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The purpose of the journal is to promote scientific exchange and cooperation between Russian and foreign political scientists.

The journal is intended for the publication of the results of fundamental and applied scientific research. Thematic focus of the journal is reflected in the following permanent headings: "History and philosophy of politics," "Political institutions, processes and technologies," "Political regionalism and ethno-politics," "Political culture and ideologies," "Political problems of international relations and globalization."

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INFLUENCE OF CONFUCIANISM ON THE POLITICAL AND CULTURAL ELITE OF THE RUSSIAN SOCIETY¹

The article is devoted to the study of the influence of Confucianism in Russia. The author pays special attention to the influence of Confucianism on the political and cultural elite of the Russian society.

Key words: *Russia, China, Confucius, Confucianism, history, modernity, influence, political and cultural elite.*

Confucianism (the teachings of Confucius) is an important part of the world's cultural heritage. This is an ethical and philosophical doctrine created by Confucius (553-480 BC). For a long time, Confucianism was identified exclusively with China. Currently, it is widely represented all over the world.

Many works are devoted to the study of the spiritual origins of Confucianism, its history, elements, components and orientation. There are no comprehensive studies on the history of Confucianism in Russia.

The nature of Confucianism's presence, the extent of its prevalence, and the context of its public perception differ significantly from one era to another. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to study the influence of Confucianism on the political and cultural elite of the Russian society.

From the methodological point of view, we note that in this work we consider Metropolitan and regional ruling groups, whose representatives perform the function of governance, as the "political elite" of Russia.

Representatives of the Russian intelligentsia (creative and scientific) are studied as the "cultural elite".

It is important to note that it is necessary to distinguish between Confucianism as a teaching that is followed and a teaching that is studied.

At present, it is impossible to date with certainty the time when Russians got "acquainted" with the teachings of Confucius. There are no comprehensive, generalizing scientific studies on this problem. A generally accepted point of view is the hypothetical assumption that this event should be dated to the Middle Ages.

¹ The article is written with the support of the Zhejiang social science N20NDJC203YB.

It is possible that the fragmentary penetration of certain elements of Confucianism, for example, in the form of individual (phenomenal) contacts, mainly books and actual borrowings, could have occurred in the XIII century during the Mongol conquest of the Russian principalities. This assumption is hypothetical.

It is based mainly on the fact that the Mongol army had some Chinese natives (mainly specialists in the field of artillery and clerks) who, theoretically, could be both supporters of Confucius' teaching and simply bearers of knowledge about it.

If this kind of phenomenological contact took place, then the number of its participants on the part of Ancient Russia was negligible, and the result is clearly not significant, since there are no references to either Confucianism or Confucius in written sources of this era (Chronicles, hagiographic literature, other genre works, etc.).

The image of China in Russian literature is clearly identified from the XV century, but it is related exclusively to the trade issues. In 1472, Tver merchant Afanasy Nikitin mentioned China in the context of the production of high-quality and inexpensive porcelain products.

Active incorporation of Chinese themes into the everyday life of Russia began only in the XVII century. There are quite pragmatic explanations for this process.

After the end of the Time of Troubles in Russia, an interest in the correct organization of the state administration grew sharply. People were interested in the rights and duties of individual estates, and the relationship between the tsarist government and the people, i.e., the problems that Confucius was actively engaged in. Therefore, a number of his selected statements (anonymous and often with distortions of the author's text) on this issue were included in the domestic collections of statements of ancient and modern sages. The name of Confucius was not mentioned and the author was presented in a "neutral" form, like, for example, "a certain wise man; a wise old man from the Kingdom of Cathay," etc.

It is believed that the first direct (identification) contacts between representatives of the two countries were established in the early XVII century, when the first Russian mission led by I. F. Petlin (1618) was accepted in the "middle Kingdom" at the court of Emperor Shen-Tsong (1573-1620). By this time, Western Europe was already acquainted with the creative heritage of Confucius, whose works became known thanks to the Jesuit monk Matteo Ricci (1552-1610).

In 1656, China was visited by the mission headed by F. I. Baykov, in 1660 – by the Embassy headed by I. Perfiliev, etc. However, in the XVII century, relations between Russia and China can be described more as pragmatic "trade" relations.

