

SOME BASIC ISSUES IN MENCIUS'S "RULE OF VIRTUE" AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE TO THE HISTORY OF VIETNAMESE IDEOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

As many researchers have affirmed, Confucianism is essentially a political-ethical doctrine, the most concentrated expression of which is the ideology of "Rule of Virtue", which is the concept of the way to govern the country and manage society based on ethical standards. It is a system of standards, principles, and ethical norms to regulate human behavior in social relations, to ensure the unity between personal interests and community interests. The Rule of Virtue reflects the needs and social interests of the ruling class, expressed in the form of regulations and assessments based on the establishment of ethical values, recognized and voluntarily followed by everyone. It is reinforced by ethical examples. Mencius's ideology of the way of virtue governance is one of the most fundamental contents in his political-social doctrine.

Keyword: Confucianism, ideology, way of governing the country, ethics, people.

1. SOME BASIC ISSUES OF MENCIUS'S RULE OF VIRTUE

1.1. Mencius's perception of the role of morality and moral philosophy

Mencius lived during the Warring States period, a period of chaos and constant war, where kings and lords only cared about expanding their territories, increasing their power and enjoying luxury without worrying about saving the people, and not caring about the lives, rights and wishes of the people. In such a context, Mencius wanted to bring his "humane and righteous" philosophy and proposed his "humane and righteous" philosophy of governance to help kings implement a humane and righteous philosophy of governance, taking the people as the foundation. Therefore, in his "humane and righteous" doctrine, Mencius advocated the implementation of humaneness, considering humaneness as the foundation of politics. On this issue, the book Mencius recorded many of his sayings. For example, he said: "Now the king initiates good policies and practices virtue, which will make all the mandarins in the world want to stand at the king's court, all the farmers want to cultivate on the king's fields, all the merchants want to store goods at the king's market, all the travelers want to travel on the king's roads, and then all the people in the world who hate their king will come to denounce to the

king. If that is so, who can stop (the king from establishing his kingdom)?" [1, pp. 754-755]

In addition, in Mencius, on the basis of the basic qualities of Humanity, Righteousness, Propriety, Wisdom and the combination of "Humanity" and "Righteousness" into the category of "Humanity and Righteousness" plays the role of two aspects, two aspects of the body and function of the mind and nature, he believes that it must be the root, the nature of human beings. Along with his ideal goal of wishing for national peace and prosperity, people living in prosperity, peace, and respect, Mencius built his "Rule of Virtue" doctrine.

Similar to Confucian scholars from the time of Confucius onwards, Mencius also particularly emphasized the role of morality, considering morality as the most important tool and means to achieve political goals.

The concept of the role of morality in Mencius's thought on the "Rule of Virtue" path shows some of the following basic contents:

Firstly, ethics and the implementation of humane principles are the most important tools and means to govern and manage society.

As one of the Confucian scholars and standing on the position of the ruling feudal class, when mentioning the role of ethics and the

implementation of ethics in governing the country and managing society, Mencius affirmed that: "Using force to conquer, pretending to be humane, that is hegemony. To be hegemony, one must have a large country. Using force to implement humane principles, that is kingship. To be kingship, one does not have to wait for a large country...Using force to conquer, people do not submit, but only because they do not have enough strength (to resist). Using virtue to conquer, people are truly happy, and sincerely trust" [2, p.852]

In Mencius, the royal way of politics is humane politics, which includes protecting the people, nurturing the people and educating the people. He always advised the kings of vassal states to return to the root of politics, which is to practice "humanity and righteousness". He believed that morality and the practice of morality are the best measures to eliminate inhumane and immoral situations in society. According to Mencius, in a country, the most frightening thing is not a poor country with little wealth, but a lack of rules and morality. As he said: "If the citadel is not complete and the army and armor are not numerous, it is not a disaster for the country. If the fields are not developed and the wealth is not accumulated, it is not a danger to the country. However, if the superiors do not observe the rules, the inferiors do not learn, and the people rise up violently, then the country will be lost without knowing the day" [3, pp. 1015 -1016].

Secondly, morality is the most important premise and condition for forming and contributing to the perfection of human morality and contributing to the maintenance of social order and stability.

A person is considered "human" when and only when he lives with virtue, knows how to rely on virtue to cultivate and perfect his personality. Therefore, for Mencius, "a person who is devoted to his heart knows his nature. Knowing his nature, he understands the principles of heaven. Preserving his heart, cultivating his character is to serve heaven. Dying young or living long is the same, just worrying about cultivating oneself to wait for the last moment is to establish one's destiny" [4, p.1285]

In the book Mencius, many of his sayings are cited, showing that, according to Mencius, to establish and maintain social order, it is necessary to implement ethical measures in social life. That is, we must use Humanity, Righteousness, Propriety,

and Wisdom to preserve the mind, nurture the mind, and enrich those virtues throughout society. We must make those ethical standards become moral standards, governing the behavior and activities of people in the family as well as in society. Only then can people preserve goodness and eliminate evil. And only then, according to him, will society be peaceful and prosperous, and the world will be unified.

Thirdly, ethics plays a decisive role in creating the ideal person, the type of person needed to build an ideal society.

The ideal person according to Confucianism, as well as Mencius's concept, is the "gentleman". But to become a gentleman, they must go through a long process of cultivating and training morality. Only then will their intelligence and virtue become increasingly rich and sustainable. Obviously, to become a saint, a gentleman, an ideal person, the most decisive thing is that person must know how to cultivate morality, practice principles and moral standards in society, in human social relationships.

