

# The Application of Confucianism in Contemporary Chinese Foreign Policy

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**Abstract:** Confucianism is a splendid treasure in Chinese traditional culture. It has an important influence on the unique spirit and thinking of the Chinese nation, and also has a certain degree of influence on China's foreign policy. This paper studies the application and manifestation of Confucianism in contemporary China's foreign policy from three aspects of Confucianism: "Great Harmony under Heaven", "Good Neighborhood and Friendship", and "Nature and humanity", and explores how to improve and strengthen foreign policy, correct remote.

**Keywords:** Confucianism, Chinese traditional culture, China's foreign policy.

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## 1. Introduction

Confucianism is a splendid treasure of the traditional culture of the Chinese nation and an indispensable and important part of world culture. " *the Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*" written by Huntington, an American political scientist, mentioned that conflicts caused by differences in civilizations and cultural identity will replace ideological conflicts as the basic form of international conflicts after the end of the cold war, and the cultural differences of different civilization groups may lead to the outbreak of conflicts or even wars. Therefore, Chinese traditional culture, as the theoretical basis for the formulation of China's foreign policy, plays an increasingly prominent role. In summary, the study of the application of Confucianism in contemporary China's foreign policy, effectively explains to the outside world that China's foreign policy is different from the West with Chinese philosophy and thinking, conveys a signal of peace and friendship, which is conducive to China's further development.

## 2. Cultural " Great Harmony" Thought

"The Book of Rites" mentioned the meaning of the "Universal Harmony". The Confucian great harmony thought focuses on " strengthening trust and cultivating harmony" , and its connotative spirit was mostly used in ancient China to deal with the relationship between ethnic groups and surrounding areas.

With the development of globalization, this idea has been gradually adopted today as the principle for China to handle state-to-state relations and actively participate in globalization. The most typical example is the embodiment of the Chinese traditional humanistic thought of " if beauty represents itself with diversity and integrity, the world will be blessed with harmony and unity" in the two Olympic Games, which made Beijing become the first city with two Olympics in the world. The 29th Summer Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008 welcomed people from different countries and regions, ethnicities and races, cultures and languages to Beijing with an open and inclusive mind. In the literary and artistic exhibition of the opening ceremony, the characters of "

harmony " in three different periods reflect the ideological China's theme of " peace is the most precious" , fulfilling the promise of a harmonious Olympics, and applying the traditional thinking of the Chinese nation to modern society, showing the world the Chinese nation's peace loving national characteristics.

Since the Cold War ended, Western countries have continuously occupied a dominant position in the field of culture and widely spread their successful experience around the world. Some Western mainstream media even believe that Western civilization is the only way to achieve modernization. This " egoistic" thinking mode has exacerbated conflicts and collisions between different civilizations. Different from Western values, the reason why Chinese civilization can be endless and has a long history is that we insist on harmonious coexistence and always respect the diverse world civilizations. The general secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that the world is made up of more than 200 nations and regions, more than 2,500 ethnic groupings, and several religions. Different histories, national contexts, ethnic makeups, and cultural practices have nourished various civilizations, adding color to the world. At present, the international situation is turbulent and mankind is faced with various difficulties and challenges, China continues the idea of harmony, rejects the Cold War mentality, and actively calls on all countries to unite as one and work together for the future. The 24th Beijing Winter Olympics and the 13th Beijing Winter Paralympics once again used the Olympic culture as the background to present the Chinese concept of " One world, One family" , which is a successful practice for China and other countries to jointly build a community with a shared future for mankind. Through these two Olympic Games, China has proved to the world that China will promote " globalization" in the direction of harmonious integration and sharing weal and woe. It has proved that the Chinese nation is a harmonious, friendly, united and just people, and that the Chinese civilization is characterized by openness, inclusiveness, mutual respect and win-win cooperation.

As the saying goes, a moral person is not alone, and there are always like-minded people to accompany him. Chinese ideas and Chinese solutions have been increasingly recognized by the world. China will continue to advocate the common values of all mankind on the international stage. It

advocates that the arrogance of civilization should be transcended by the relative words of civilization, that the common access of civilizations should replace the confrontation of civilizations, and that the mutual learning of civilizations should resolve the conflicts of civilizations, promote harmonious development and play a greater role. [1]

### 3. "Oneness" Ecological Thought

The ecological environment is the foundation of human survival. Therefore, since the ancient Chinese sages, the problem of the ecological environment has been widely concerned. The extremely rich ecological civilization thought, and its guiding people's practice has left a precious spiritual heritage for future generations. "Heaven and man are one" was first proposed by Zhuangzi. After that, Xunzi further advocated that "Heaven's destiny should be controlled and used. In the "Zhouyi · Wen Yan Zhuan" once mentioned that the essence of the thought of the unity of earth and man. It is necessary to pay attention to giving full play to man's subjective initiative, transforming and using nature, and respecting nature. Based on protecting natural resources and the ecological environment, human production activities are carried out to establish a relationship of coexistence, co-prosperity and harmonious development between man and nature [2].

