

THE INFLUENCE OF MENCIUS' HUMANISM AND BENEVOLENT GOVERNMENT ON CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

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Abstract: Mencius inherited Confucius' path of "benevolence" and formed a relatively complete political theory of benevolence. The concept of "benevolent governance" is also a "royal way". Its main content is to control the people's property, take people's ownership, do not violate agricultural seasons and attach importance to moral education. The core of benevolent governance is Mencius' people-oriented ideology. The concentration of his people-oriented ideology is reflected in the following three aspects: those who win the people's hearts will win the world, the relationship between the people and the monarch, and the way of serving the monarch and the minister. Mencius' political theory outlined the blueprint for governing the country in ancient Chinese society and had a profound impact on traditional Chinese politics. Starting from the perspective of Mencius' "benevolent governance" and people-oriented ideology, this paper systematically discusses Mencius' governance ideology, thereby highlighting the special significance and charm of Mencius' political philosophy. The people-oriented ideology in Mencius' political theory has inspired a people-oriented harmonious society's construction in contemporary society. Mencius attaches great importance to the core concept of moral education and provides guidance for the construction of political and spiritual civilization in today's society.

Keywords: Mencius. Political philosophy. Humanism. The idea of benevolent governance. Contemporary values.

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Resumen: Mencio heredó el camino de la "benevolencia" de Confucio y formó una teoría política de la benevolencia relativamente completa. El concepto de "gobierno benévolo" es también un "camino real". Su contenido principal es controlar la propiedad de las personas, tomar posesión de las personas, no violar las temporadas agrícolas y dar importancia a la educación moral. El núcleo del gobierno benévolo es la ideología orientada a las personas de Mencius. La concentración de su ideología orientada al pueblo se refleja en los siguientes tres aspectos: aquellos que ganen los corazones del pueblo ganarán el mundo, la relación entre el pueblo y el monarca, y la forma de servir al monarca y servir al ministro. La teoría política de Mencius esbozó el modelo para gobernar el país en la antigua sociedad china y tuvo un profundo impacto en la política tradicional china. Comenzando desde la perspectiva del "gobierno benévolo" y la ideología orientada a las personas de Mencius, este documento analiza sistemáticamente la ideología de gobierno de Mencius, destacando así el significado especial y el encanto de la filosofía política de Mencius. La ideología orientada a las personas en la teoría política de Mencius ha inspirado la construcción de una sociedad armoniosa orientada a las personas en la sociedad contemporánea. Mencius valora el concepto central de la educación moral en el gobierno del país, proporcionando inspiración para la construcción de la civilización política y espiritual en la sociedad actual.

Palabras clave: Mencio; Filosofía política; Humanismo; La idea de un gobierno benévolo; Valores contemporáneos

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Abstract: Mencius inherited Confucius' path of "benevolence" and formed a relatively complete political theory of benevolence. The concept of "benevolent governance" is also a "royal way". Its main content is to control the people's property, take people's ownership, do not violate agricultural seasons and attach importance to moral education. The core of benevolent governance is Mencius' people-oriented ideology. The concentration of his people-oriented ideology is reflected in the following three aspects: those who win the people's hearts will win the world, the relationship between the people and the monarch, and the way of serving the monarch and the minister. Mencius' political theory outlined the blueprint for governing the country in ancient Chinese society and had a profound impact on traditional Chinese politics. Starting from the perspective of Mencius' "benevolent governance" and people-oriented ideology, this paper systematically discusses Mencius' governance ideology, thereby highlighting the special significance and charm of Mencius' political philosophy. The people-oriented ideology in Mencius' political theory has inspired a people-oriented harmonious society's construction in contemporary society. Mencius attaches great importance to the core concept of moral education and provides guidance for the construction of political and spiritual civilization in today's society.

