

# ELUCIDATION OF CONFUCIAN HUMANISM AS AN ANTHROPOCOSMIC HUMANISTIC PHILOSOPHY

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**ABSTRACT**--Confucianism is humanism as it is centred on the advancement of human, as a collective community. The philosophy much inclines towards strict convictions and leans towards religious beliefs. The goals are of Yin, Yang, Tian, and ceremony. The significant thoughts on identifying Confucianism as a humanistic approach are based on the ideals of the sage-thinker which are marked as four ideals. They are Ren, Li, Yi, and Zhi. These ideals refer to the humankind, custom appropriateness, proper conduct, and practical knowledge. The other ideals supporting humanism includes Renxing (human nature and humanity), change through contemplation, and reflection of self. This paper centres essentially on the ideas of Confucianism in the two books the Analects and Mengzi. It is Weiming (1999) who put forth Confucianism as anthropocosmic. This thinking of anthropocosmic blooms out of the Confucian accentuation on ideal harmony between Tian, nature, and Ren the people, the sequel between Tian and Ren, and the link amid Tian, Ren, and Earth. It is anthropocosmic too, with its worth hypothesis accounts for itself from cosmological, moral, and spiritual perspectives. Confucianism is not a strict way of thinking, yet it is a strict humanism with religious incline.

**Keywords**-- Human, nature, world, virtue, humanism, practical wisdom.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The early Confucian works of art incorporate the *Liji* (Classic of Rituals), *Yijing* (Classic of Changes), *Shiji* (Classic of Songs), *Shuji* (Classic of Documents), and the Spring and Autumn Annals. Those works add much value to the fields of theory of religion and Asian philosophy and thinking. At the same juncture, Confucianism is not a strict humanism but it is liberal. This paper adds information to the aforesaid area by distinguishing the key messages that help this contention. It addition to that it recognizes and explains the four principles of Confucius (Kongzi), its relation and interconnection among themselves and people. Confucianism is an anthropocosmic theory proposed by scholar and philosopher Tu Weiming. This paper supports the scholar's opinion additionally identifies the role of the human in Confucian philosophy to the progression of information. Confucianism promotes peaceful existence of human. The Confucian ideas are the icon in the philosophical tradition. Confucius noted down the equality and humanity as "By nature, men are nearly alike; by practice; they get to be wide apart." (*Analects* 17)

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## II. DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF HUMANISM

The features of humanism should be defined before quoting Confucianism as humanism. The distinguishing features of the humanism must mark to trace how those features are apt to Confucian humanism. The features of humanism, in a secular sense, can be a divergence from supernatural views to explain morals/events in favour of rationality and reason. One more feature is that without the need for an objective ethical motive imbued in them people can be self-sufficient. Ultimately there is vehemence towards the evolution of the individual, individual's ability to change or self-transform and the ability of individual over the community or the world.

Confucianism varies in a few different ways, yet it is a humanism fit to its context. The distinction found in Confucianism is an influence of the Chinese culture itself. It is the concept of collectivism, implying that society and community goodness is put before the individual. This idea likewise is found in Confucianism as people should be characterised in the whole of their connections to the world, people, nature, and universe. One another distinction is the presence of the supernatural and its existence. Confucius didn't dismiss the supernatural idea rather he focuses on the human and natural world. The role of a human in the natural world is on emphasis. *Tian* the governing force is prevailing strife for years, whether it has a link between heart and mind and has any intention of its own. Confucianism could be marked as a cosmological humanism as it spotlights on the connections among people and the universe as a whole. Confucianism is a humanistic way of thinking since the significant thoughts of Confucianism is characterized as much humanistic.