In the book Mencius, he proposed the policy of governing the country according to the "Rule of Virtue" approach with a system of ethical standards that people need to have. These include humanity, righteousness, propriety, trust, filial piety, and loyalty. Thus, to become a saint or a gentleman, the most meaningful and decisive thing is that people must cultivate and practice ethical standards and moral rules at all times, in all places, in all circumstances, and in all relationships. And according to Mencius, a gentleman who wants to always have ethics must always be dedicated to "preserving virtue" and "cultivating virtue". As he said: "The reason why a gentleman is different from ordinary people is because he maintains his heart. A gentleman relies on humanity to maintain his heart, relies on propriety to maintain his heart. A benevolent person loves people, a propriety person respects people. If you love people, people will love you back, if you respect people, people will respect you back" [5, p.1088].

Thus, from the point of caring about people, recognizing and evaluating people from the political - social and ethical aspects, Mencius especially emphasized the role of ethics, of the ethical path in restoring and maintaining order,

discipline, stabilizing social order and in perfecting human ethics.

1.2. Some main measures in implementing the policy of governing the country

Firstly, governing and managing society with humane measures

To implement the humane policy, according to Mencius, it is necessary to implement "humane" measures, because "humane" is the root of politics, so implementing the "humane" policy cannot be separated from "humane". In the situation of hegemony prevailing, hegemony overwhelming the royal way, the people suffering, the country in chaos, Mencius proposed the idea of the humane policy, implementing "humane" to advise people, help people awaken, use "humane" to relate to each other, calling on the king and those in power to implement humane measures to save the people. He said: "The ruler who knows how to follow the right path and justice is supported by the majority of the population, but those who abandon the right path and justice, the number of people who will help is very rare" [6, p.115].

The way of governing the country according to Mencius's humane way is to preserve the people with peace and save the people with humanity. In Mencius's concept, implementing the humane way requires the king and those in power to practice humane governance and not encourage the use of military force or violence.

Secondly, to effectively implement the humane path and implement humane measures, the king must have morality and always cultivate morality. Mencius believed that the king and the ruler must have virtue (humanity), not only study but also cultivate morality themselves, must be truly devoted to "preserving virtue" and "cultivating virtue". For example, he believed that a person who "loses his own personality cannot work with anyone. Speaking in an improper manner is called self-harming personality, not being able to cling to humanity and follow righteousness is called losing his own personality" [7, p.1035]. Cultivating morality is not only to always have humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom, but the king must also demonstrate that virtue towards himself, towards everyone, in all relationships, in all circumstances.

For him, the ideal political regime is one in which the throne belongs to a virtuous and talented

person, a sage, and the governance of the country must follow the mandate of heaven. Mencius was determined to depose immoral kings who harmed the country and its people. Thus, it can be seen that for a country to be peaceful and prosperous, the moral cultivation of the king and those in power is extremely necessary.

2. THE BASIC MEANING OF MENCIUS'S "RULE OF VIRTUE"

As a political and social doctrine, Confucianism in general and Mencius's thought in particular were introduced to Vietnam during the period of Chinese domination, have existed, influenced and played a certain role in Vietnamese society and people in history and at present. b

Mencius' moral thought is the main ideological basis of the Vietnamese feudal class in defining and implementing the way to govern the country, building and enforcing laws, creating and implementing education and examinations.

With the spirit of "educating talented people is closely linked to the prosperity or decline of a dynasty, of a country", "training scholars and talented people is the first and fundamental task" of the king, of the regime, etc. Mencius's viewpoint has shown the elevation of talented and virtuous people and their role in all eras, especially in building and perfecting the Vietnamese people today for the cause of industrialization and modernization of the country in our country today.

In addition, the ethical standards that Mencius considered indispensable for a human being, namely Humanity, Righteousness, Propriety, and Wisdom, have become even more necessary and have great effects today. For Vietnam today, which is in the process of industrialization and modernization of the country in all aspects, and is carrying out the construction of Socialism, it is even more necessary to have people with both virtue and talent - Socialist people, and those people cannot lack ethical qualities.

In Mencius, we need to acknowledge a very meaningful thought not only for Vietnam today but also for all peace-loving humanity in the world, which is the thought: People are precious. This thought is the fundamental thought in building a democratic society as well as aiming at building a state of the people, by the people and for the people. Today, Confucianism and especially

Mencius's political and social thought in general and his ethical thought in particular still exist, influence and play a certain role in the cause of building and perfecting the ethics of the Vietnamese people, in realizing the goal of "Rich people, strong country, fair and democratic society" in our country today. Recognizing and applying the reasonable values in Mencius's political and social thought and the role of ethics in Mencius's thought towards society and people will contribute to overcoming and eliminating unethical behaviors and manifestations, violations of the law and social discipline, embezzlement, corruption, moral degradation, and lifestyle of many people, many officials and party members with positions and power, etc. in our society today.

3. CONCLUSION

Mencius's "Rule of Virtue" ideology, taking Humanity and Righteousness as the foundation and main thing, is also called the "Humanitarian" ideology, the Humanitarian path is like that. In the Analects, Confucius always affirmed that morality is the root, the foundation of human beings, of each person, and that is why, for him, talking about human beings is first of all talking about morality. Not only that, according to him, morality plays a huge role in perfecting human personality, in maintaining order, discipline and stability of society.

In Mencius's era (the Warring States era), an era in which all thoughts were strongly liberated, with the status and mission of inheriting, protecting and developing Confucius's ideology in the new context, Confucius's ideology of "Virtue-based governance" was developed to a new level. Mencius's ideology of the Virtue-based governance (or the Humanitarian path) is one of the most fundamental contents in his political and social doctrine.

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