" of Xunzi not only has epistemological and logical meaning but is also associated with social and ethical meanings. That is also the theory of rectification of names in the philosophy of Xunzi. This view not only requires people to be aware of having to build concepts and names (names) that are right for things and phenomena (real) called by names, but also requires everyone in life to properly perform his/her position (i.e. his title). Xunzi has a chapter dedicated to the rectification of names. It concentrates on the relationship between names and actuality, on the one hand, and politics, on the other (Feng, C. 2016).

In the theory of logic, Xunzi considered the concept to be the general, the essence to be drawn from different concrete things and then to be abstracted. He also said that the general nature and nature of the concept is to refer to the whole thing or a type of thing, through which it is possible to distinguish the similarity and the difference of things and phenomena in the objective world. Therefore, he divided into two types of names, according to the similarity of things, namely "common name" and "proper name". Xunzi has been labeled as a nominalist (Graham, 1989, p. 141); a constructivist (Hagen, 2002), a conventionalist and an absolutist (Hansen, 2000, pp. 319–322), a realist (Eno, 1990, p. 272), a semantic inferentialist (Lin, 2011), and a correlativist (Möller, 2001) when it is assumed that all things have names, similar things have the same names, things Different names are different. In order to avoid the confusion of name and reality, people must take that common convention as the standard and model for all their activities, thoughts and inferences. That is, once a name has been established, conventionally applied to a real thing, it can only be applied to that real, not arbitrarily changed and applied to other realities. Moreover, the king must use his legal system and authority to create a name, specify the meaning of the name, and define the title for clarity and unity. With that unique logical reasoning, Xunzi criticized and pointed out the fallacy of the philosophical schools of that time when dealing with name and reality. Thus, the righteous name of Xunzi mainly serves the socio-political doctrine, in which, it can be said that the most important is the idea of evil.

3.2. Perspectives on human nature

On the basis of the theory of "malignancy", Xunzi said, "*human nature was essentially bad*" (Wang, R. R. 2005). The reason he said that "*human nature is inherently evil*" is because people are born with desires. Therefore, they are always looking for ways to satisfy those needs. Satisfying the needs of individuals in society will lead to competition and looting. That process forms in human "evil". He believes that human nature at birth is the same, inherently evil. But when growing up, due to social circumstances, living environment and educational environment which make them become difference. Therefore, the government must make laws to govern the people. Besides the legal form, the king must also educate the people towards the common moral values of the society.

According to Xunzi, human nature is essentially evil, but through education and culture this evil can be rooted out and replaced with goodness (Perrett, R. W. 2002). The views on human nature contemporaneous with Xunzi have such views as: being good, being unwholesome (Ivanhoe, P. J. 1994); qualities that can make them wholesome or unwholesome; neither kusala nor akusala; benevolence. These four views are recorded in the book of Mencius and the view of "evil" by Xunzi. Xunzi advocated evil, in contrast to Mencius advocated good. Xunzi advocates that what is suitable with reality and makes society stable is good, on the contrary, what is not suitable with reality but makes society chaotic, that is evil. Thus, empirically, man's nature consists of desires and feelings (Perrett, R. W. 2002). Stability or disorder is considered a standard to judge and distinguish between good and evil. According to Xunzi, what is in accordance with ceremony and righteousness that leads to equality, and what is contrary to ritual and meaning that leads to disorder. Xunzi denies an inherent goodness, he sucks therefore be committed to the belief in an inherent badness (Chong, K. C. 2008).

In society, anything comes from a certain motive, any motive will have that result. Usually the motive is good, the result is also good, but not all things happen according to that rule, sometimes the motive is good but the result is evil and vice versa. From that point of view, the evaluation of behavior, based on motives or outcomes, depends on specific historical circumstances. Xunzi takes equanimity as the standard to distinguish between good and evil. Equality can not only be understood as the motive of egalitarianism, but also as a result of egalitarianism. Xunzi said that people are born with a will, if they want to, they can seek and demand; Seeking and demanding without limits, limits cannot help but fight. The fight is chaotic, and the chaos is miserable.

To prove the view that human nature is inherently evil, Xunzi gave two arguments: one direct and one indirect to defend his point of view. In the direct argument, he proved that human nature is inherently evil because people want more, so love is given (more) for wealth, but sin is reduced. When I eat, I want to eat well, I want to dress well. Everyone wants and needs a lot. Everyone's needs are the same, everyone wants the same thing but supplies are limited. Indirect argument is considered a psychological principle. What is available where we are, we do not need to look outside, on the contrary, what is not available in our place needs to be searched outside. People want to be good, because people are inherently evil, if they are bad, they want good, when they are narrow, they want to be wide, when they are poor, they want to be rich, and when they are low, they want to be rich. So if you're rich, you don't want money, and if you're rich, you don't want power. Xunzi once advocated that "humanity is wanting more", greed has no bottom: one wants to have ten, one can never "satisfy". The rich still want to get richer because they don't think that being rich enough, they still feel poor.