Therefore, speaking of the XVII century, it can be stated that the Russians, who are connected by their activities with China, were not actually carriers of Chinese Confucian traditions. In many ways, this was determined by:

1) considerable influence of the Russian Orthodox Church in terms of religious identification and existence of an appropriate legal framework;

2) the rarity and irregularity of direct contacts, due to a variety of reasons (territorial conflicts, military attacks on merchant caravans, etc.). In addition, a significant part of the trade contacts were carried out through “third hands,” so the areas of direct communication were local and limited.

The situation begins to change in the XVIII century. Paradoxically, an interest in China came to Russia not from the East (Russia has a long border with China), but from the West within the framework of the culture of the European enlightenment.

At the first stage, to a large extent, this interest was based on “cultural fashion” and consisted, most often, in external borrowing of everything fashionable, i.e. Chinese without trying to research or study it.

In the capital and provinces, it was decided to incorporate Chinese parks in manor houses, caves, pagodas, bridges, palaces etc. Elements of Chinese decor and costume, sculpture, works of art, paintings, porcelain, carpets, silk, etc. became widely popular. G. R. Derzhavin characterized that time, saying: “it was a Theater here and swing there, then an Asian house of bliss...,” when telling about the opening of the Chinese Opera (Theatre) in 1778 in Tsarskoye Selo [4. P. 96-97].

At the second stage in the 70-80 years of the XVIII century, some representatives of the national Enlightenment in their internal spiritual development were sincerely interested in the spiritual teachings and practices of China.

Confucianism has taken a very special place in the study of Chinese culture. Among the creative intelligentsia, who were in search of spiritual components of the true understanding of the meaning of life and interested in other models and practices of life, it is no exaggeration to say that there was a special interest in Confucius and Confucianism.

Representatives of the Russian cultural class were literally “mesmerized” by the paradoxically modern and surprisingly wise attitude to life. Domestic thinkers studied Confucianism intuitively, often in isolation from the history and culture of China, but fully aware of the fact of “communion” with the treasury of unique human wisdom.

It was at this time that we can state the beginning of the real influence of Confucianism on the “thinking” class of the Russian society. By this time, probably, appeared the first publications in Russian of entitled (attributed) sources about Confucius. However, rather approximate translations and the arbitrary nature of completing such collections did not actually contribute to the popularization of Confucianism, on the contrary, awareness of it turned into an attribute of belonging to the ruling class.

Therefore, in the XVIII century, the influence of Confucianism was mainly limited to:

1) nobility. Metropolitan (to a greater extent) and provincial (to a lesser extent). In part, those representatives of nobility who identified themselves as representatives of the European, enlightened culture;

2) top intelligentsia. More precisely, those representatives of the “thinking class” who were either directly connected with the managerial elites or studied China in terms of its history, culture, philosophy, literature, etc. Consequently, Confucianism of the middle and second half of the XVIII century affected only a part of the “political” and “thinking” class of the educated minority of the Russian society.

It should be recognized that influence of Confucianism in Russia was especially strong during the reign of the Empress Catherine the Great (1762-1796).

Actually, the Empress became a “popularizer” of the ideas of the European Enlightenment in Russia. Modern researchers identify direct semantic context close or identical to the works of Confucius in the work by Empress Catherine II “Grandmother’s Alphabet,” as well as in “Historical Song” by A. N. Radishchev, in the “Letter about the use of glass” by M. V. Lomonosov, in the poem “About true bliss” by A. D. Cantemir and in the “Letter of a Chinese to the Tatar Murza” by M. V. Sushkova [3].

Thus, in particular, A. N. Radishchev called Confucius a “wonderful” (amazing) teacher of humanity. Addressing the genius of Confucius, he wrote: “Your word is radiant/In the midst of a terrible storm, battle,/on the ruins of the Motherland/It is always shining in splendor/And through the whole centuries/In soaring high/Ascend and fly” [9. P. 76-77].

In this paradigm, the following issues have proved to be fundamental and in demand:

1) the role of an enlightened ruler.

“The teacher said: What is called a human duty? The father must prove parental feelings, and the son – piety; elder brother kindness, and younger – friendliness, the husband – justice, and the wife – obedience, the older – mercy, and the younger one – obedience, the sovereign – humanity, and citizens – loyalty. These ten qualities are called human duty” [6. P. 105];

2) relations between the ruler and his subjects.

