

Analysis of Hsu Fu-kuan 's Political Cultural Thoughts—— Comparing With Mou Zongsan and Tang Junyi

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Abstract: Hsu Fu-kuan is an outstanding scholar and an upright ideologist in modern China. His political and cultural thoughts can be summarized as breaking the old, set up the new, and get rid of the weed and keep the flower of the leek. On the one hand, he maintains traditional culture from the standpoint of traditionalists, and on the other hand, he is different from ordinary traditionalists who just maintain traditional culture. He doesn't just agree and maintain everything in the tradition with no change, but to implement the thought of liberalism through criticism and creation of traditional culture. This paper takes comparison and demonstration between Hsu Fu-kuan and Mou Zongsan as well as Tang Junyi. Although there are differences between the three, they jointly advocate traditional culture, trying to integrate the essence of Confucianism with Western culture for breaking the political difficulties of China for nearly a century, and clearing the way for democracy and science.

Keywords: Political Cultural ; Hsu Fu-kuan ; Mou Zongsan ; Tang Junyi

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Introduction

Hsu Fu-kuan, Mou Zongsan, and Tang Junyi are known as the three masters of the second generation of Neo-Confucianism in China. They are not only friends in life, but also all studied from one tutor, Mr. Xiong Shili. The three are a generation of great scholars who shining simultaneously in the May 4th Movement. The three people are consistent in protecting, discovering and developing the traditional Chinese culture, integrating the essence of China and the West, and establishing Neo-Confucianism, so their thoughts are often proposed at the same time. However, Tang Junyi was born in a family of scholar, and Mou Zongsan and Hsu Fu-kuan both came from farmer family. Mou Zongsan and Tang Junyi stayed in the academic circle for life, but Hsu Fu-kuan changed from political circle to academy after experiencing ups and downs as a minister. When Mou Zongsan and Tang Junyi worked hard to establish their own philosophical system, Hsu Fu-kuan gave up decisively, and believed that the revival of Chinese culture was far more important than the establishment of personal philosophical system. Mou Zongsan was proud and profoundly speculative, Tang Junyi was very warm and knowledgeable, Hsu Fu-kuan was valiant, and combining knowledge with action.

1. Comparative Study of Chinese Traditional Culture

The consensus between Hsu Fu-kuan, Mou Zongsan and Tang Junyi 's political thoughts is reflected in the "Declaration of Chinese Culture to the People in the World" jointly issued by the three and Tang Junyi. This declaration is the first systematic and programmatic document of the Neo-Confucianism. It refutes various misunderstandings of Chinese culture at home and abroad, and expresses Hsu Fu-kuan, Mou Zongsan and Tang Junyi's basic knowledge of the past, current and future situation of Chinese culture. The declaration reflected their overall conception of Chinese culture and human culture. They criticized the bias and negative effects of the May Fourth Movement, and advocated that the democracy and science supported by the May Fourth Movement should be based on the life theory of Confucianism, thereby opening the way for the healthy development of Chinese culture (Hsu Fu-kuan, 2014). The efforts of Hsu Fu-kuan, Mou Zongsan and Tang Junyi have made valuable contributions to the preservation and development of Chinese traditional culture.

Hsu Fu-kuan, Mou Zongsan, and Tang Junyi all put Confucianism as the main body, and in the deepest sense, they regarded

morality as the center of culture. They all thought that the political ideal of Confucianism is the rule of virtue, and they are all made many attempts trying to revive the rule of virtue. However, Mou Zongsan and Tang Junyi were more focused on sorting out traditional politics, while Hsu Fu-kuan was more focused on analyzing contemporary politics. This is not to say that Mou Zongsan and Tang Junyi did not attach importance to contemporary politics, nor did it mean that Hsu Fu-kuan did not study traditional politics. In fact, when Mou Zongsan and Tang Junyi were researching contemporary politics, they also analyzed the contemporary politics from the root, and Hsu Fu-kuan had a strong realistic bias when combing the traditional politics with contemporary politics(Cao Yongyang,1984).

