

# Kant's Enlightenment to Chinese Philosophy on Consciously Man Legislation for Oneself

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## Abstract

With Kant as the boundary, Western philosophy has shifted from unconsciously man-made legislation for himself to consciously man-made legislation for himself. And the core meaning of this so-called "man legislates for himself" is rationality. Rationality represents the construction of subjectivity under the subject-object dichotomy. However, the Confucian-based Chinese philosophy attaches great importance to the group and despises the individual. As a result, China is still confined to the original state of the unity of nature and man, and has not been able to break through and develop the subject-object dichotomy, which affects the development of natural science. Learning from Kant's principle of subjectivity plays an important role not only in promoting individuality, but also in developing socialist market economy, science and technology, legal society, and artistic aesthetics. At the same time, the subject-object thinking mode marked by subjectivity also injects vitality and vitality into the construction of a new unity of nature and man, constantly promotes Chinese philosophy to the world, and contributes its own strength to the pursuit of world philosophy.

## Keywords

Rational; Confucianism; Subjectivity.

## 1. Introduction

Whether as Kant, the founder of German classical philosophy, or as a Chinese civilization with a five-thousand-year-old culture, the development of either side occupies an important position in the history of its philosophy. With the continuous development of the market economy, all countries in the world have formed a whole. Philosophy should also integrate and promote each other in this context, and seek the common progress of world philosophy. Therefore, studying Kant's philosophical thought, excavating Kant's connotation of consciously making laws for themselves, enlightening Chinese philosophy to use different perspectives to make continuous progress, to step out of its own established paradigm, and to study the Western mode of thinking, can make Chinese philosophy negate the negation. It is inevitable to promote the cultural self-confidence today, and promote the continuous innovation of Chinese philosophy. Regarding the enlightenment of Kant's thought to Chinese philosophy, there are indeed many scholars at home and abroad, but there are no scholars who point out that "people make laws for themselves consciously". Therefore, although this article is an old saying, but the choice of angle is novel, it still has a certain value of the times.

## 2. It Is Required to Pay Attention to Individual Initiative in the Chinese Etiquette System

Kant's "man legislates for himself" establishes the important role of reason in real life, and realizes the long-standing personal transformation of western philosophy. At the same time, his "Copernican Revolution" shifted the world's attention from the perceptual objective world to the human initiative, reversing the understanding around the object, and elevating the

position of the individual to an unprecedented height. Facing Hume's problem, he criticized philosophy, solved the problem of how a priori comprehensive judgment is possible, and provided a definite basis for the reliability of natural science. Thus, natural science has developed into a new stage. As a result, Western philosophy changed from "the handmaiden of theology" to a free man. Kant developed the spirit of humanism to its peak, and the spirit of rationality that Plato began to advocate began to rise, opening the age of rationality. The spirit of the individual is also developed in this relationship.

In traditional Chinese society, under the etiquette system advocated by Confucianism, the position of society is obviously superior to that of individuals. The existence of an individual contributes to the country and society. This can be seen from the word "benevolence" which is the core of Confucianism. In "Origin of Chinese Characters", the translation of "benevolence" is as follows: benevolence, dear. It is understood by "people" and "two". Ling, the ancient character benevolence, is understood by "thousand" and "heart". From this we can see that "benevolence" cannot be achieved by a single person. To realize "benevolence", one must become a "benevolent person" from the relationship between people and from the group society. Also in the most basic "monarch, ministers, fathers, sons." [1], although the social structural order is explained, the relationship between the ruler and the minister still precedes the relationship between the father and the son. It is even more obvious that in the "The Analects of Confucius, Zihan", "Zi Gong said: 'There are beautiful jade in this country, and the cassocks are hidden? Ask a good friend to sell them?' Alas! I am the one who treats good people.'" Here, Confucius directly expressed the determination of the foreign king. The Doctrine of the Mean also has the same expression: "To be afraid of the people's will, this is called the foundation of knowledge. This is called the foundation of knowledge, and this is called the ultimate in knowledge." [2] From this, it can be said that Confucianism takes the path of the inner sage and the outer king. Not only traditional Confucianism, but later Han Yu and even Song and Ming Neo-Confucianism all followed the same path. It seems to emphasize the inner sage and the moral nature of people, but in fact the goal is to serve the country and make great achievements.

