

The Modern Value of Mohist Theory in Ancient China

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Abstract. Mozi¹ can be described as broad and profound, which covers the natural sciences, philosophy and social sciences, Mozi has made great achievements in mathematics, mechanics, optics, engineering science, etc. In terms of natural science, philosophy and logic, thoughts including «whole world as one community», «homogeneity of benefit and morality», «respect the rules», «peaceful coexistence», «mutual aid» advocated by Mozi, are complementary and consistent with his scientific rationality and scientific spirit. On this basis, Mozi further demonstrated his labor-based and ability-based view, power contract view, view of rule of law, and social overall view, etc. With the serious incompleteness and loss of the documents of Mozi, and the practical rationality and empirical way of thinking of traditional Confucianism have become cultural factors restricting the further development of science, technology and spiritual civilization. So the numerous scientific and technological achievements created by Mozi, and the ideological system of Mohism have not been fully and completely inherited and developed. In a certain sense, the elements of science, democracy and other elements lacking in the feudal social ideology with Confucianism as the mainstream need to be supplemented by the clear scientific rationality and scientific spirit of Mohist. To revitalize traditional culture and promote economic and social development, it is still necessary to continue to excavate and carry forward the scientific rationality and ethical spirit of Mohism.

Key words: Mozi; Mohist theory; modern value.

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Значение древнекитайского Моизма в современном мире

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Аннотация. Моци можно охарактеризовать как широкого и глубокого ученого, охватывающего естественные науки, философию и социальные науки. Моци добился больших успехов в математике, механике, оптике, инженерных науках и т. д. С точки зрения естествознания, философии и логики мысли понятия «весь мир как единое сообщество», «однородность пользы и нравственности», «соблюдение правил», «мирное сосуществование», «взаимопомощь», отстаиваемые Моци, дополняют друг друга и согласуются с его научной рациональностью и научным духом. На этом основании Моци продемонстрировал свою точку зрения, о труде и способностях, на властный контракт, на верховенство закона, общую социальную теорию и т. д. С серьезной неполнотой и потерей документов Моци, их практическая рациональность и эмпирический образ мышления традиционного конфуцианства стали культурными факторами, ограничивающими дальнейшее развитие науки, техники и духовной цивилизации. Так что многочисленные научно-технические достижения, созданные Моци, и идеологическая система моизма не были полностью унаследованы и развиты. В определенном смысле элементы науки, демократии и другие элементы, отсутствующие в феодальной социальной идеологии с конфуцианством как мейнстримом, должны быть дополнены ясной научной рациональностью и научным духом

¹ Mozi was a collection of works and sayings by the distinguished thinker and politician Mozi (cir.468B.C.-376B.C.) and his principles. The original book contained 71 chapters, yet they were gradually scattered after the Six Dynasties (200-589). As a result, only 53 chapters are still in existence. Mozi covers a wide range of subjects, including politics, military science, philosophy, ethics, economy, logic, natural science and technology, and is the chief representative work of Mohism. Altogether ten propositions are put forward in Mozi: «Universal Love», «Denouncing Aggressive Warfare», «Respecting the Virtuous», «Identifying with the Superior», «Economizing Expenditures», «Simplicity in Funerals», «Against Music», «The Will of Heaven», «On Ghosts», «Against Fatalism».

моиста. Чтобы возродить традиционную культуру и способствовать экономическому и социальному развитию, по-прежнему необходимо продолжать раскопки и продвигать научную рациональность и этический дух моизма.

Ключевые слова: Мози; моистская теория; современная стоимость.

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INTRODUCTION

The occurrence and development of modern science and technology is not only the internal mechanism of the development of science and technology, but also the external environment of education and cultural inheritance. Why did the scientific and technological culture that flourished in ancient China stagnate for a long time without the development of modern science and technology? In this regard, the authors believe that the modernization of Chinese traditional culture can only be completed through the Chinese people's cultural reflection, cultural comparison and cultural consciousness, and through the innovative development and creative transformation of modernity. As the saying goes, «He who tied the bell to the tiger must take it off», which is the fundamental issue of cultural awareness and cultural self-confidence.