## III. REN – A WAY OF VIRTUE

Among the four ideals of Confucius, *Ren* (humanness) is a significant commonality. Confucius, the thinker marked that *Ren* is wholesome of virtues. It perfects a person as *junzi* (a gentleman). *Ren* can exist only within the social construct which denotes goodness and humanity. The relationship between a person and humane expressed as "To be humane (*ren*) is what it means to be human (*ren*)" (*Mengzi* 7B: 16). To be altruistic is being human is noted by Confucius. *Ren* is a procedure of creating uprightness step by step. Self-cultivation is a prior need. "One who is good sees as his first priority the hardship of self-cultivation and only after thinks of results and rewards" (*Analects* 6.22) *Ren* a way of virtue could be cultivated through self-correction and introspection. This harmony develops relationships. Confucianism quotes that the self is made up through the relationship in society. So through these ideas of self-development and correction inside a societal build, the idea of *ren* can be seen as turning into an individual or personhood.

## IV. LI AND YI SUPPORTS THE REN

Confucianism refers to the relationships as, it begins within, and it begins from family and extends outwards. In similar to that transformation also starts from self, family, and extends to the world. Confucianism describes five primary relationships exist between husband-wife, lord-servant, father-son, brothers, and friends. Inside these relationships response and thoughtful comprehension emerge; it supports the individual's development of *ren* inside the self. It is further formed and characterised by societal relationships. Sympathetic understanding and

reciprocation play a significant role in emotional control towards the others in the society, it helps to transform and improve the self of a person. It contributes much to the virtues *Li* and *Yi*. *Li* is the structure which supports the social and moral development of *ren*. Hall and Ames (1987) mark that *li* is the internal structure of *Dao*. This *li* as ritual propriety goes with the concepts of rite, ritual, and role. Considering *li* in the humanistic sense is a finding which helps human to find an appropriate place in the societal and cosmological triad. Confucian society comments that the first role of a person is a child. *Xian* the filial piety deals with how a person behaves with elders and parents. The appropriate roles preside over the emotion, behaviour, morality, day to day activities, and rituals of a person. *Li* concerns with the others in the society, *Yi* is the appropriate conduct of the person towards others. Appropriate conduct can be best applied to the possibility of an ever-changing world and the best way to respond to this steady transition in the characteristic world. “Of the things brought about by the rites, harmony is the most valuable” (*Analects* 1.12)

## V. ZHI, THE PRACTICAL WISDOM

*Zhi* the fourth virtue can be best translated as practical wisdom. This practical wisdom permits an individual to take decision correctly towards the activities. This prompts to appropriate conduct, adherence to custom and roles within the societal frame and relationships. Confucian love of learning supports the practical wisdom which plays an active role in the process of learning. The learning at first settled as ideas, these ideas reflect and reason out through thought process and practical implementation. Further, it evolves as knowledge. A gathering of information with the practical application has framed into a specific form of wisdom as *Zhi*, the practical wisdom. Again the concept of development and self-reflection emerge inside the context of Confucianism. The ideals of *Zhi*, *li*, *yi*, and *ren* are possessed and developed by the sage in Confucian philosophy. The ideals of the sage appear in many Confucian classics. It is *Sheng*, a phase that anyone can attain ideals through hard work in the cultivation of virtue and self. The individual, who is in harmony with *tian*, observes it in actions based on the observations. Virtuous action is the next nature; one with this can act with assured of being harmonious with *tian*, appropriate action for the circumstance. “In virtue-ethics, the focus is on the virtuous individual on those traits, dispositions, and motives that qualify...being virtuous” (Slote, 2000)

## VI. SELF-IMPROVEMENT AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO SOCIETY

Confucius marked that the appropriate ruler is a sage-ruler, which brings reference to the platonic philosopher-king. Confucius believed that the sage-ruler will govern things with the moral virtue and there is no need for the ruler to implement any incarceration. Confucius denotes the sage-ruler as “stars around the pole star” (*Analects* 2:1) who attract people with *de* the moral virtue. The person is full of his dispositions and human nature (*renxing*). *Renxing* denotes human nature, human dispositions, and the common nature of the response of a human to the universe around. It is of debate on the innate human nature is good or not. *Renxing*, as indicated by *Mengzi*, is acceptable, or possibly people have the capability of goodness that presently can’t seem to be completed. This goodness requires an individual to be dynamic and decide to be acceptable or the individual will become pretty and base. *Xunzi* thought *renxing* is not good, or that individuals are not inclined to do well. This doesn't mean individuals are inherently insidious in nature. It implies that we are creatures and are corrupt naturally. *Xunzi*