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INTRODUCTION

Mencius was an outstanding thinker during the Warring States period. He deeply understood the essence of Confucius' "benevolence" and transformed it into the "benevolent governance (BG)" ideology. He was the inheritor and founder of Confucius' ideology and was revered as the 'sub sage' by later generations. On the basis of inheriting Confucianism, Mencius further expanded and systematically elaborated on the three dimensions of "benevolence and righteousness", "goodness in nature" and "people-oriented". Mencius put forward the political concepts of "benevolence and righteousness", "kingly way (KY)" and "people-oriented" centered around Confucius' "benevolence" as the core. Mencius led his disciples around various countries to promote his ideas, but for those princes who wanted to quickly expand and unify the world, no one was willing to accept Mencius' "BG" concept. Although this concept has not been accepted by contemporary people, it still has a profound impact on China's over 2000 years of development. This is the precious spiritual wealth left by Mencius to the Chinese people and the entire humanity (Ess; Sungmoon, 2022, p. 399-401; Ge; Hou,

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2021, p. 374-386). The people-oriented thought is one of his most glorious thoughts. He thinks that “[...] the people are precious, the country comes second, and the ruler is light” (Bloom, 2011, p. 61). In Mencius, the people were the most important, followed by the god of valley and the king by the king. He, who wins the people’s hearts, wins the world, and the king’s heart becomes the vassal; the vassal’s heart is the doctor. Once doctors and princes endanger the country, they can be established if they are not compliant, and even the god of the land can be established. However, if there is the idea of “people-oriented”, the king’s position is very stable. It shows how important “putting the people first” is. Mencius was great to offering such an idea at that time. Although Mencius’ philosophy of governing the country was not highly valued by those in power long after his death, the ideas of governing the country and the literary and artistic value contained in them have been increasingly valued by people. Mencius’ philosophy holds a pivotal position in the development of traditional Chinese Confucianism (Carey; Vitz, 2020, p. 693-713; Huang, 2020, p. 277-294). Among all his philosophical systems, his political philosophy holds significant historical significance. Mencius’ political philosophy has rich connotations and innovative viewpoints, reflecting the value orientation and ideal pursuit of traditional Confucian political thought, and deeply influencing the ancient China’s political life. The academic research on Mencius’ political philosophy is not only numerous, but also fruitful. Although there is little mention of the worldly value of Mencius’ theory (Yi; Guo, 2020, p. 64-76; Gao; Walayat, 2021, p. 213-234). This study will elaborate on the unique connotations of Mencius’ political philosophy theory from the perspectives of people-oriented thinking and BG thinking, and analyze its ideological charm in contemporary society.

1 BG AND PEOPLE-ORIENTED – THE MAIN IDEAS OF MENCIUS’ POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

1.1 MENCIUS’ BG THOUGHT

The theory of “benevolent government” is the inheritance and development of Confucius’ ‘thought of “benevolent science”’. Starting from Confucius’ thought of “benevolent learning”, Mencius expanded it into a policy program including ideology, politics, economy, culture and other aspects, which is “benevolent government”. The basic spirit of “benevolent government” is also a deep sympathy and love for the people. The benevolent government’s foundation is to “control the property of the people”, so that the people have the basic guarantee of life, which is the cornerstone of political stability. Mencius emphasized the protection of the small-scale peasant economy to maintain and improve the common people’s livelihood and thus lay the foundation of regime stability. Secondly, Mencius advocated light corvee and poor taxes, and the corvee was levied against the farming time. Not violating agricultural time and thin tax collection is the basic requirement of feudal agricultural economy. It is a benevolent government’s important content. He believed that, only by reducing the people’s

burden and acting according to the nature's laws, the people have adequate food and clothing. Only at this level, it can be said to be a benevolent government. Only after adequate food and clothing, the people's moral level can be improved through moral education, which is the benevolent government's high-level requirement.