2.3. Social Perspectives

When studying the origin of the social system, he showed that humans differ from animals in having hierarchical distinctions, social organization and social activities according to the nature of the community. According to Xunzi, the reason why people live in a community is because each member of society obeys a certain position and responsibility, called "fate". Every human being has to rely on each other and naturally help each other. Humans cannot exist in isolation because life takes place according to the law of symbiosis. In the process of existence, people must exchange the fruits of their labor for each other to coexist, so the work of a hundred workers is to feed one person. Moreover, if people are not united, they cannot combine their strengths to conquer nature, conquer all things, and ensure their own survival. Humans exist in the salt of mutual and mutual relations, so there is birth and death. Xunzi pointed out, humans differ from animals because they have social organizations and social activities in a collective and harmonious manner (Ivanhoe, P. J. 1994). According to him, the reason humans live in community is to survive, to contact, exchange, and help each other naturally and inevitably.

People's strength is not equal to that of buffaloes, they cannot run like horses, but buffaloes and horses are controlled by humans because people have wisdom. The process of human development has divided society into two basic types of people: intellectual workers and manual workers. Although these two types of people have two different forms of labor, the person with wisdom is the ruler of the person without wisdom. According to this assignment, in society, there must be something, superior, inferior, who is in any position, they must perform their own position. The clear delineation of the upper and lower order will be an important factor for social stability.

Xunzi said that in order to stabilize society, the government needed to make life easy for the people. In addition, there must be regulations for society to have order from above and below. The ruler must know how to gather and promote the abilities of each person. In social theory, Xunzi upholds humanity, respects music, respects religion, and rules the country. The leader is considered a standard for others to follow, if the leader is honest and upright, the society will be honest and upright, or vice versa. The head is considered to be the measure for everyone in society, so the king is the root of the people, so the source is clear, the water is clear, the source is cloudy, the stream is cloudy. Therefore, if the king does not love the people, does not benefit the people, but asks the people to love him, it is not possible. The people did not follow, did not protect the country, but asked for strong soldiers and durable cities, it was not possible. If the army is not strong, if the city is not durable, it will lose its country. Therefore, if the king wants the country to be strong, rich and to maintain its sovereignty, it must have people to protect it. To do that, the king must constantly take care of the country. If you want to take care of the country, you must use good and talented people, for the talented people to help the king, you must be kind. If the leader lives with virtue and kindness, the society will be peaceful and the people will love and protect it. Xun Kuang said that victory or defeat were not a question of weapons or tactics, but the general relationship between a ruler and his people (Kuang, X. Xunzi 荀子).

In his socio-political perspective, Xunzi also said that the king was not worried about not having strength but worried about not having virtue, because with virtue, he would have strength. The gentleman takes virtue, and the petty man takes strength. Strength is to let virtue dictate. The strength of hundreds people who wait for the king to succeed, the unity of a hundred people wait for the king's virtue and then reconciles, the wealth of a hundred people waits for the king's virtue and gather, the power of a hundred people waiting for the virtue of the king and then rest, the life of a hundred people waiting for the virtue of the king and then a long time. Here, Xunzi wants to say that the person who becomes the king takes virtue and treats the people, the people will put forth their strength to serve the king. Hundreds of them have strength, unity, wealth and influence, but it is necessary to have the virtue of the king to manage to not create competition.

In his social theory, Xunzi also criticized the way the country was ruled by brutal power. He said that society respects moral leaders, that is, they respects the common beauty and their common interests. If the king wants to make the society stable, he must make everyone in the society ethical. The king must use his virtue to transform the world, and use his mind to benefit the world, then everyone must respect and cherish it. If the king is only for his own interests, then he is a tyrannical king, contrary to religion. God created the people not because of the king, but created the king because of the people. The people must respect the king, but when the king is a cruel man, the people have the right to leave and set up a new king. This view also agrees with Mencius, who says: killing the brutal king of a country is like killing an animal. Therefore, if anyone knows how to rule the world with benevolence, the world will be at peace, and if anyone uses cruelty to rule the world, it is dangerous. Therefore, if the king wants peace, there is nothing like honoring and respecting the wise, and if he wants to make a name for himself, there is nothing like loving the sage.