In On new democracy, Founder of New China MAO TSE-TUNG stressed: «A splendid old culture was created during the long period of Chinese feudal society. To study the development of this old culture, to reject its feudal dross and assimilate its democratic essence is a necessary condition for developing our new national culture and increasing our national self-confidence, but we should never swallow anything and everything uncritically». [Mao, 1967: 62]² Regarding the long and colorful traditional Chinese culture, it is still important to adhere to two points: neither historical nihilism nor retroism. This basic judgment on traditional culture representing the Chinese Communist Party, and the general principles and methods of critical inheritance, are still realistic and instructive. This article mainly discusses the scientific elements and the system of «public morality and ethics» of Mohism.

SCIENTIFIC ELEMENTS OF MOHIST THEORY

Mozi (cir.468B.C.-376B.C.) is one of the earliest and most outstanding scientists in ancient China. He has made great achievements in mathematics, mechanics, optics, engineering science, etc. In terms of natural science, philosophy and logic, Mohism had surpassed Confucianism. In the grand ideological system of Mohist theory, there are lofty academic ideals, which are also Mozi's life and social ideals. Mohist theory attempts to reveal an inherent and inevitable connection between the natural sciences and the social sciences.

First, Mozi is the earliest mathematician in ancient China, and his geometric achievements are comparable to, perhaps even earlier than that of ancient Greece. In recent years, Mohist researchers have found that, in Mozi, strict definitions are put forward for points, lines, surfaces, bodies, circles, etc. Its geometry corresponds one-to-one with many entries in Euclid of Alexandria's, such as many definitions and axioms. For example, Mozi·The Canon (I) records, «The end-point takes no definite position in an object, but takes its position at the end of a line». [Mozi, 2006: 319]³ But Euclid's Elements Volume 1

defines «A point is that which has no part» (Book I Definition 1). «The ends of a line are points». (Book I Definition 3) Another example, Mozi·The Canon(I) records, «Equidistance is the same length shared by straight lines» [Mozi, 2006: 315], «A circle has a center that is equidistant from any point on its circumference» [Mozi, 2006: 317]. But Euclid's Elements Volume 1 defines «Of quadrilateral figures, a square is that which is both equilateral and right-angled». (Book I Definition 22) Another, Mozi·The Canon (I) records, «The center of a circle is the point that is equidistant from any point on its circumference» [Mozi, 2006: 315]. But Euclid's Elements Volume 1 defines «A circle is a plane figure contained by one line such that all the straight lines falling upon it from one point among those lying within the figure equal one another». (Book I Definition 15)

Second, Mozi can be said to be the earliest physicist in China. His achievements in mechanics were earlier than that of the ancient Greek mechanic Archimedes, and his content is comparable to that of Newton's classical mechanics. Most commendably, the discovery of «force» in Mozi was earlier than that in the West, «Force is the deep-rooted cause for the movement of an object» [Mozi, 2006: 321], this is the earliest definition of «force» and reveals that «force» is the fundamental cause of changes in objects and their states. On this basis, Mozi discovered the principle of leverage, he believed that «In weighing an object, the long arm of a steelyard will not tip up, for the weight will counterbalance the object being weighed. When the fulcrum is moved toward the end of the long arm, the long arm will tip up, even though nothing more is added to the object; for the weight will not counterbalance the object being weighed». [Mozi, 2006: 373] This discovery predated Archimedes by about 200 years and made the principle of leverage clear. Mozi concluded: «When we build a wall, we must lay the foundation, for stones must be laid in the ground before we build a wall». [Mozi, 2006: 343] «The gravitational force accelerates the speed of a falling object». [Mozi, 2006: 351] On this basis, the relationship between motion, space and time is demonstrated. The word «accelerate» referred to by Mozi not only represents motion, but also indicates the progressive change of the motion of an object. There is an «acceleration». This theorem is equivalent to Newton's second law, that is, an object goes from rest to motion, or from motion to rest, everything that changes the state of motion of an object is due to the action of «force», and gravity is the gravitational force of the earth on the object, so there is a vertical downward freely-falling. Newton's second law states that: The alternation of motion is ever proportional to the motive force impressed; and is made in the direction of the right line in which that force is impressed. Mozi·The Canon (II) further demonstrates, «Two things might or might not be synthesized into one, for there might be resistance between them. In that case, nothing can be done about it and needs to be done, for it is proper to act like this». [Mozi, 2006: 337]

Third, Mozi was the pioneer of optical physics in ancient China. He first discovered that light travels in straight lines, and completed the first optical experiment of pinhole imaging. Mozi·Exposition of the Canon (II) records «To cast light on a man is like shooting an arrow into an aperture. The light cast onto the lower part of the man will be thrown back upward while

² Mao Ts. On New Democracy. Foreign Languages Press. 1967. 62 p.