1.1.1 PEOPLE'S PROPERTY CONTROL

BG and KY are the main ideas of Mencius' political philosophy. In order to counter the prevailing "hegemonic" concept during the Warring States period, the "KY" concept was proposed, but its essence remains "BG". Mencius believed that, without benevolence, one cannot govern a country well. The content of "BG" is very rich, but its starting point is still "property control of people", which means creating constant property for the people. In the feudal era, when agriculture was the main business, "constant production" mainly referred to land. Land is one of the most fundamental means of production in the agricultural era. It is not only the basis of all political systems, but also the source of people's survival supplies, such as clothing and food. Without the necessary means of production, people cannot get enough means of subsistence, so Mencius' primary advice to the ruling class is "property control of people" (Huang, 2020, p. 21-42; Tu, 2020, p. 1-12)

The reason why Mencius advocated "property control of people" is that the first step is to solve "constant property", thereby governing a country well and achieve long-term social stability (Ren, 2020, p. 1-15; Lo, 2020, p. 688-729). In addition to the solid ideological and moral character developed by scholars, ordinary people do not have "perseverance" if they do not have permanent property. Perseverance is the heart of stability and orderliness, which is people's adherence to their own moral and behavioral standards. Mencius believed that "property control of people" refers to giving the people a certain amount of land, allowing them to have sufficient material conditions to sustain a family's livelihood, which is to meet the people's basic living needs. Only in this way, their thoughts and actions can become stable, which is beneficial for the country's stability and the monarch's governance (Aleksandrov; Kovalev, 2021, p. 30-41).

A king must possess territory and people in order to govern. Since land is the most fundamental means of production for people's life, "property control of people" must start from land. Only by solving the land problem, we can establish a solid foundation for the "king of the world". Solving the land issue well is a prerequisite for maintaining feudal social order (Sin, 2020, p. 206-225; Ge, 2021, p. 374-386). Mencius recognized the dialectical connection between human thought and action and material value through the interaction between "constant property" and "perseverance". He proposed that if a king could provide his people with sufficient "constant property", then his people could maintain "perseverance".

Only in this way, the king can better educate his people and guide them to “be kind and benevolent”.

As for the method of “property control of people”, Mencius advocated starting with dividing the land. If the land is not properly divided, taxes will be unfair and people’s income will be unfair. In Mencius’ view, if ordinary people own a five-acre house and one acre of fertile land, they can achieve a happy life through their own efforts. On this basis, rulers can create a harmonious and peaceful world by gradually promoting filial piety, which is the specific embodiment of their “BG” ideology and “KY” one (Meng; Wang, 2020, p.131-160).

1.1.2 MODERATE TAX ON PEOPLE AND NOT VIOLATING THE AGRICULTURAL SEASON

Mencius’ “property control of people” is only the beginning of BG. Subsequently, Mencius proposed the concept of “rate tax on people”. It means that the state should have a systematic taxation system, so that people cannot lose the power to produce and create wealth due to bearing too much tax burden. From ancient times to the present, a country’s fiscal revenue has always relied on taxation, and the source of taxation is the people. The amount of tax revenue is closely related to both social development and the people’s living conditions (Song, 2020, p. 178-186). Therefore, Mencius’ theory of “reduction of tax revenue” is highly relevant. Mencius compared the previous tax systems and concluded that the tax systems of the Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties actually belonged to the “land tax” category, with the “labor service rent system” of the Shang Dynasty being the best one. The “labor service rent system” stipulates that eight households jointly cultivate hundreds of acres of public land, and the harvest belongs to the state without paying any taxes, thus avoiding the additional pressure brought by famine on farmers (Fan, 2021, p. 287-306). The “reduction of tax revenue” does not advocate absolute non-taxation or minimum tax rates, but simply emphasizes that taxes should be set within a reasonable limit.

Mencius’ viewpoint is of great practical significance. Taxation is a necessity for a country’s economic development. Every dynasty and government cannot sustain operations without taxation. However, in the feudal era, rulers often collected taxes far beyond what was generally necessary for their own enjoyment, a phenomenon known as “indiscriminate tax”. Mencius proposed to collect a certain amount of taxes without intentionally favoring the ruling class. But, in the feudal society at that time, it was unrealistic to blindly emphasize the reduction of taxes.