“The teacher said: When you rule a land that can supply a thousand war wagons, you must be careful in your business, truthful, love the people, save money, and encourage the people to work in accordance with the changing seasons” [7. P. 400-401];

3) relations between the younger and older people.

“The teacher said: At home, the younger ones are respectful to their parents, and on the side to the older ones, careful and truthful” [7. P. 22];

Thus, the spiritual teaching of Confucius turned out to be relevant and fundamentally modern for the Russian political problems of the Enlightenment. Questions and problems that were considered and acutely debated in the Russian society actually received clear, concrete and time-verified answers through the statements from Confucius.

Of course, sometimes other people covered their own thoughts and ideas by the name and authority of Confucius, often attributing to him their own thoughts and ideas.

In the conditions of an absolute “enlightened” monarchy disguise allowed public figures to preserve their freedom and sometimes their lives. Thus, China, the doctrine of Confucius and Chinese wisdom, became an independent concept of Russian culture, politics and literature, and Confucius himself became an authoritative author, a supporter of the restriction of serfdom in Russia.

The concept of “Chinese mind” (Chinese wisdom) was formed and widely used in Russian public thought under the direct influence of his writings [3].

To this same thematic period should be attributed the research of the authors who “discovered” the real works of Confucius for the Russian reader. Translations by A. L. Leontiev (1716-1786) and Fr. Iakinf (N. Ya. Bichurin) (1777-1853) introduced the domestic reader to the text of the classical Canon “Si Shu,” the true history and culture of centuries-old China [5. P. 68-69].

From 1828 to 1851, N. Ya. Bichurin alone published more than 100 works, including many valuable translations.

In 1780, the first book of the Quatrains, da Xue, was published in Russia, and “Jung Yoon” was published in 1784.

A partial return to the old ideals took place during the reign of Emperor Alexander I (1801-1825), but during the reign of Emperor Nicholas I (1825-1855) the influence of Confucianism on the political and cultural life of Russia was constantly decreasing.

Russian researchers note the fragmentary influence of Chinese heritage and Confucius, in particular, on the authors of the Nicholas I Russia, such as Alexander Pushkin (“Ruslan and Lyudmila”), however, this is an exception rather than the rule [1].

A certain surge of interest of the “thinking class” in the teachings of Confucius was observed during the reign of Emperor Alexander II (1855-1881). This is again explained by the modernity and relevance of Confucius’ work and its perception in the “Russian era of change”. However, the vector of event interpretations, even taking into account the traditional Russian conservatism, did not contribute to the expansion of Confucianism’s influence in Russia.

Thus, in the middle of the XIX century, the spread of Confucianism in Russia was localized. The “political layer” of the society, which was extremely interested in Confucius’ ideas in “Catherine’s” Russia, almost completely distanced itself from them in the mid-90s of the XVIII century.

However, interest in the heritage of Confucius, in general, has always been characteristic of the “cultural layer” of Russian society. Thus, during the reigns of the Emperors Alexander III (1881-1894) and Nicholas II (1894-1917), sources record a new stage of growth in the popularity of Confucianism in Russia.

1. An interest in Confucianism from the scientific community (cultural layer) is represented by the brilliant works of P. E. Skachkov (1892-1964); P. S. Popov (1848-1913), V. P. Vasiliev (1818-1900), and others. It is P. S. Popov who has the merit of publishing the classic treatise “Meng-Tzu” in 1904. At the same

time, the national school of “Chinese studies” was actively developing, and the tradition of studying various aspects of the history and culture of China and Confucianism in particular was being formed.

2. The Russian intelligentsia was literally “fascinated” by the works of Leo Tolstoy, who actively used Chinese cultural heritage in his works. Confucius became a necessary daily “companion” of the great Russian writer. In 1905, a rare and little-known work by L. N. Tolstoy was published, the history of which was described in the publisher’s preface. “During the serious illness of Leo Tolstoy in January 1903, when his life was hanging by a thread, ... he still found the strength to read the gospel and, out of habit, daily ... the calendar, read the sayings of various great people collected there” [8. P. 1]. The sayings of Confucius turned for Leo Tolstoy into a spiritual medicine: “when a wise man adheres to the law of virtue, he hides it from the eyes of people and does not regret that it is not known to everyone. ... Although people do not know what good is, they have it in themselves. ... Everything has its beginning and its end. So is the business of man: there is not a single business that does not have its beginning and its end. He who truly understands where the beginning and the end are, is close to the truth.