As Kant's philosophy, which establishes individual subjectivity, and Chinese philosophy, which is goal-oriented with social values, it is obviously a better choice to integrate the former into the latter. Because Chinese philosophy focuses on the social level and ignores the value exertion at the individual level, it indirectly hinders the development of natural science. Although the Mohist school in the pre-Qin period advocated "universal love", the foothold behind it was personal interests. Therefore, in Mohism, logic and natural sciences were rare. Its "Three Tables Method" became an early form of "practice is the only criterion for testing truth". Although its various military inventions did not rise to the theoretical level, they raised the technology level at that time to a new level. Although it did not occupy the mainstream in the later period, and scientific and technological inventions were regarded as "exotic and ingenious skills", they were still the shining points of ancient Chinese philosophy. Therefore, Chinese philosophy should absorb the subjective thinking in Kant's philosophy and put its foothold on the individual. Only in this way can it deal with the "flood beasts" of Western scientific and technological civilization, and can keep up with the pace of world philosophy without being overwhelmed. Similarly, the subjectivity of personal values can not only play an important role in coping with Western civilization and promoting scientific and technological progress, but also play an important role in the "yearning for a better life" in our current social stage. "Everyone's free and comprehensive development" should not be something that can only be done in the stage of communism. Even if it is still in the primary stage of socialism, it should also achieve personal development in socialism. Promoting the development of personal value in the society as a whole, focusing on individual creativity and applying it to science and technology, craftsmanship and aesthetic activities all play an important role. In addition, highlighting the

initiative of individuals has contributed to transforming the tradition of isomorphism between the country and the country, and paying attention to the construction of the rule of law. Mr. Li Zehou believes that the driving force of social development must ultimately be implemented on individuals, "Individuals are more convenient to absorb, accept, and choose other cultures that are different from their own culture, so the differences in individual accumulation can be even greater. It will become the theme of the future world." [3] At the same time, he also said that "the totality, society, and rationality are ultimately implemented on the individual, nature and sensibility" [4]. Injecting the Western tradition of focusing on the individual into Chinese philosophy can also promote The "transformative creation" of Chinese philosophy constructs the world development of Chinese philosophy.

### 3. Building a New Unity of Nature and Man

The so-called "harmony between man and nature" in Chinese tradition means that man acts according to the laws of nature, and nature makes laws for man, or that man takes nature as his law, which is a primitive state of man and nature. China's concept of the unity of man and nature has existed in the mythology of the history of witchcraft, and in the pre-Qin period, although Confucius said, "If you can't deal with people, how can you deal with ghosts?" [5], but in "Confucius Yan Yuan", Confucius' disciples Zixia also said, "Life and death have destiny, wealth and honor are in the sky" [6]. It can be seen that it is not really out of the influence of God. Among the hundreds of schools of thought, Taoism and Yin-Yang and Five Elements are the schools that represent the unity of nature and man. They discuss their philosophical thoughts in terms of "Dao follows nature" and "Yin-Yang Five Elements Theory" respectively: all things are born out of Tao or Yin-Yang, and people and all things should conform to the laws of Tao and go with the natural nature of things. After that, Dong Zhongshu of the Han Dynasty clearly put forward "the unity of man and nature" and "the number of people in the sky" as a tool for feudal rule. Since then, the Buddhism of the Tang Dynasty, the famous religion and nature of the Wei and Jin Dynasties, the Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming Dynasties, and the philosophies of the Chinese dynasties have always been within the framework of the unity of nature and man. This phenomenon was not until the Ming and Qing scholar Wang Chuanshan put forward the viewpoint of "Nengsuo", which marked the transition from the traditional Chinese concept of the unity of man and nature to the "dichotomy of subject and object".