2. Comparison of Western Culture

Hsu Fu-kuan, Mou Zongsan, and Tang Junyi all believed that the cultural spirit of Confucianism was superior to that of Western culture. But they also acknowledge that China's traditional politics has not developed into the democratic politics that is urgently needed today. They criticized the disadvantages of traditional Chinese politics and profoundly analyzed the fundamental reasons why China did not move towards a democratic political path. When criticizing the failure of traditional Chinese politics, the three have similar points of view. For example, Mou Zongsan and Hsu Fu-kuan believed that the lack of people's political awareness is a major drawback of traditional Chinese politics. However, Mou Zongsan directly studied the roots of Chinese politics through the superficial phenomenon of Chinese political issues. He pointed out that there is only a "comprehensive law-exploring spirit" and no "detached law-exploring spirit" in Chinese cultural, which is the crux of China's lack of democratic politics. Mou Zongsan's research is the research in philosophers' way, not the research in historian of political thoughts, so he is much deeper than the research of historians of political thought in general and undoubtedly has important theoretical value. Tang Junyi also realized this point. He believed that Confucian culture only emphasizes moral education, but ignores the construction of the system(Hsu Fu-kuan,2014). Relying solely on the moral self-discipline of rulers with no constraints of the legal system is one of the reasons why China failed to establish democratic politics.

Hsu Fu-kuan, Mou Zongsan, and Tang Junyi also differed in their discussions on how to embark on a modern democratic political path. Mou Zongsan emphasized from the perspective of the Chinese and Western cultural associations that democracy and science emerged for the moral reason, that is, self-negation. Tang Junyi advocated the combination of Chinese and Western cultures and political systems to create a democratic system with higher value. Hsu Fu-kuan started directly from the political level, and took a step from the people-oriented to democracy, and creatively merged Confucian humanism with the essence of western democratic politics(Li Weiwu,2001).

3. Evaluation of Political and Cultural Thoughts

In the second generation of Neo-Confucianism, Mou Zongsan 's thought was deep, Tang Junyi 's thought was broad-bodied, and Hsu Fu-kuan 's thought was direct. Tang Junyi 's thought has the richest religious tenderness. Mou Zongsan 's thought has religious rationality, while Hsu Fu-kuan 's thought does not leave any place for religion. Mou Zongsan and Tang Junyi are both philosophers, and they both created their own philosophical systems. After the death of Tang Junyi, Mou Zongsan called him a "giant in the culturally conscious universe", and after Mou Zongsan's death, Taiwan scholar Zeng Zhaoxu called Mou "a giant in the philosophical universe" in the tone of Mou. These titles have gained agreements in academic circles. Therefore, Mou Zongsan contributed most in the field of philosophy, and Tang Junyi has made significant cultural achievements. However, Hsu Fu-kuan is the most successful political thinker in the field of political science(Fang Keli,1997). As a result, scholars at home and abroad called him as "innovative traditionalist", "fighter who sacrificed to democracy" and "humanistic liberal who dare to challenge power."

The biggest difference between Hsu Fu-kuan, Mou Zongsan and Tang Junyi is that Hsu Fu-kuan is not a scholar in the ivory tower. In my opinion, Hsu Fu-kuan 's origin is the determinant of his character and thought. Childhood life in poor rural areas left Hsu Fu-kuan with many painful images and also left him many beautiful memories, which provided Hsu Fu-kuan with the deepest personal experience of the humiliation and suffering of Chinese farmers, and made him express his sincere appreciation for the simplicity, honesty, and kindness of ordinary people. He can always find the highlights of human nature in the ordinary words and deeds of ordinary farmers. In his appreciation, he mentioned many times that ordinary people have bred greatness, and repeatedly expressed admiration for them, thinking that the mother of Chinese culture is the hardworking Chinese farmers. Yin Haiguang's student, Wang Xiaobo, recalled an experience when he studied from Hsu Fu-kuan. He said that Hsu Fu-kuan once said that Chinese culture is a way for the Chinese nation to survive for a long time, and it has been managed and accumulated by the Chinese nation for a long time.

4. Conclusion

In the Neo-Confucianism, Hsu Fu-kuan is undoubtedly the person who has the deepest contact, understanding and experience with real politics. Li Weiwu said, In terms of relations with real politics, not only academic scholars like Feng Youlan, Tang Junyi, and Mou Zongsan can't compare with Hsu Fu-kuan, but scholars like Xiong Shili, Liang Shuming, and Zhang Jundai, who were once involved in the political field did not go close to the core of real politics as Hsu Fu-kuan did. Hsu Fu-kuan went from a participant in real politics to a painful dissembler in real politics, and finally became a brave critic of real politics. Whether the active participation, painful disappointment, or courageous criticism, all come from his concern and hope for the fate and future of the Chinese nation. The rich political experience and sympathy for the working masses made Hsu Fu-kuan's understanding of political issues deeper than other Neo-Confucian scholars. Hsu Fu-kuan's political thought was unique and particularly important in the development of Chinese politics in the 20th century.

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