In addition to the modernized tax on people, Mencius also proposed the concept of respecting the agricultural season on this basis. Because agriculture was the main economic industry in feudal society, compared to other industries, agriculture was the most important one. In order to maintain the stability of agricultural production, Mencius proposed the idea

of “not violating the agricultural season”. This proposition has two meanings. Firstly, Mencius does not approve of wasting manpower and damaging natural resources. He advocates planting at appropriate times, harvesting appropriately during logging and following the nature’s laws when developing agriculture. In addition, in ancient times, the court not only recruited soldiers, but also forced the people to build city walls, water channels, palaces, and so on, all of which were called “labor”. In feudal times, military service and corvee were both the foundation for maintaining a country and social order. However, during the busy farming season, this type of labor greatly hinders the development of agriculture. Because labor force was conscripted for military service, the number of people involved in farming was reduced, and farmers were also very disgusted with being forced into labor. So, another meaning of “not violating the agricultural season” is to avoid agricultural labor as much as possible during busy agricultural times, and to recruit farmers for military service during winter slack.

1.1.3 EMPHASIS ON MORAL EDUCATION

Mencius believed that enabling the people to have a stable economic life was only the “beginning of KY”. Only by educating the people, we can ensure the completion of KY. Therefore, Mencius pointed out the need to implement “moral education” on the basis of “property control of people”, which is a higher-level requirement of BG thought (Ziliotti, 2020, p. 1-23).

Mencius attached great importance to moral education. He believes that moral education has the function of “understanding of human relationships”. This can reconcile internal contradictions in society and also prevent social unrest. In his view, the so-called “good government” is far inferior to the so-called “good education”. “Good government” refers to controlling people’s behavior through laws and prohibitions, while “good education” refers to guiding people towards good through laws. In contrast, “good education” is not as popular as “good government”. Good government uses laws and orders to restrain the people and make them feel afraid. And “good education” is to educate people from the depths of their hearts, allowing them to consciously do good things and not do evil ones. From this point, it can be seen that the “good government” constrains the people’s behavior, which appears to have a lot of momentum, but it cannot compare to the “good education”. Because it can earn people’s respect and love (Chan, 2020, p. 1-20).

In the theory of emphasizing “moral education”, Mencius believed that it was not only necessary to educate the people, but also to educate the monarch, and to stop and correct the monarch’s mistakes. This is an important component of “moral education”. For some political figures in history, Mencius specifically praised Yan Zi’s behavior, in the state of Qi, who advised the monarch to exercise abstinence, in order to prevent him from being killed. Mencius believed that this was a virtue of loyalty to the emperor. Mencius also contacted the

situation of various feudal states at that time and regretfully stated the drawbacks involved. The reason why the feudal lords, in the world, have not been able to establish the cause of monarchy nowadays is because the other countries' monarchs have an arrogant attitude and only prefer those who have been taught by themselves, rather than those who have taught the king (Purcell, 2020, p. 1-6; Carleo, 2021, p. 211-228).

1.2 MENCIUS' PEOPLE-ORIENTED IDEOLOGY

Mencius is the main content of Mencius' people-oriented thought. Under normal circumstances, ancient Chinese rulers not only agreed with the basic idea of "people are people", but also required those who study officials to understand the truth. Those who win the hearts of "the people win the world" reflects the thought that the country is variable, the monarch can be changed, but the people cannot be easy. Although Mencius believed that the world's rulers were the heaven's sons, vassals and doctors, the reason for their existence was that they could "win the high people", that is, to get the common people's support. The people-oriented thought is concentrated in Mencius' discussion on the relationship between the king and the minister, the king and the people. He believed that the king has a way, for the minister model, with benevolence and justice, courtesy; ministers have the way, are loyal to the king and do not do the order. In this way, each way is the one to govern the country and smooth the world.

