

## **ANALYSIS OF SIMILARITIES BETWEEN SOCRATES AND CONFUCIUS**

*TianBo<sup>1,2</sup>*

*1. Faculty of Social Sciences, the National University of Uzbekistan, Tashkent,  
Uzbekistan*

*2. Jining Normal University, Wulanchabu, 012000, China*

**Abstract:** Socrates and Confucius are important figures in the history of early human thought. A comparison of Socrates and Confucius's life pursuits, life trajectories, ways of thinking, and contents of thought reveals many thought-provoking questions about ancient Greece and ancient China, it would be helpful to have a better and more objective understanding of world civilization.

**Key words:** Socrates; Confucius; commonality; influence

Socrates and Confucius were thinkers from different countries and regions, although they were in different historical states and in different cultural environments, however, there are many similarities in their life experiences, ideological contents and value orientations. Their common or similar thinking can especially express the same or similar experiences and problems faced by different nations. This kind of comparative study can not only show the common cultural mentality of different nations and the common characteristics of mankind, but also help us to understand the common destiny of mankind.

### **1. All live in troubled times**

Confucius was born on September 28 in the 551 BC Year and died in the 491 BC year. He was 73 years old. Socrates was born in AD 470 BC and died in AD 399 BC at the age of 71. Confucius was only 80 years older than Socrates. Confucius lived in the spring and Autumn period of ancient China. The society was in transition from slavery to feudalism. Socrates lived in a time when Athenian democracy was in decline, unstable

and corrupt. Both came from humble beginnings, Confucius lost his father when he was young. His family was poor. Socrates's father was a sculptor and his mother a midwife. Socrates studied with his father from an early age. Confucius ran the ancient Chinese city of Lu, but was later framed and pushed out of Lu. Confucius, who had a 14-year rule of "Benevolence", returned to LU to focus on education. According to historical records, during Confucius's Confucius, he was trapped several times, "Like a lost dog," and even assassinated once. Socrates's support for "Dictatorship" drew opposition from Athenians, most of whom were used to democracy, so he had to endure his contemporaries' rejection of his lectures and the failure of his life's purpose (to become an influential aide) . In the end, Socrates was executed for impiety, endangering the state and corrupting young people. Confucius devoted his life to education and his ideals to politics. The aim of education is to improve social order. Socrates laid bare the failings of Athenian democracy. Both of them took education as their main cause, but both of them "Said but did not do", the main words and deeds were recorded by the disciples after death. All the life eager to learn, sleep and forget to eat, but they think they know nothing. "Confucius said: I know what? Ignorance is also". Socrates emphasized that he was considered the wisest by God because he knew he knew nothing. In the object of education, are "Taught no class.". Confucius argued that "There is no class without education". Socrates taught both rich and poor.

## **2. Both regard the rise and fall of the world as their own responsibility**

Neither likes metaphysics. Socrates did not value the idea of thinking about the origins of things in the heavens or in the universe, but he criticized those people, "Does it feel like you're doing your job to ignore people and guess what's going on Up There?" Socrates believes it's absolutely important and necessary to understand people first. In his opinion, the personnel problem is the most important and the most important problem in the world. It is not only very important in itself, but also all other problems will lose their significance if they are separated from the personnel problem. Confucius is similar to Socrates in this respect. Ji asked Confucius how to "Deal with ghosts and gods."

Confucius said, "If you can't understand people, how can you understand ghosts...", asked "Death," Confucius replied, "How can you know death if you don't know life?". In Confucius's view, there is no need to talk about "Ghosts" and "Death" when the problems of life and people are not clear. While Socrates doesn't like to talk about "Objective existence" beyond personnel first, Confucius doesn't like to talk about things like "After death.", but it is obvious that the two sages did not like to discuss the problems outside of human beings first. This shows that both of them have a clear spirit of the world, the two sides also hold a clear sense of salvation.