Taking Kant as a boundary, Western philosophy has shifted from unconsciously man-made legislation to consciously man-made legislation for himself, which marks the awakening of rationalism. After modern philosophy, the subject-object dichotomy mode of thinking has gained a new development in German classical philosophy. Similarly, the unity of man and nature in ancient Greece has reached a new unity of man and nature after such a long-term development of the modern subject-object dichotomy. That is to say, in modern western philosophy, postmodernism emerged, which abandoned the traditional mode of dichotomy between subject and object, and returned to the state of unity between man and nature. But this kind of harmony between man and nature is different from the one in ancient Greece, but a new one that includes the dichotomy of subject and object. Its connotation is richer, its characteristics are more distinct, and its social orientation is clearer. As Mr. Zhang Shiyong said, "The dichotomy of subject and object and subjectivity give us the spirit of infinite progress and persistent pursuit. It is the combination of the two." [7] The revelation that Kant's philosophy brings to Chinese philosophy should be more about the relationship between heaven and man, and it should inject the duality between heaven and man marked by rationality into Chinese philosophy, and promote the formation of the new unity of heaven and man. "I think what China needs more is modernity than postmodernity. [8]" The destructive power of postmodernity is not conducive to us absorbing the subject-object dichotomy to promote the development of

natural science. On the contrary, its role is more reflected in cultivating people's spiritual strength and establishing a sound spiritual character. In this regard, the contents of free will and self-discipline in Kant's moral metaphysics can give us some inspiration.

#### **4. Promoting the New Development of Chinese Philosophy—Constructing the Philosophy of the World**

Hegel, the master of German classical philosophy, once published a book called *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. From the title of the book, we can tell that he arrogantly believed that he had exhausted the truth of the world. Philosophy came to an end with him, and the rest of the day was nothing but a cycle. And his philosophy of history also clearly and clearly shows that in his mind the world has become a whole, and he must look at the world and should not be limited to his own part to make arguments. It can be seen that after the era of great voyages and the development of capitalism, the world has become a whole, history has become world history, and philosophy should also develop world philosophy. Many contemporary scholars are not confident in constructing a philosophy of the world. Therefore, as far as current Chinese philosophers are concerned, they start from the roots of Chinese and Western philosophy, and compare world philosophy to a big tree. Chinese and Western philosophy is this big tree. Different branches that develop on the tree, but are essentially homologous to the same root. There are also many scholars who disagree with this view, which leads to questions such as whether there is philosophy in China. And like Zhang Shiyong, Li Zehou, Wang Defeng put forward their own views on the construction of new philosophy. Mr. Zhang Shiyong believes that "the bright future of Chinese philosophy lies in the combination of the idea of developing the relationship between subject and object and the idea of opposing metaphysics." [9] As a result, Chinese philosophy and Western philosophy are integrated into a whole, and Chinese philosophy has its own As it is, there is also the penetration and influence of Western modern philosophy and Western modern philosophy, although this is what Mr. Zhang Shiyong only talks about on the way out of Chinese philosophy. But in my opinion, this also provides a new way of thinking for Western philosophy, that is, Chinese philosophy seeks inward in shaping personality spirit and personal morality, rather than relying on the unique role of theology's external shock and deterrent. Li Zehou's historical ontology of anthropology, after integrating the thoughts of Chinese philosophy, Western philosophy and Ma Zhe, emphasized the unique role of emotion ontology in constructing the philosophy of the world. After hundreds of years of development, western rationalism has become so perfect that postmodernism has emerged, and people's spirits are gradually breaking down under the rule of reason. At this time, people are eager to find the support of the soul, so the "qing" in Chinese tradition has become the big tree behind the spirit. Wang Defeng, on the other hand, is directly based on Marxism, the mainstream thought in today's China, and sees that "a history of the international communist movement in the 20th century and the homeless state of contemporary Western civilization finally made the fundamental problems faced by contemporary human beings resolved. I really feel that this makes the objective conditions for a deeper understanding of Marx's philosophical revolution to mature. [10]" He keenly observed that Marxist philosophy and phenomenology have certain similarities, and through phenomenology "Suspension" method, traces the real role of sensibility in Marxism, re-understands the true meaning of Marxist philosophy, and exerts its contemporary significance. In this regard, no matter which way of thinking is used to construct a new philosophy, it seeks the new development of today's philosophy from different angles and provides new ideas for the development of world philosophy. Although we do not yet know what form the true world philosophy will take in the future, it is clear that world philosophy must be based on the whole and cannot be limited to one aspect. Therefore,

understanding Kant and absorbing the connotation and value of Kant's legislation for oneself play an indispensable role not only in Chinese philosophy, but also in world philosophy.

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