1.2.1 THE PEOPLE ARE PRECIOUS, THE RULER IS LIGHT

The concept of "valuing the public" in Mencius' thought has never existed before in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, with its large quantity and heavy weight. Mencius' theory of valuing the people, apart from "The person who gets the support of people will get the world", is most notable for "The people are precise, the ruler is light". This ideology shines with the light of people-oriented principles, and it still shines brightly to this day. In Mencius' view, "The people are precise, the ruler is light" means that the people are the most important, followed by the state, and the monarch is the least important. Mencius fully recognized the people's power and put forward his own opinion that "people" is the country's foundation and "KY" is the foundation. Mencius believed that if the monarch was not competent, he could change the selection of monarchs, but only "people" could not be replaced. Only with the people's support, a monarch can rule the world and achieve "KY" rule. Therefore, when Mencius talked about loving and valuing the people, he would associate it with the king's establishment and the establishment of the industry.

Mencius has repeatedly discussed the issues of "Shang Tang defaced Jie" and "King Wu defaced Zhou". He believed that the reason why Xia Jie and King Zhou lost their country

was because they lost their people. Although King Jie and King Zhou ascended to the emperor's throne, they faced countless people's resistance due to their cruel ruling methods. Because they did not gain the people's hearts, they lost their qualification as monarchs and were ultimately eliminated by Shang Tang and King Wu. On the contrary, Shang Tang and King Wu saved the people from danger and were deeply loved by the people, which is why they were able to unify the world. The two things of "Lose the world" and "Get the world" prove the same truth from opposite perspectives, that is, the people's hearts are what the world belongs to. It is precisely on the basis of this profound historical thinking and profound understanding of the current social situation that Mencius came up with a shocking saying. That is, among the people, the state and the monarch, the people are the top, the state is the second, and the monarch is the bottom. The establishment of political power requires the people's support, while a country's rulers require the people's support. Compared to the people, the state and monarch appear insignificant.

From this point, in Mencius' eyes, the people's attitude is the key to whether the regime changes or not. In a country's political system, the people have fundamental power. And, in the relationship between the monarch and the people, the people are the decisive ones. Mencius' concept of "The people are precise, the ruler is light", to a certain extent, has sprouted the idea of breaking through the feudal autocratic monarchy system due to its emphasis on the people's interests.

1.2.2 THE PERSON WHO GETS THE PEOPLE'S SUPPORT WILL GET THE WORLD

Although Mencius' theory of "benevolence" has profound content, it is not the essence of his political philosophy. Mencius strongly advocated "BG" and "KY". But ultimately, the idea of "people-oriented" is the deeper content of Mencius' political philosophy. The concept of "people" holds a very important position in all Mencius' political thought, serving as the "coordinate" of all Mencius' political problems, and closely related to his political thought of "BG" and "KY". In the concepts of "BG" and "KY", Mencius clearly placed more expectations on the monarch. He hopes that the monarch has a benevolent heart and acts with benevolence. So, that country's people will follow him and respect benevolence and righteousness, achieving a social state of great stability in the world. Correspondingly, Mencius also believed that the ordinary people's behavior was carried out according to their own habits. The people do not have self-awareness, do not have "perseverance", and need saints to enlighten and awaken them. They also need the "BG" of those in power to cultivate and enhance their character. However, Mencius elevated the status of "common people" to an unprecedented level, pushing the ancient concept of "putting the people first" and Confucius' emphasis on the people to a new height. Whether summarizing various countries' experiences and lessons of the prosperity and decline, or constructing and practicing the

political concepts of “BG” and “KY”, the element of “people” has always occupied the core position of Mencius’ thought.