registers that an individual must inculcate goodness and live with good morals. The two perspectives require the advancement of the self inside the relationship concerning community and society. This development starts inside an individual's heart and psyche. If people are humanistic then the society or community generally gets enlightened.

## VII. CONFUCIANISM AS AN ANTHROPOCOSMIC THEORY

Chan (1999) point out that Confucianism has different meanings. It can be referred to as a political ideology, way of life, actual state politics and philosophical tradition. Confucianism is human-centric as it is centred on the human aspect of life. Anthropocentric nature of Confucianism focuses on humans and their role in the universe, as a whole as every one of the groups of three has its own way or *Dao*. *Tian* administers the role of an individual inside Confucianism; a way to be in concord with *Tian*, and how an individual should look towards cosmology. Individuals are characterized by their connections. It also incorporates their relationship with the natural world and *Tian*. Therefore Confucianism is human-centric and it is much fixed and focused inside the setting of cosmology. Therefore as proposed by Weiming Confucian philosophy is “anthropocosmic”. Identified with its worth hypothesis, Confucian virtues are dependant and related to the connections.

Zehou (2010) stated that Confucianism is inclined to religion but it doesn't have any God or deity. It prefers reason and tends to question the superstition. The researchers on Confucianism find the relevance of rituals, sacrificial practices, descendants, and ancestral worship influence in it. Ritual reminds the role of an individual in society and imparts a feeling of good and structure. The *Tian* which also includes the ancestors serve as a model and give moralistic guidelines to the human mind. Confucian researchers and adherents have faith in cosmology. They believe that the universe is an arranged framework, as well as in the disordered and constantly changing state. These convictions and beliefs are used to build the individual ethically, to invigorate the community and world entirely; it goes in accord with humanistic methods and philosophies. Confucianism is religious as well; it accepts the concept of the universe, which has its determined purpose although it contains some vague characteristics. These uncertain characteristics are focused on people, their will to pick things and act by their freewill accordingly, which is inherent. This inherent freewill has made the people liable for their actions and activities. The free will of humans has made them responsible for the effect they have on the world and the connections with other individuals. “In an ideal world, the privileged would deserve their privilege by virtue of moral self-cultivation” (Peerenboom, 1998)

## VIII. CONCLUSION

Confucianism is humanism, in that sense, it is centred on the individuals' abilities to create and develop ethically, contribute to improving the world and community as a whole. It additionally contains a cosmology of relationships among people and continually changing forces in the universe. Confucianism addresses people the way they can change in harmony with the universal forces. Through this harmony, the human can empower amicable relationship throughout life and accomplish satisfaction. Other ideas related to the Confucian humanism are the unstable human behaviour, emotions, actions, and morals obtained through self-reflection and introspection. *Renxing* supports the way of human to adjust with the innate nature through their natural dispositions. Confucian

philosophy is unique; it is a form of religious humanism. Sometimes it can be attributed as non-religious since it has no deity and shows less importance to superstition. Confucian ideas of humanism and other related values are embedded in the Mengzi and Analects. The other classics support the same context of humanism is Yijing and Liji. The preferable human values are perfect in the sage's ideals correlated as four virtues Ren, Li, Yi, and Zhi. Different ideas identified with humanism are people changing their behaviours, emotions, actions, and morals through self-reflection, contemplation, and altering as most ideal concerning the intrinsic idea of their characteristics (Renxing). Confucian way of thinking is an interesting type of strict humanism and an anthropocosmic humanistic philosophy.

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