

# Analects: Cultivating Cultural Self-confidence with the Beauty of Humanity

Gong Xu

School of Marxism, Jiangsu University, 212013, Zhenjiang, China

**Abstract**— As one of the oldest civilizations in the world, the Chinese civilization has a history of more than 5,000 years. Chinese culture is an important support for Chinese civilization along the way, carrying the spiritual pursuit of the Chinese nation for thousands of years, and is the "root" and "soul" of a country. Learning and carrying forward excellent traditional culture is an important embodiment of firm cultural self-confidence. Confucius's humanistic thought is an important source of Chinese tradition, and the Analects are the cradle of humanistic thought and have had a profound impact on future generations. Combining the classic Analects with the background of the development of the times and exploring the humanistic beauty in traditional culture is of great significance for cultivating humanistic spirit and enhancing cultural self-confidence.

**Keywords**— Analects; humanistic thought; cultural assertiveness; Traditional culture.

## I. INTRODUCTION

With the vigorous development of digital technology, digitalization is an irreversible trend in the future social development, and digital technology has gradually become a new type of productivity. It is undeniable that in such an era of "virtual and real interconnection and interconnection of everything", there is a disregard for humanities in today's society. The development of socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era, and we must firmly grasp the "root" and "soul" of the Chinese nation, explore the beauty of humanities from the excellent traditional culture, truly understand the value and meaning of "man" from the Analects, and return to the essence of "man".

## II. THE BACKGROUND OF THE WRITING OF THE ANALECTS

To measure whether a literary work can become a classic for a long time, there are mainly the following criteria, one is whether it has been self-inflicted by great words to dye future generations, the second is whether it shows humanistic feelings, and third, the noble quality of real classic works in content often gives people positive guidance. As a heirloom work, the Analects has experienced praise from the world and some criticism, and the study of the work should be combined with the background of the times in which it was produced, and unique value will be found through the prism of history.

Confucius was born in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, when society was facing the collapse of etiquette and music and the serious destruction of social order, which was an era of great ideological changes. Born in troubled times, Confucius devoted himself to spreading the idea of "benevolence" by restoring ritual music, hoping to cure the devastated society of the time. After Confucius's death, his disciples and his descendants compiled and recorded his remarks. The publication of the Analects was by no means an overnight achievement, but the crystallization of collective wisdom in troubled times.

No one is perfect, and the statements of Confucius recorded in the Analects have certain limitations due to historical factors such as social circumstances. Traditional

Confucianism, with the Three Principles and Five Constants as its creed, upholds feudal etiquette and deepens servility. Although there are certain differences in thought and content between the Analects and modern concepts, we cannot deny the important position of Confucius Thought and the Analects in traditional Chinese culture, and the humanistic connotation and pursuit of noble personality contained in them prove that it is a classic work that can withstand the baptism of time.

## III. THE CONNOTATION OF HUMANISTIC THOUGHT IN THE ANALECTS

"Civilization without people, meaningless." When this line appeared in the movie "The Wandering Earth 2", it triggered a heated discussion on "people" in the digital age from all walks of life. Humanities is the general term of human culture, in traditional Chinese culture, "culture" has always revolved around the existence of "people", humanistic thought is the respect for the existence of human beings as life and the affirmation of the existence of culture as a history. China has always attached importance to "humanities", and under the subtle influence of humanistic thoughts, it has cultivated the feelings of home and country.[1] The Analects of Confucius is not only a cultural treasure in the long river of history, but also a strong spiritual guidance of the Chinese nation, and its humanistic thinking is reflected in the following aspects:

### 3.1 Respect Human Relationships

Reading through the Analects, the word "ren" appears a total of 109 times, with the idea that ren is the value orientation of Confucius. Confucius's humanistic thought embodies respect for "man", and respect here is first of all respect for man himself, abandoning all external conditions such as wealth, power, and status, and returning to respect for man himself. The Analects of the Township Party writes: "Burning the stable, the son retreated, and said: 'Hurt people?' Don't ask about horses.[2] It is recorded that the stables caught fire, and Confucius's first reaction was to be concerned about whether anyone was injured. Under the premise of respecting people themselves, they demand themselves with the value principle of benevolence, and finally push themselves and others, "do not

do unto others what you do not want" shows Confucius's benevolent thinking of comparing hearts to hearts and thinking about others.