The socio-political views of Xunzi have a contrast with the previous Confucianists. Confucianism in the past all used holy kings like king Yao and king Shun as the standard. Xunzi said that the ancient saints and the three great kings (Xia,

Thuong, and Chu) were no different, because the kings of all dynasties followed the same religion. Therefore, if you want to see the affairs of the millennium, then look at the affairs of today. Now, the gentleman that everyone respects. Smart people know from near and far, because one knows many. The situation in the past is different, the treatment for disorder is also different. Xunzi believes that people who are ignorant and do not know how to reason will be deceived, not to mention things that have not been seen since ancient times. Smart people use their own ideas to infer people's ideas, so compare people with people, compare feelings with feelings, compare things with things, and infer things from the great Dao, it's the same in the past or now, just the same. is inferred. The type of thing does not change, even though it has been around for a long time, its reason is still the same, no different. So the way is deviated, the way is still not mistaken, it is because of knowing the analogy. Three Sovereigns (Nair, R et al. 2012), no one left a legend, not that there were no sages at that time, but because it was so long ago, no one knew for sure. The Five Emperors Dynasty (Nair, R et al. 2012) did not leave a legacy, not because it did not have good politics at that time, but that it was lost for a long time. The politics of King Vu, King Thang has been transmitted, but not as clearly as the politics of the Zhou Dynasty, it is not that King Vu, King Thang does not have good politics worth passing on, but because of a long time, politics that is no longer evident than in the politics of the Zhou dynasty.

Long time, things become fade; recently, things are clear. After long time, there is only the outline left, recently, things are in details. A stupid person who listens to the general outline cannot understand the details, and the person who listens to the details cannot understand the general outline. So in the long-term, ritual disappear. The Gentleman must clearly justify what is right and wrong. There is no one who does not like to say what they think is right, and the Gentleman likes that even more. So the petty person argues dangerous things, the gentleman argues kind things. Words that are not suitable for kindness are better to be silent than to speak. Words that are in harmony with kindness are often said to be noble, not often spoken as lowly. So the word of kindness is really great. Those above who say these words and lead the people below will have good orders, and those below will use those words to show their loyalty and dissuade wrongdoing, then they will save the superior people. A gentleman does not get bored with benevolent people, loves benevolence with his heart, acts according to benevolence, and speaks benevolently, so a gentleman must argue.

Words sound vivacious, but they have no basis. There are many lies in action, but no effect. They can't worship the wise King upper, they can't regulate hundreds of families lower, but their tongue is still crooked. They talk and stop inappropriately, they are snobbish, boastful. That's the villain. He must be killed first, then the bandits: The robbers can be taught, but they can't be.

To people of the army, the throne is respected but the will is reverent, the mind is careful, but the way is great, the hearing is near, but the understanding is far. Because my word is kept like that, the love of thousands and thousands of people and the love of one person is the same. Heaven and Earth were born in the beginning as they are today.

Xunzi said that the king was always the same, and people's temperaments were always the same. He said: The Holy King has hundreds, I know who to imitate. Because, the long-term literature is lost, the long-term rhythm is great, the eternal private ownership in the middle of the long-term law is also lost. If you want to know the career of the holy king, look at it clearly, that is, look at the queen. The other queen is the ruler of the world, leaving the queen and following the ancients is like abandoning his own man and following his benefactor. He also said that: if you want to see a thousand years ago, then look at the current days; if you want to know ten thousands, look at one or two; if you want to know the ancient times, look at the Zhou Dynasty; If you want to know the religion of the Zhou Dynasty, you should clearly examine the king that people consider precious. Therefore, by taking near, you know far, by taking one, you know ten thousand, by taking the hidden, you know the clear. The hopeless person said: *"In the past and in the present life, the difference in love is because of the different ways of*

treating chaos". People are so enthralled by hearing this, they are stupid but do not have arguments, foolish but do not know how to measure, their views are still deceivable, let alone a story that has been heard for thousands of years. For the dead people, even in the communal house, there is something wrong, let alone in the thousands of ancient times. How can a sage not lie? That: the sage used his own will to achieve the will of the ancients, so he can't be against himself, but he can't get him either. If you take a person to measure people, measure a person's feelings, take a measure of a kind, measure an industry with speech, and measure the logic of all things with the Tao, then in the ancient times there are no different. The types are not contradictory, but old, the reason is still the same. Therefore, when you see a wrong song without falling in love with it, you don't like it when you see it, it's because of the things mentioned above that you can measure it. Before the life of the Five Emperors, there were no traces left by anyone, not because there were no sages, but because it was so old. In the life of the Five Emperors, there is no transmission policy, not because there is no righteous thing, but because it is so old. King Vu, King Thang (Fung, Y. 1948) passed down the policy, which is not as clear as the Zhou Dynasty (Fung, Y.L. 1952), not because it has no good cause, but because it is so old. The long-standing tradition is a brief treatise, the more recent one is a thorough one. The comb says the outline, the wall says everything. Fools who listen to the great do not know the wall, and when they listen to the wall, they do not know the great. Therefore, the long-standing literature is lost, the long-term rhythm is destroyed. Therefore, according to Xunzi for the Warring States period, when discussing the king's path, it is not advisable to discuss the affairs of the Xia, An, and Zhou dynasties, if you considered something too far, it is very far, and hard to believe, it is authentic, and using magic is according to the law of kings in the world, but you should not leave and seek far away. That is Xunzi's special thought on the political path.