³ Mozi. Mozi. Hunan People's Publishing House. 2006. 319 p.

the light cast onto the upper part of the man will be thrown back downward. The legs cover the light from below and form an image above; the head covers the light from above and form a shadow below. This is because at a certain distance there is an aperture that coincides with the light; therefore, when the light is thrown into the aperture, the image is formed». [Mozi, 2006: 369] Then Mozi discovered the principle that the size and shape of the object changed when the light passes through the convex and concave mirror, which laid a theoretical foundation for applied optics. It can be seen that on the basis of geometry, Mozi observed and recorded the imaging results and laws of light with modern scientific experimental methods, and established ancient Chinese optical theory, thus linking production technology and scientific theory. Joseph Needham believed that, Mozi's research on optics, «earlier than what we know of Greece», «India can't compare» [Joseph Needham, 2003: 81]⁴, all these show that Mozi's physical optics was in the leading position in the world at that time. Einstein, the modern physicist, once believed that the development of Western science is based on two great achievements: the system of formal logic invented by Greek philosophers (in Euclidean geometry), the possibility of finding causal relationships through systematic experimental discovery (in the Renaissance). [Albert Einstein, 2010: 574]⁵ However, due to the burial of historical dust and the limitation of cultural dissemination, Einstein did not know at that time that Mozi had invented and created formal logic and experimental scientific methods as early as Spring and Autumn Period and Warring States Period in China.

In a nutshell, on the basis of profound scientific thought, Mozi founded the «Universal love» theory with «Universal love, Mutual benefit», the system can be described as rigorous and complete. «Universal love» can be roughly divided into three levels: One is the level of ideas and values, which discusses the purpose and goal of China's ideal society, «whole world as one community» as the basic concept, «benefit to the state and the people» [Mozi, 2006: 273] and «encourage what was beneficial and abolish what was harmful», [Mozi, 2006: 91] as the core values of goals and principles. The second is the theory and principle of epistemological significance, that is, on the basis of natural science, the objective inevitability and regularity established by moral theory and principles cannot be violated, otherwise, it violates science and human nature. As recorded in Mozi·Canon (II), «Although there is non-being, a being cannot become a non-being, for it has been a being». [Mozi, 2006: 339] The third is the principle and regularity of following with methodological significance, that is the command and order of the «Necessity of standards» and «Identifying with the superior» with «The will of heaven» above, as recorded in Mozi·the will of heaven (III), «If there is righteousness, the world is in order; if there is not righteousness, the world will fall in disorder». [Mozi, 2006: 223] So Mohist has rich and comprehensive scientific and humanistic thoughts.

MOHIST «PUBLIC MORALITY AND ETHICS» SYSTEM

Mozi is broad and profound, which covers the natural sciences, philosophy and social sciences, Mozi has made great achievements in mathematics, mechanics, optics, engineering science, etc. In terms of natural science, philosophy and logic, thoughts including «whole world as one community», «homogeneity of benefit and morality», «respect the rules», «peaceful coexistence», «mutu-

al aid» advocated by Mozi, are complementary and consistent with his scientific rationality and scientific spirit. On this basis, Mozi further demonstrated his labor-based and ability-based view, power contract view, view of rule of law, and social overall view, etc.