Consequently, when China's overall strength increases, China is increasingly taking on more and more responsibilities in promoting global environmental governance, adhering to the principles of following the laws of nature, and protecting the ecological environment. At the opening ceremony of the Paris Conference on Climate Change in 2015, to form a new pattern of the harmonious development of modernization between man and nature, President Xi Jinping proposed in his "Nationally Determined Contribution" that China will peak carbon dioxide emissions around 2030 and strive to achieve it as soon as possible. In addition, China adheres to the correct concept of justice and interests, actively participates in international cooperation on climate change, earnestly implements its policy commitments on South-South cooperation in the field of climate change, and supports developing countries, especially the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island development. China's response to climate change challenges.

China announced the establishment of an RMB 20 billion China South-South Climate Cooperation Fund in September 2015 in order to increase support. The activities of human beings to transform nature must be based on the laws of nature to regulate their behavior in interacting with nature. The human body and spirit both originate from nature and exist in nature, and there is "oneness" between man and nature.

### 4. The Idea of Combining "Righteousness and Benefit"

Confucius once said: "The gentleman is compared to righteousness, and the villain is compared to profit." ("The Analects of Confucius, Liren"); Mencius also said: "The advantage of unrighteousness is not obtained." ("Mencius Gao Zi Shang"). In traditional Chinese culture, the correct view of righteousness and interests occupies a very high position, and which is the moral quality respected by the ancient Chinese people.

When Xi Jinping made his first trip to Africa as president

in March 2013, he introduced the right idea of justice and benefit. Following that, Xi Jinping would frequently reference "adhering to the correct concept of justice and benefit," which had evolved into a guiding principle of diplomacy with Chinese characteristics in the new age, whether he was speaking to foreign allies or Chinese diplomatic employees. Thanks to the joint efforts of both sides, China-Africa relations have entered the fast lane of comprehensive development. The two sides established the China-Africa Cooperation Forum, built a new type of strategic partnership, and achieved remarkable results in cooperation in various fields. The friendship and cooperation between the Chinese people and the African people have become a symbol of China-Africa relations and have been passed down as a good story in the international community. In addition, during the Central Foreign Affairs Work Conference in November 2014, Xi Jinping presented and thoroughly explained the right understanding of justice and interests. He underlined that, for Africa and developing nations, it is crucial to strike a balance between righteousness and interests, stressing good faith, encouraging friendship, supporting justice, and establishing morality. The Communist Party of China's 19th National Congress report from October 2017 emphasized the need to defend the right understanding of justice and interests as well as the notions of sincerity, amity, and sincerity, and to strengthen solidarity and cooperation with developing nations. Together, China and Africa created the "China-Africa Cooperation Vision 2035" in December 2021, and China has since grown to be a significant player in Africa's development agenda. China actively participates in the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Plan (CAADP), the African Infrastructure Development Plan (PIDA), the African Mining Vision (AMV), the African Strategy for Science, Technology, and Innovation (STISA), the Intra-African Growth Plan (BIAT), the African Industrialization Development Acceleration Plan (AIDA), and the African Development Agency-New. China supports the implementation of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and its flagship projects[3].

Various facts have proved that China has never forgotten the generosity of African countries when it applied for the restoration of China's legitimate seat in the United Nations, and actively implement various policies, realize and fulfill commitments to African countries, uphold the concept of sincerity, amity, sincerity and the correct concept of justice and interests. Chinese traditional culture has always advocated both justice and interests, and the unification of justice and interests, even putting justice before interest and valuing justice before interest. Confucius said, "A gentleman regards righteousness as his noblest virtue." Mencius said, "Life is what I want, and benevolence and righteousness are also what I want. If I can't get both at the same time, then I will give up my life and choose benevolence and righteousness."

In the past, China was right to assist African nations in gaining their independence; today, China is also correct to work with African nations to achieve mutual benefit and shared development, as well as to advocate on their behalf in international forums[4].

### 5. Conclusion

The world today is unpredictable, turbulent, complex, and changeable. In the face of such an international situation, it is also necessary to develop new thinking and ideas and develop

diplomatic thinking, theories and strategies with Chinese characteristics. Based on adhering to the basic principles, and looking for ideas from the historical and cultural heritage, not only can traditional culture be given a more vivid mission in the contemporary era, but also can continue to continue the excellent traditional culture and virtue of the Chinese nation since ancient times, to inspire the nation Pride and national self-confidence. Through research on the application of Confucianism in contemporary Chinese foreign policy, the following conclusions can be drawn:

According to a quote from Zi Zhongyun, " Marxist theories cannot account for Chinese cultural aspects of international relations and diplomatic ideas. " In the process of forming the theoretical system of major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics in the new era, it is necessary to abandon the confrontational thinking and conflicts and misunderstandings caused by differences in ideological fields. Therefore, the formulation of China's foreign policy should be based on the profound historical and cultural traditions handed down by the nation, and fully reflect the inherent continuity and continuity of the national spirit [5]. The relationship and development of things are regular, and the law of the negation of negation indicates that in the process of development of things, it is a historical necessity for new things to replace old things. But we must "Absorb the best in things and discard the bad and useless in things. When dealing with old things, traditional culture has survived the turbulence and precipitation of history, so its value is immeasurable and will not disappear due to social changes. The traditional culture,

especially the Confucian culture, will be critically inherited and creatively developed to build China's international relations. The theoretical system is urgently needed today, to deal with the three mainstream schools of contemporary western international relations theory [6].

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