In his reflection on history, Mencius deeply understood the people’s power and significance or the people’s hearts. In practical life, Mencius deeply realized the people’s enormous power in opposing authoritarian rule. When the monarch brutally and authoritatively treats the people, the people will rise up in rebellion until he is overthrown. In the people’s turbulent uprisings throughout history, kings were often killed or exiled, and the country’s political power also collapsed. Mencius argued that it is legitimate for the people to oppose the monarch’s tyranny. And he often uses this to warn the world’s rulers to mainly use the techniques of “BG” and “KY”. Only in this way, the people sincerely can support the monarch, and the state power can be stable for the long term.

1.2.3 THE WAY OF BEING A PRINCE AND A MINISTER

Based on the concept of “people-centered” and guided by the concept of “people-oriented”, Mencius proposed a governance strategy of serving the monarch and ministers. It should be noted that the concepts of “serving the king” and “serving the minister” here are not independent ones, but concepts based on the concept of “putting the people first”, which is fundamentally different from the concept of “the art of emperor’s power and strategy” mentioned by later generations. Mencius first pointed out that a wise king must have a deep understanding of the people’s living conditions, and then consider the people’s needs and demands when governing. Mencius believed that monarchs must delve deeper into the people’s suffering at the grassroots level, in order to identify deficiencies in the national system and implement the policy of “benevolence”. Mencius advocated that, for the country’s stability and the nation’s prosperity, rulers should care for and care for the people, especially providing assistance to those in need. Only in this way, we truly can ensure the society’s stable development. Secondly, Mencius advocates that “have fun with the people” is a basic requirement for a wise ruler. In his view, “have fun with the people” is not only a form of human ethics, but also a major event related to the nation’s survival. A monarch, while enjoying his own blessings, does not forget to seek the people’s blessings. He must do his best to meet the people’s universal needs and, only in this way, he can be qualified to become a country’s head. If the people cannot eat enough and the monarch’s granary is full, it will cause alienation between the monarch and the people, leading to the people being unable to survive and, ultimately, leading to the country’s downfall.

A country’s strength cannot be achieved solely by a wise monarch, and it requires the wise ministers’ assistance. So, only by recruiting wise people, we can achieve the goal of becoming king in the world. In terms of the method of serving as a minister, Mencius borrowed the “loyalty to the king” idea from Confucianism. The idea of “loyalty to the

king” emphasizes that subjects should follow the basic principles of “benevolence”, “loyalty” and “honesty”. Like Shun and Yao, they always remain within the monarchs and ministers’ conventional framework, showing a relatively conservative attitude. On this basis, Mencius summarized the gains and losses of the rise and fall of various dynasties. He summarized the connections between monarchs and ministers caused by changes in times. He also proposed new norms and requirements for his subordinates’ ethical norms. Mencius believed that, as a minister, one needs to possess benevolence, righteousness and morality. Before becoming an official, one must first be a wise person. However, whether an official can be called a sage or not depends not on his monarch, but on his people. By referring to their evaluation among the public, one can correctly judge the officials’ ethics and select qualified officials.

The way of serving officials, advocated by Mencius, changed the monarchs and officials’ absolute obedience and personal dependence during the feudal era, and played a guiding role in the development of the later literati’s character. In China’s feudal era, there were a group of upright officials and loyal ministers who were brave enough to plead for the people and bravely admonished them. They have a strong sense of justice, which is inseparable from the influence of Confucianism and Mencius’ one on them. In short, the king and ministers’ way, advocated by Mencius, is the rational extension of his people-oriented theory, and the kings and ministers’ governance to the people is based on the people-oriented thought. The king’s rule needs to take the people and the people as the core, in order to realize the people’s support and the stable and long-term rule. Whether to make decisions for the people is the standard to judge whether the minister is wise or not. The minister can serve the people without the premise of personal gains and losses. This kind of kindness and good deeds can often achieve the effect of making the people accept the rule.

2 THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF MENCIUS’ THOUGHT IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

Mencius’ thought of benevolent government and people-oriented has exerted a certain enlightenment to the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics. The benevolent government inspires the Chinese government to promote a harmonious socialist society’s construction and the construction of socialist moral values, while the people-oriented thought inspires the Chinese ruling party to keep in mind the original aspiration of governing for the people.