To attain knowledge, one must examine the essence of things... To be highly moral means to be a free soul” [8. P. 21-176].

The legacy of Confucius is more or less present in the works of a number of Russian poets and writers of the late XIX – early XX centuries.

The growth of interest in Chinese culture and Confucianism in particular in the early twentieth century was probably caused by the following circumstances:

1) the Russian – Japanese War of 1904-1905, as a result, a part of the Russian society personally visited China and could get acquainted (to varying degrees) with the culture of the Chinese people;

2) the defeat in the war, the internal ideological crisis, which stimulated the spiritual search for directions of development among the Russian intelligentsia (cultural class). As a result, a significant part of the society turned to the heritage of Confucius, to the study of scientific literature, the development of Chinese spiritual practices, etc.;

3) the search for the “Eastern” wisdom, sacred knowledge, attempts to see the meaning and direction of the world’s development, characteristic of a significant portion of the Russian cultural layer of that era;

4) the presence of a significant Chinese Diaspora in Russia, which was widely represented in almost all regions of Russia [2. P. 132-134].

S. M. Georgievsky (1851-1893) and I. Ya. Korostovets (1862-1933) made a great contribution to the study of Confucianism. Anna Stolpovskaya called Confucius a great “reformer of morals.”

In the Soviet period of history, the attitude to Confucianism should be recognized as rather negative. Since Confucius was considered part of the feudal elite that exploited the working population of China. At the same time, this did not

mean that representatives of the scientific community were forbidden to study his work. V. M. Alekseev (1881-1951) and V. A. Rubin (1923-1981) made a huge contribution to the study of the problem.

During the periods of complications in relations between the USSR and China, the situation deteriorated significantly. A kind of “liberalization” occurred during the period of “perestroika.” However, it was not due to a growing interest in Confucianism on the part of the political layer of the USSR, but rather to the actual inability to control the society. Attempts by the representatives of science to pay attention to the Chinese studies (historical, political, economic and cultural) were not widely supported in the society. At the same time, M. L. Titarenko noted that Confucianism has always been a regulator of life relations in China [10]. The works by L. S. Perelomov, V. V. Malyavin and L. S. Vasiliev were devoted to the study of Confucius ‘ personality and legacy.

After the collapse of the USSR (1991) and the first disappointments in the Russia’s new capitalist course, there was again an increase in the interest in China in general and Confucianism in particular. This process was primarily due to the serious economic success of the PRC, which combined elements of capitalism and planned economy with modern development which contrasted the negative results of the “process of initial capital accumulation” in the Russian Federation. Some representatives of the cultural layer of the Russian society tried to explain the Chinese specifics by many factors, including the traditions of Confucianism, which promoted the study of such traditions in the Russian Federation. However, without the support of the PRC, this process was rather slow. The situation started to change from the beginning of the XXI century.

In 2001, the “Treaty of good-neighborliness, friendship and cooperation” between the Russian Federation and China was signed. Within the framework of this agreement, it was supposed to intensify mutual activities in the field of science, culture and inter-civilizational contacts.

In 2002, a decision was made to provide large-scale support from the PRC to the public Russian Confucius Foundation. The Foundation fully supports publications in the Russian Federation of classical works (“Da Xue,” “Zhong Yun,” “Lun Yu”), etc.

Currently (2019), scientific research and conferences are being held in the Russian Federation, the exchange of students and teachers has intensified, and Confucius Institutes have been opened and are working fruitfully.

With regard to the degree of influence of Confucianism on the modern political class, it should be noted that such research has not been conducted in Russia. Therefore, we can only hypothetically assert that such influence may well exist in certain regions of the Russian Federation. This assumption is caused by the presence of personal interests.

Certain elements of Confucianism can be spread much more widely in the Russian Federation. However, this is only an assumption. For example, the per-

sonal image of Russian President Vladimir Putin and Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu contain elements that, with a certain degree of caution, can be attributed to the tradition of Confucianism. However, their points of view on this matter are not known. There is no doubt about another circumstance. The global and universal significance of Confucius's legacy is undeniable.

In modern Russia, there is a steady trend to research and study Chinese politics, economics, history, culture, and spiritual practices. In this regard the number of Russians who sincerely want to join the culture of the Chinese people will only increase.

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