### **3.They are all interested in politics**

For a thinker or practitioner full of practical interest, the questions before life, after death, or outside of man are equally meaningless and of practical utility, although they do not advocate banning such ideas, they always take a critical attitude towards them, it is meaningless and unnecessary to think about things other than people or real and unreal "Things" before life or even after death. In this, Socrates and Confucius have little difference of principle. The two philosophers were both interested in practical problems and endowed themselves with a strong sense of responsibility and mission through cultural self-identification. In the two sages, this concern for the present world, mainly focused on their interest in political issues above. This strong political interest led the two philosophers to focus on the field of morality at the same time. They both hoped to establish a politics in line with ethical principles, both of them tried hard to create a reasonable political life with the unity of politics and ethics. Socrates preached morality in pursuit of his earthly ambitions, "Like a father and a brother, urging people to care about virtue," urging and persuading them daily, "No matter young or old, don't only care about personal and property, first care about improving their own soul," he said, which is more than personal and property "More important things.". In his view, it is better for a man to turn to the spirit, the standard of "A better citizen," than to make himself powerful and virtuous, to turn to the spirit, it includes the ability of financial management, the ability to defeat the enemy by serving the polis, the ability to make the enemy a friend by

diplomatic means, the ability to rally the people through speeches, the ability to make the people work together, and so on. The main idea of this preaching is to integrate the public sphere with the private sphere, to harmonize politics and ethics on an ethical basis, and to raise the moral standards of citizens, would make it possible to achieve better politics in the polis. Similar to Socrates's attempts to moralize the politics of the present, Confucius's goal was to politicize it. He went around promoting his social ideals, Confucius, and came up with a lot of political ethics, these ideas are based on the transformation of reality and serve the transformation of reality. Confucius's tendency to politicize ethics can best be seen in “Learning excellence leads to being an official” and “Governing with benevolence”. In order to realize the goal of politicizing ethics, Confucius put forward the idea of “Etiquette”. The so-called “Ceremony”, in fact, including the maintenance of the hierarchy and the first performance of the hierarchy to maintain the order of social life. “The prince, the subject, the father, the son”(Analects of Yan Hui) became, naturally, the amulet of hierarchy and the Old Order. This is a political theory with a strong ethical color. Confucius took morality as an all-powerful political tool, hoping to restore the lost Zhou dynasty-style rule and life order through the moral transformation of the people. In fact, the real intention of “If I am useful, I am the eastern Zhou dynasty” (“The Analects of Confucius”) is to rebuild the ethical politics and politicize the ethics. The ethicalization of politics and the politicization of ethics are very similar but different ideological tendencies. The similarity of the two lies in that both of them are seriously dissatisfied with the political and ethical status quo, both of them think that ethics and political “Morality” of the new social life order.

#### **4.They all had a profound impact on later generations**

Confucius and Socrates are both moral gurus, but they share a strong passion for the world in which they live. Confucius's politicization of ethics was inherited by Mencius, who argued that “Benevolence is invincible. “Socrates's tendency of political ethicalization was continued by Plato, forming the political ideal pattern of the so-called “Philosophy King”, which was also unrealistic and could not be implemented.

Confucius wanted to politicize morality, but he chose the path of first ethics, then politics, and finally ethics, which objectively showed a top-down tendency, while Socrates wanted to moralize politics, the way it chooses is to make people learn the knowledge of politics first, then form the idea and habit of justice, then use this idea as the guide to reform the realistic politics, finally realize its ethics. Such paths have a bottom-up tendency. It should be said that Confucius's approach and tendencies are aristocratic, while Socrates's approach is manifested in a clear populist characteristics.

Socrates and Confucius were in different circumstances, but they both recognized that the separation of politics and morality was the “Impurity” of modern life, and they both wanted to rationalize the social order by reintegrating it, the similarity of their thinking on political and moral issues shows that the problems encountered by human beings are similar and the solutions to them are similar. However, the different paths and orientations of the two sides reflect that they can not think out of their own living environment, which shows the obvious differences between the two sides. This difference, in a sense, also foreshadows the divergence of the two cultures in the future development process. This difference between the two philosophers is in fact a relatively obvious sign that the two cultures-the east and the west-began to diverge at the source.

As the founder and founder of the Ancient Greek philosophy, Socrates influenced the development of Western philosophy for more than 2,000 years, his philosophy has exerted a great influence on the development of human civilization in science, politics, sociology, ethics, aesthetics and thought. As the most resplendent spiritual treasure of Chinese philosophy, Confucius's philosophy has influenced the historical process of the Eastern world, in many aspects, such as cultural identity, spiritual tracing, the foundation of one's life, behavioral norms and so on, it shapes the world outlook and values of the Chinese people, the unique metaphysical system and the philosophy of governing the world developed by him are the most important things that can not be ignored.

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