First, labor-based and ability-based view. Guided by the ideas of «Respecting the virtuous»; «Against fatalism»; «Against Music», Mozi emphasized the respect of knowledge and talents, labor and creation based on material interests, labor-based and ability-based view according to his ability and his work. In terms of the distribution system, it advocates that should not be equal, opposes unearned gains, encourages technological invention, brain-body integration and labor income, and resists hedonic luxury to promote production and economic development. Mozi·Against Music (I) advocates «Exerting himself in labor, he will be able to survive; otherwise he may die» [Mozi, 2006: 265] this includes the labor values of intellectuals. Mozi advocated «not discriminate against the disfavored, those who stayed afar and us, and is ready to promote anyone that is righteous» [Mozi, 2006: 45], and for those virtuous people who have contributed «bring benefit to the state and the people», [Mozi, 2006: 273] we should all «elevate their social status, respect them, admire them and grant them sufficient emoluments». [Mozi, 2006: 43] Mozi also advocated «Against Music», that is, the wealth of the people's clothing and food should not be used. «Though the body finds comfort, the mouth gratification, the eye pleasure, and the ear delight» [Mozi, 2006: 261], all of these reflect the extensive demands of the ancient Chinese working people for democracy and people's livelihood based on interests. «Righteousness» in Mohism is different from «benevolence» in Confucianism. Confucianism is based on blood kinship closeness and affection, while Mohism is on the merits and demerits of people's actions, regardless of whether they are noble or grassroots. In this regard, Mozi took Yu the Great (an ancient hero who successfully controlled floods) as an example and explained that the reason why Yu the Great was worthy of love was because he was able to love the people of the world, thus upheld and emphasized the publicity and objectivity of «public morality and ethics» and its political and economic basis of justice theory.

Second, power contract view. Mozi adhered to the «theory of homogeneity of benefit and morality», and his concepts of «Universal love» and «Mutual benefit» highlighted the common and fair consciousness of the world, the common people and grass-roots consciousness, as well as scientific rationality and scientific spirit, it shows that the whole world is a kind of community relationship of mutual assistance and mutual benefit. On issues such as state power and governance, Mozi was rich in the idea of people-oriented or democracy and the rule of law. Through the development of ethical thoughts such as «whole world as one community», «The will of heaven» and «Necessity of standards», Mozi has regarded the power relationship between the monarch, the minister and the people as the result of a contract and checks and balances. The so-called «The monarch governs both the ministers and the people» [Mozi, 2006: 325]. The monarch and its power are the result of the common agreement of the subjects, rather than innate or predestined, or established only by coercive force, which lays the ideological foundation of the Chinese social rule of law rather than the rule of man. Therefore, compared with the ideological theories of the pre-Qin philosophers, Mozi's view of interests and power is closer to modern democracy and science, and can be more inherited and used by citizens and a society ruled by law. Mozi was the first person in Chinese history to advocate the rule of law⁶. In fact, starting from Confucius, the Confucians

⁴ Joseph Needham. Vol. 4. Vol. 1. Science and Civilization in China. Science Press. 2003. 81 p.

⁵ Albert Einstein. Vol. 1. Albert Einstein Selected Works. The Commercial Press. 2010. 574 p.

⁶ In the beginning of Mozi·On the necessary of Standards, there is «Now in administering the land under heaven or managing the state affairs of large countries, we seem to lack standards. This shows that we are less

of all dynasties, especially the late Ming and Qing Confucians, have made unremitting efforts in the construction and development of their benevolence studies, including absorbing the science of Mohism and the people-oriented thought, trying to break through such a limitation of lacking modern. However, some of the shortcomings of Confucianism cannot be extricated from the paradox of «private morality and ethics» with «Filial piety» and «Ethical Code» as the core, however, it is revealed by the «Universal love» theory of Mohist theory at that time.