The King, Xunzi said, brings the whole country to exhort to do good deeds without doing harm to politeness. Doing an unjust thing, killing a person without sin and gaining the world, the hypocrite does not do it. Just keep your heart and keep the country. If so, it's really solid. Those who work with me are all benefactors, and the legal forms shown to the nation are all jurisprudence. The things that the owner really believed and brought his courtiers to focus on, were all about paying attention to the righteous. Thus, it is basically determined that the people below rely on the people above them. The basic is determined, then the country is determined, the country is determined, the world is determined.

To people, he said, virtue has not yet reached the extreme, but the meaning is not perfect, but the reason of the world also has a rhythm. Punishment of reward and punishment for trusting the world, the underling knows what is clear and knows the essentials. Even if he clearly sees that his own interests are damaged, he does not deceive the people. If he has made a pact with any country, even though he clearly sees his own interests are damaged, he will not deceive others. Thus, transparency becomes durable, people and country believe. Although in a remote land, there is also the power of the whole world...But not wholeheartedly correcting the root in righteousness and teaching, not taking literature as the basis, not making people's hearts submissive. Whatever you do, you tend to be strategic, consider what you do, use the art of taking care of yourself, being careful and concise, correcting your military situation, trusting each other, no one in the world dares to compete with you. Not because of anything else, just because of the trick of the nature that does.

Xunzi argued that, to promote the whole country for the public good, there is no need to open the love, keep the trust, just seek profit. Inside, he is not afraid to lie to the people to seek small benefits, outside, he is not afraid to lie to his own country to seek great benefits. In not worrying about correcting their own land of wealth, but wanting his own, so that the subordinates and hundreds of families will not treat people with a false heart. People above lie to people below, people below lie to people above, so the upper and lower are divided, so the enemy despises them, but the country close to them distrusts them, to the end the country is lost.

Xunzi followed the Confucian principles, so he was very respectful of the king's way and expressed the royal method of ruling the world very clearly. Although Xunzi criticized the brutal rule of the country, he also paid great attention to the legal method of ruling the country. Because, according to Xunzi, although ritual is the source of rule, but ceremony alone is not enough to rule the country and educate the people, but also has to be severely punished. Punishment of sinners is to make wicked people not do illegal things, so reward and punishment must always be just and worthy. Using legal punishment that is worthy of sin is prestigious, if it is not guilty, the people below are despised, rewarding and depriving the talented person is precious, not worthy, it is not precious. In ancient times, punishment was not worth the crime, and the reward did not exceed the virtue. Good people and evil people are distinguished, who takes the faithful to communicate. The purpose is to advise people to do good things, then the punishment is reduced, but the authority is like flowing water, the command is very clear, the transformation is like a god.

Thus, in the thought of respecting the law, Xunzi always attaches the importance to both rewards and punishments. He believes that strict laws can prevent tyranny, hate evil, deter bad things, enforce ordinances, and good customs. It is from these ideas of his that the philosophers of the legal school such as Han Fei (280 – 233 BC) have inherited, developed, and changed completely from the ritual method to the method of treatment, contributing to helping Qin Shi Huang reunified China after long years of fierce war.

4. Conclusion

The socio-political views in Xunzi's philosophical thought are approached in different ways by researchers, depending on their point of view. There is an opinion that Xunzi is just a supplement to the ritual and virtue. Therefore, Xunzi should be classified into the Confucian school. This opinion comes from Sima Qian and later many Chinese scholars also agreed. Phan Boi Chau also agrees with that view. But for many other scholars, especially during the period of the cultural revolution in China, Xunzi is considered the ancestor of the jurisprudence.

From a research perspective, the author thinks that, in contemporary historical conditions, the achievements in his philosophical system such as: radical atheism materialism in the concept of nature; the development of cognitive reasoning and logic; The view on the active role of people in cognitive activities and world change is a long step forward in the history of ancient Chinese philosophy. Xunzi has absorbed the philosophy of Lao Zhuang, using the humanist political thought of Mencius to build a very new and valuable socio-political viewpoint.

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