2.1 THE ROLE OF BENEVOLENCE AND POLITICAL THOUGHT IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF SPIRITUAL CIVILIZATION IN MODERN SOCIETY

Mencius' theory of benevolence is a comprehensive elaboration of his thought of rule by virtue, which reflects Mencius' basic thought and methods of leveling the world and governing the country. At present, China is in the transition period. Only by establishing a sound socialist ideological and moral system and the socialist legal system, and playing the positive role of both, we can better escort a harmonious socialist society's construction. Mencius' thought of "emphasizing agriculture", in the theory of benevolent politics, still has certain reference significance for us to solve the problems of "agriculture, rural areas and farmers" and "carry out the construction of new socialist countryside." Agriculture, rural areas and farmers refer to agriculture, rural areas and farmers. The essence of "agriculture, rural areas and farmers" is the development of urban and rural areas, so China should strengthen the overall planning of urban and rural development, improve the level of agricultural modernization and farmers' living standards, and build a beautiful home for farmers to live a happy life. The implementation of "benevolent governance" in modern society means that the government needs to care about the contemporary people's sufferings, formulate relevant policies conducive to the people's lives, reduce the gap between the rich and the poor, alleviate the contradictions among people and promote the whole society's harmony.

After more than 40 years of reform and opening up, China has achieved tremendous achievements and development. However, with the development of the economy and the accumulation of wealth, the Chinese people have shown an incredible confusion and depression in terms of spiritual civilization and ideological and moral values. At the same time, as economic development, the issue of spiritual and cultural construction is becoming increasingly serious, as economic construction cannot replace the construction of spiritual and cultural heritage.

In the Spring and Autumn period, Mencius had already explicitly proposed that if a person still lacks morality despite sufficient material resources, it is no different from an animal. This indicates the need for moral education for people. Next, he said that understanding of human relationships and emphasizing morality are the basic requirements for social spiritual civilization in any era. Mencius' concept of moral education is an inspiration that transcends time and space. At present, the CPC advocates 24 core values related to the construction of citizen's morality, such as "patriotism, dedication, honesty and friendliness", which play an important role in the construction of citizens' spiritual civilization. From a historical perspective, this is actually no different from the Confucian initiatives of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and faith. And at this point, Confucianism in the pre-Qin period seems to be more substantial and complete than current Confucianism. Of course, we cannot prioritize the past over the present, but should adhere to the principle of making

the past serve the present and comprehensively innovating, and integrate the ancient moral education ideas with today's spiritual civilization construction.

At present, China is in the most stable and harmonious era after the Opium War. In this context, we can better utilize values, such as "loyalty," "righteousness," and "morality". Under such historical conditions, Mencius' concepts of "people-oriented" and "moralizing the people through education" have valuable practical value in promoting the formation of good social customs. The various new ethics, advocated in the process of building a harmonious society, should organically integrate traditional Chinese virtues with contemporary spirit. It needs to reflect the national spirit centered on patriotism and the spirit of the times centered on change, and should establish a new standard for the construction of Chinese citizen ethics. In this regard, Mencius' moral education ideology has eternal vitality. Mencius believed that education is the fundamental way to shape people's moral character and good behavior. This shows that the Communist Party of China also attaches great importance to education and moral construction, and promotes social progress through universal education, training of outstanding talents, and advocacy of social ethics and professional ethics.