Third, view of the rule of law. Mozi advocated the rule of law and opposed feudal ethical code. Mozi-On the Necessity of Standards records «So neither the parents nor the teachers nor the rulers can be taken as models to administer the land under heaven or manage the state affairs of large countries». [Mozi, 2006: 17] Mozi's thought on the rule of law is most perfectly expressed in «The will of heaven» and «On the Necessity of Standards», «The will of heaven is to me what a pair of compasses is to a wheelwright or what a square is to a carpenter. The wheelwrights and the carpenters use their compasses and squares to measure the round or square objects in the world». [Mozi, 2006: 207] As a utilitarian, Mozi insisted that reward for meritorious deeds; punishment for guilt; self-defense; and restraint in accordance with the law, and opposed «rule by man» or «rule by virtue» such as Sage, Parents and Teachers. In addition, Mohist put forward the concept of «good law» and «evil law»⁷, and the rule of law thought of «A crime: A serious offence is not a crime if it does not violate the law, even if it brings harm to the people». [Mozi, 2006: 353] The meaning is that as long as it is not within the prohibition, even if it obstructs others, it cannot be counted as a crime. It is like a person who walks on a small road in order to catch up with the person in front, but has no time to give way, although it is not etiquette, it cannot be said that he is guilty. Of course, what Mozi advocates is still some kind of elite or sage politics, and there is still a gap between his political and legal thinking and modern values of democracy, the rule of law and freedom. For example, in Mozi-Identifying with the Superior, Mozi hoped to elect a monarch with both political integrity and ability from top to bottom, «one with the world's righteousness», that is, on the premise of «whole world as one community», adopting a unified mind; public opinion; and the totalitarian way of formulating one standard; one heart and one mind; and prohibiting orders, in order to govern the country and society, it is still unavoidably simple and idealistic.

Forth, social overall view. With a systematic scientific theory, Mozi regarded all people in the «world» as a systematic whole from the logical relationship between the parts and the whole, and then proved the ethical basis of the objective inevitability of «Universal love». Mozi used formal logic to make a scientific demonstration of the relationship between the whole and the individual. He believed that, «A part is a portion taken from the whole. Necessity is what is inevitable and everlasting». [Mozi, 2006: 315] That is to say, the overall virtue of «Universal love» is due to the relational properties of things, that is, the interdependence of all things, or the concept of post-modern thought-«intersubjectivity», which has the inevitability of the existence of objective things. It is not the subjective will of the individual that can be denied. Therefore, in social life, it is necessary for people to build on common interests, enhance public awareness and awareness of equality and cooperation, and follow the law of «Universal love» of equal treatment, mutual assistance and

discerning than craftsman». Mozi's idea of the rule of law is to emphasize equality, election, competition, rewards and punishments and the observance of rules.

⁷ Such as in Mozi-Identifying with the Superior, «The ancient sage kings set up the Five Punishments to govern the world, while the Youmiao people established the Five Punishments to disrupt the world. Can we now put the blame on the Punishments themselves?»

peaceful coexistence. What Mozi strived to advocate is the holism of the world rather than the holism of the family, and «Denouncing Aggressive Warfare»; «Economizing Expenditures», it is the high expression of national and international relations of the holistic view of society. Therefore, in the context of today's world development and globalization, the policy of «peace, development, cooperation, and mutual benefit» advocated by President Xi Jinping and the Chinese government, as well as the consciousness of a community with a shared future for mankind, has inherited the «whole world as one community» and the overall social concept of «peaceful coexistence» of Mohist, which should be made into the principles that different countries and peoples abide by in international affairs today.

FATE AND TREND OF MOHIST THEORY

Due to the serious incompleteness and loss of the documents of Mozi, the numerous scientific and technological achievements created by Mozi, and the ideological system of Mohism has not been fully and completely inherited and developed. As Mr. Yang Yi, a contemporary cultural scholar, thinks these are enough to explain the root problems of the unity and diversity of Chinese traditional culture: first, the Chinese have excellent wisdom and ability to promote the development of human scientific creative thinking; second, the mainstream ideology and social system in ancient China have not enough recognition and respect for wisdom and ability has resulted in this kind of wisdom being marginalized to a considerable extent during the two thousand years since the Qin and Han dynasties. [Yang, 2011: 69-70]⁸ It is true that we do not need to feel inferior for the modern loss of traditional culture, and at the same time it is necessary to draw experience and lessons from this loss. Among them, the Mohists followed the principle of «Denouncing Aggressive Warfare» and devoted their lives to stopping the war; The absence of Mohism as an official ideology led to an imbalance in traditional culture and weakened its centrality as Chinese science.