When dealing with family members and parents, the description in the Analects is "Respect without disobedience, work without complaint" (Analects of Riren ), requiring that as children, the requirements of their parents should be met as much as possible without any complaints. From today's point of view, this statement may have certain limitations, but it also reflects the beautiful virtue of honoring parents. In addition, in the modern society with the rapid development of science and technology, many people maintain friendships through the Internet, and the Analects have unique insights from the perspective of making friends. "Have friends from afar, are you happy?" (Analects of Learning) is the expression of the true feelings of friends, and "having faith in talking with friends" (Analects of Learning) embodies the wisdom of honesty in dealing with people. There are always people who say that although the living conditions have improved significantly, they feel that the human touch is getting weaker and weaker, and then the Analects answer that we need to respect the existence of people, cultivate good inner character, maintain a sincere and inclusive attitude in the daily relationship between people, and jointly build beautiful and harmonious social relations.

### 3.2 Respect the Relationship Between Man and Nature

The ancient Chinese nation is famous all over the world for its country of etiquette, and the idea of traditional Chinese culture stems from the reverence of nature, and in the relationship between man and nature, the idea presented in the Analects is that man and nature live in harmony. Farming culture is one of the first cultures that appeared and has been passed down to this day, and the fruits of human labor in ancient times depended on natural conditions such as climate and land, so people at that time placed their hopes on the beautiful vision of abundant grains in the gifts of nature. In this case, people regard man himself as a part of nature, pay attention to the protection of nature, and develop in harmony with nature. Humanities originated from primitive religious concepts such as reflection on man himself, fear and worship of mysterious natural forces, and reverence for ancestors, and the relationship between man and nature in traditional culture can also be manifested through the "ren" font.[3] In the Analects of Yan Yuan, Fan Chi once asked Confucius what "ren" was, and Confucius replied, "lover." Mencius also put forward the idea of "being close to the people and loving the people, benevolent and loving things", and humanistic thought included the natural moral concept of "loving others sparingly".

## IV. THE EMBODIMENT OF "BEAUTY" IN THE BEAUTY OF HUMANITIES

The humanistic thought in the Analects contains respect for "man" and reverence for nature, embodying the wisdom of "benevolence". The beauty of traditional culture is also full of cultural connotation and humanistic beauty, and the "beauty" of cultural beauty lies in the "unity of beauty and goodness",

which has both the beauty of etiquette and music, and the beauty of morality.

### 4.1 The Beauty of Etiquette

The "rite" in ritual music refers to a series of etiquette and norms produced by the combination of patriarchal system and hierarchy, and "music" refers to the music and dance that appear in conjunction with ritual. The emergence of ritual music has made human society put on the mantle of civilization, become the external decoration of people, and is an important symbol of the progress of human civilization. The description of ritual music in the Analects integrates aesthetic ideas into humanities, enriches the expression of beauty, and exudes the brilliance of humanities.

"If you don't learn etiquette, you can't stand (Analects of Ji)" is Confucius's attitude towards learning etiquette, in Confucius's view, learning etiquette is the foundation of a person's existence, this idea has had a far-reaching impact on future generations, and the beauty of etiquette is also the beauty of harmonious civilization in social development. "The son is hearing "Shao", and March does not know the smell of meat." It can be seen that music brought Confucius the ultimate enjoyment. The reason why Confucius smelled "Shao" and "March did not know the smell of flesh" was not only because of the beautiful melody of the music, but also because its content was "perfect and perfect", and the beauty of music was not a superficial beauty, but also an inner pursuit of humanistic beauty. The beauty of etiquette is a deep beauty that promotes the all-round development of people, the beauty of etiquette, the harmony of beauty in society, the enjoyment of aesthetics, and the pursuit of "benevolence".

### 4.2 The Beauty of Character

A gentleman is a noble personality advocated by Confucius. In the Analects, the quality of a gentleman is described as follows: "A gentleman is not worried about poverty, and a gentleman does not seek food when he seeks his way." "It is Confucius's description of a gentleman's emphasis on his own moral cultivation, a person of high moral character is a person with a heart for the world, and they always put personal self-interest after the general righteousness of the country." "Food without food, living without peace" is Confucius's description of a gentleman's extremely high spiritual pursuit. Confucius believed that people of high moral character did not seek the comfort of a living environment or physical satiety, but inner pleasure and spiritual prosperity. Zi said: "A gentleman is righteous and righteous, courtesy is done, Sun is out of it, and faith is accomplished." Confucius believed that a gentleman regarded righteousness as the foundation of being a human being, restrained himself with propriety, truly achieved self-denial, humble in speech, gentle in attitude, consistent in words and deeds.