2.2 THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF PEOPLE-ORIENTED THOUGHT ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF A HUMANISTIC AND HARMONIOUS SOCIETY

The people-oriented ideology has a long source and history in the history of Chinese thought. Its origin can be traced back to the early Western Zhou Dynasty, when enlightened rulers advocated the concept of "respect morality and protect the people" in governing the country. During the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, Mencius proposed the people-oriented ideology, which later formed the eternal theme of putting the people first in traditional Chinese political culture. This ideology has since become the most advanced and enduring ideological proposition in traditional Chinese political culture. Under the leadership of the CPC, China has become a socialist society, and the people no longer rely on the monarch but hold their destiny in their own hands. Building a modern country with Chinese characteristics is every Chinese people's common "Chinese Dream" and also all Chinese people's common dream. In the process of modern industrialization construction in China, in addition to the modernization of hardware, such as industry, agriculture, national defense and technology, it is also necessary to build a modern political culture centered on democracy and the rule of law. This will become an important institutional culture in China's modern system and an important 'soft power'.

Although there was no systematic concept of democracy and rule of law in ancient China, the profound meaning of the people-oriented spirit can still communicate with contemporary society and shine brightly through the time's long river. Mencius' concept of people oriented has profound and rich content, which is thought-provoking. Mencius' people-

oriented ideology not only has profound significance for the Chinese nation's development, but also has great reference significance for the Chinese people to establish and improve the country's democratic and legal system, and build a people-oriented harmonious society. The concept of "the people are precise; the ruler is light" proposed by Mencius can inspire today's ruling party to improve its political status and enhance its sense of faith in serving the people. The Soviet Union's disintegration was essentially caused by the great separation between the Soviet Communists and the people, which is undoubtedly a lesson for the CPC. At the same time, Mencius' "people-oriented" ideology also inspired the ruling party to adhere to the principle of putting people first, establishing the purpose of establishing the party for the public and the people, and adhering to the principles of one mind, one word and irretrievability. The so called "for the people" means that one should consider the people's needs and consider them as the starting and ending points of one's work. Only when a ruling party and its leaders can wholeheartedly think for the people, they can gain more public support, thus creating a cohesive force around the ruling party in the whole society.

Mencius' people-oriented thought emphasizes putting the people first, pays attention to the people's interests and happiness, and emphasizes that national governance should take the people's needs and interests as the starting point. For the Communist Party of China, this means adhering to the people's position, serving the people and putting the people first. Mencius advocated that the monarch should be responsible to the people and promote the balance and harmony of social order. Therefore, the Communist Party of China has been committed to achieving social equity, reducing the gap between the rich and the poor, and protecting the people's basic rights and interests. Mencius also stressed that the ideal society is a harmonious and stable one. For the Communist Party of China, it is an important task to maintain social stability and unity by building a harmonious society, and to achieve harmonious social development by means of rule of law, policy and democratic supervision. In general, Mencius' people-oriented thought provides the reference and guidance for the Communist Party of China to put people first and build a harmonious society, and helps to promote the good governance of the governance of CPC and the improvement of people's well-being.

CONCLUSION

Mencius' political ideology has rich connotations and unique viewpoints, which reflect the traditional political and moral concepts of Confucianism and have had a profound impact on ancient Chinese political ideology. The study explains Mencius' political philosophy from his BG and people-oriented ideas, and discusses its enlightening significance in contemporary national development using China's spiritual civilization construction as an example. Mencius' people-oriented ideology straightened out the relationship between

the monarch and the people for the first time, emphasizing that the monarch's legitimacy originates from the people's support, and proposing a path to solve this contradiction. The ruler should have fun with the people and achieve political stability through people's property control and moral education. Although during the Warring States period, Mencius' political philosophy and behavior were adopted by those who were not in power. But as time goes by, many politicians and thinkers are summarizing the experience of successive dynasties. The foresight and foresight of Mencius' political philosophy have been affirmed. It has been regarded as an important tool for maintaining political power and social stability, or for carrying out reforms. To this day, integrating and innovating Mencius' various ideas into the present have become an inexhaustible source of ideas for building a rich and harmonious society with rich spiritual civilization. However, a theory can only accurately realize its practical value through its social practice over a certain period of time. Therefore, it is still necessary to promote understanding in practice, drive practice in understanding and find a broader path for the specific implementation of Mencius' thought.

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