Extending to the entire education and cultural heritage, China has lost the support of scientific rationality and scientific spirit, so that the scientific culture that embodies modernity cannot be properly and universally developed. Take the «Pythagorean Theorem» as an example, the proof methods are completely different in Chinese and Western cultures. Ancient China «still made more use of figures or examples to analyze and understand concretely and figuratively through empirical materials, but lacked the method of geometric deduction with purely logical thinking such as abstract symbols, language and axioms». [Guo, 2007: 11]⁹ In fact, from the excavation of Mohism, we found that traditional culture does not lack this kind of scientific method. However, too much respect has been given to Confucian culture for a long time, regardless of the cultural heritage of Mohism. Some people even think that the use of Chinese figurative characters is not suitable for the cultivation of logic and abstract thinking. This view is contrary to historical facts. Although figurative writing is the product of figurative and experiential thinking, it cannot be considered that figurative language and writing are incompatible with abstract and logical thinking. In the evolution and development of human thinking, figurative characters and their norms can also keep pace with the times. In the ancient Mozi, there is no shortage of methods based on axioms and logic and experimental science, but they were unfortunately and artificially abandoned early. At the same time, the practical rationality and

⁸ Yang Yi. Restore Mozi. Zhonghua Book Company. 2011. 69–70 p.

⁹ Guo Jinbin, etc... History of Traditional Chinese Mathematical Thought. Chinese Science Publishing & Media Ltd. 2007. 11 p.

empirical way of thinking of traditional Confucianism have become cultural factors restricting the further development of science, technology and spiritual civilization to a certain extent. As some scholars believe, «The scientific purpose that is applied to the world has led to an earlier tendency of ethics, and it has become a cultural factor that hinders the development of modern science, especially experimental science». [Ma, 1989: 8-12]¹⁰ The philosopher Li Zehou also believed that, Benevolence «Because of emphasizing the reality of the world and putting too much emphasis on the combination of practicality, it relatively ignores, despises or even opposes the abstract speculation of science» [Li, 1986: 37]¹¹, so that ancient Chinese science stayed and satisfied for a long time at the level of empiricism, lacking the in-depth development of theory and pure speculation hobbies. Without the development of abstract speculative theory, it is impossible to fully develop modern science. What the West is good at and used is also the ancient Greek civilization tradition that Western philosophy has always praised, is «An attitude and method of rationally exploring nature using logic, mathematics, and experimental observation». [R.Hooykaas, 2003: 2]¹² Since modern times, with the occurrence and rapid development of the scientific and technological revolution, this tradition of scientific rationality and scientific spirit has gradually become a new way of scientific culture and social civilization in the West.

CONCLUSION

Dating back to Mozi more than 2,000 years ago, there is no shortage of modern scientific thinking and scientific methods in China. Like a ray of dawn of human scientific civilization, the principles of scientific methodology that have been revealed

to us by Mozi. Questions about what should be, whether it is a moral or a non-moral matter, must be based on scientific facts and the basis for seeking science, including scientific rationality and scientific spirit that includes scientific attitude, scientific thinking, scientific method and scientific concept, to reflect on human society itself, including philosophy and social sciences, realize the necessary transformation from scientific rationality to value rationality, and use scientific ethics to plan the world and govern society. At present, such traditional moral and cultural resources are precisely that traditional Confucianism as the mainstream culture cannot provide. The «May 4th» Movement, which took place 103 years ago and was jointly participated and led by the Chinese Communists, held high the two banners of «Science» and «Democracy», and finally pointed out a new direction for the development of traditional culture for the Chinese people.

In a nutshell, Mozi's «Universal love» theory is based on a modern scientific theory, which is different from the «benevolence» advocated by traditional Confucianism, and also different from the abstract «Equality» and «Fraternity» advocated by Western religions. Mozi's ethical thoughts, including labor-based theory, social overall view, and theory on homogeneity of benefit and morality based on «Respecting the Virtuous»; «Denouncing Aggressive Warfare»; «Identifying with the Superior»; contract; public election; rule by law; fully affirms human rights; personality and the value created by labor, and a high degree of scientific rationality and scientific spirit, are lacked in traditional Confucianism as the mainstream ideological system, but are necessary condition for today's scientific and technological progress and social development. In a certain sense, lack of the elements of science, democracy and other elements in the feudal social ideology with Confucianism as the mainstream, need to be supplemented by the clear scientific rationality and scientific spirit of Mohist. As one of the long-standing and rich sources of traditional culture, Mohist has a broad and profound ideological system due to their simultaneous integration of literature and science and mutual infiltration. If it is rediscovered and utilized, it will still have a strong impact on the construction of socialist market economy and rule-of-law society.

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