"The beauty of etiquette lies in ornamentation, and the beauty of personality lies in benevolence." [4] Ritual music is the modification of people's exterior, and personality is the internal demand of people. Perfect personality is everyone's unremitting pursuit, not happy with things, not sad for themselves, with a rich inner world, and at the same time with the feeling of benefiting the world. This is in line with China's

concept of "people-oriented", and the pursuit of noble morality in the Analects makes the humanistic thought that has been baptized by the years always shine with the light of beauty and goodness.

## V. CULTIVATE CULTURAL SELF-CONFIDENCE WITH HUMANISTIC BEAUTY

### 5.1 Pushing the Envelope and Injecting Inexhaustible Power

With the development of science and technology, the concept of "digital humanities" has gradually entered the public eye, and has sparked heated debates from all walks of life. In the context of the digital age, "digital humanities" can be summarized as follows: "humanities" as the body, "digital" as the use, a product of the combination of humanities and digital technology, making it possible for culture to break through the barrier between the ancient and the modern, to break the divide between time and space, and to create a new relationship between "digital" technology and the digital world.[5] It is a product of the combination of humanities and digital technology, which allows culture to break through the barrier between ancient and modern times and the gap between time and space, creating a new situation where "digital" technology and traditional culture are mutually beneficial and win-win.

The widespread use of digital media has penetrated all walks of life, including the Internet, culture and the arts, and various online media platforms have become part of the public's entertainment in everyday life, providing new ways of spreading good traditional culture. In addition, the emergence of virtual simulation technology has enriched the expression of traditional culture. For example, in recent years, Henan TV has been able to create a national style craze with its production "Tang Palace Night Banquet", which has greatly enhanced the influence and public recognition of China's traditional culture and demonstrated the beauty of traditional culture to the public with practical actions.

As we all know, technology is a double-edged sword, if not used properly it can cause real people to become addicted to the virtual world and lose themselves in the network. Therefore, when using science and technology, we should always uphold the value principle of people-oriented, adhere to the value concept that science and technology are for the development of people, and guide technology for good with humanistic thoughts throughout the ages.

### 5.2 Facing the World and Promoting the Construction of a Community of Human Destiny

Confucius put forward the idea that "the benevolent person loves others", and under the guidance of the idea of benevolence and love, the fine tradition of helping each other in the same boat was formed. To be benevolent is to be strict with oneself while respecting others and treating people and things around you with a heart of equality. The saying "The people are the most important thing, the community is second to the ruler" has been handed down to this day, reflecting the people-oriented thinking in our traditional culture. The essential attribute of our democracy is that it is a people's democracy, a democracy adapted to our national conditions and a new form of human civilization that is people-oriented.

In the values of traditional Chinese culture, honesty is the basic rule of being a human being and the foundation of a secure life. In the Analects of Confucius, the word 'faith' appears 38 times, and Confucius made honesty a code of conduct for himself and his disciples. In today's society, which upholds the rule of law in a free and democratic society, inheriting and carrying forward the virtue of honesty and integrity is of great importance to the moral development of citizens and the building of a harmonious society. The realization of justice is a vision that has always been pursued by all peoples of the country, and the values of justice and defiance of violence have been upheld from ancient times to the present day.

The phrase "to promote harmony and seek commonwealth" depicts the beautiful pursuit of human society towards commonwealth. "The ancient people pursued the unity of heaven and man, internal and external peace, which has evolved into the pursuit of harmony between man and nature, national harmony, social stability, material and spiritual adaptation and so on. The word "harmony" also means mutual cooperation and maximizing the interests of all parties. "Cosmos" refers to the return to the essence of man, social stability and harmony, and is the ancient Chinese vision of a perfect future society, a pursuit. Today, it can be derived from the economic, political and cultural integration between countries. To achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, contemporary citizens need to enhance their cultural confidence, strengthen their moral development, treat foreign cultures with tolerance and positivity, and absorb and learn from the factors that contribute to the development of the national cause.

## REFERENCE

- [1] H. Zhang. From tradition to modern: humanism in Chinese culture [N]. Guangming Daily, 2020-10-31(11).
- [2] B. Yang. Translation of the Analects of Confucius [M]. Zhonghua Book Bureau, 1980: 105.
- [3] X. Zhao. The spiritual value of Chinese culture [M]. Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House, 2003: 36.
- [4] C. Zheng. The humanistic beauty of Confucius' thought [J]. Jiangnan Tribune, 2022, 528(06): 53-57.
- [5] Y. Han. Digital technology enables the humanities for research: A rational examination of the digital humanity [J]. Journal of Hubei University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition), 2022, 49(05): 142-149.