



Cross-Cultural Communication
Vol. 16, No. 1, 2020, pp. 29-45
DOI:10.3968/11536

ISSN 1712-8358[Print]
ISSN 1923-6700[Online]
www.cscanada.net
www.cscanada.org

Quoting the Classics: An Alternative Reinforcement of Regime Legitimacy in China

KANG Zeyu^{[a],*}

^[a]Doctor of Policy Studies, School of Graduate Studies, Lingnan University, HK.

*Corresponding author.

Received 5 December 2019; accepted 18 February 2020
Published online 26 March 2020

Abstract

After the opening reform of China, the revival of Chinese traditional culture has raised by the CCP. One characteristic of this revival has emerged with the continuous adaption of the Chinese classics in speeches of top leaders of the CCP. In particular, the current president Xi Jinping likes to cite Chinese traditional classics more than his two predecessors. This paper examines this tendency. At the same time, the CCP propaganda department also actively matches up Xi's citation. They have published official interpretation books, raised Xi's personal prestige as a Confucian gentleman possessing the good values of Chinese traditional philosophy. These values are aimed at gaining the support of the conservative climate in Chinese society and adapted to be an alternative for the reinforcement of CCP legitimacy. This paper also examines some concrete governmental policies of raising this adaption and observes that Xi and the CCP have begun to use it to connect with current social problems and their solutions in China, such as officials' morality, social justice and equality, rule by law and nationalism. However, Xi has not matched this perfect commitment in reality.

Key words: CCP leaders; Chinese classics; Regime legitimacy; Cultural governance

Kang, Z. Y. (2020). Quoting the Classics: An Alternative Reinforcement of Regime Legitimacy in China. *Cross-Cultural Communication*, 16(1), 29-45. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/ccc/article/view/11536>
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/11536>

INTRODUCTION

“No matter in which periods of pragmatic leading of the revolutions, nation- building and reforms, our Chinese communists have always been loyal supporters and protectors of the ‘Chinese splendid traditional cultures’.” Xi Jinping made this declaration in his opening speech of Commemoration for the 2, 565th Anniversary of Confucius' Birth in 2014 (Xinhua net, 2014). This meeting discourse occurs every five years and sees the highest scale. This was the first time that the supreme leader of the CCP had attended. During this 45-minute speech, Xi introduced 17 concepts from traditional Chinese thought (e.g. the unity of heaven and man 天人合一, the unity of knowledge and action 知行合一) to demonstrate their value in modern governance. He also argued that international society should preserve the diversity of civilization by citing Mencius: “It is an objective regulation that all things are different from one to another.” (物之不齐, 物之情也). Then Xi explicitly asserted his opposition to any attempt to replace the regime or ideology of another country, even with the background of globalization. On this point, Xi appeared to follow his predecessors Hu Jintao and Jiang Zemin, focussing on soft power, and the use of traditional Chinese culture in diplomacy. But Xi is more active than his predecessors in his emphasis on traditional Chinese culture. He appeals to a much broader base of traditional culture, to cultivate among the public a notion of its asserted morality for China's future stability. Yet Xi and the CCP have maintained efforts to adapt traditional classics since he came to power in 2012 and during his accumulation of power. On the way to the reinforcement of his personal prestige, Xi utilizes the mass media and CCP propaganda system to shape himself as a leader meeting communist ideals. His ambition is not just continuing the party's opening and reform policy to develop the national economy, but also to focus on citizens' cultural living construction. (Kerry, et al., 2018). In this process,

Xi reminds many Chinese citizens of the Mao era (IBID, 2018). But Xi presents a different position from Mao in dealing with traditional Chinese thought. After the opening reform, the perspective of totally denying of traditional Chinese culture has disappeared. Xi has described his notions of splendid traditional thought and culture as the “soul” and “root” of the nation (Xinhua net, 2016). “‘Splendid traditional culture’ should be a country and nation’s foundation for duration and promotion. Once we lost it as severing a country and nation’s expectancy” (Phoenix News, 2016). Similarly, “Flourishing Chinese culture is a prerequisite for the great revival of the Chinese nation” (Phoenix News, 2016). Although there are vague concepts of Confucianism in official discourse, the CCP still has the initiative and capacity of defining this “Confucianism,” when Xi Jinping visited Qufu, the hometown of Confucius, he emphasized the importance and influence of Confucianism in Chinese history (People. cn, 2013). In general, it seems like that Xi completely praised the Confucian achievement, but official discourse does not give the concrete definition of Confucianism; it has just advocated the Confucian hierarchy and moral value such as citizens’ responsibility to be glad for their social status, the officers of party should keep their official morality (*guande* 官德). On the one hand, from scholars of New Confucianism such as Jiang Qing (2003), Gan Chunsong (2003), Chen Ming (2014) and Daniel A. Bell (2016), they uphold the imperial Confucian value which should be restored in current ideology such as Confucian constitutions, political meritocracy and institutional Confucianism. The central government has released some space and support for this research, and absorbed part of New Confucianism. Some of them pointed out the party-led Confucianism can be the compromise of the New left of China and western libertinism (Smith et al, 2018). Furthermore, the party’s promotion and lifting of Confucianism could ensure their cultural leadership. The party is interested more in the importance of the political function of Confucianism. Representative scholars who support stable authority rather than the revival of Confucianism are Fang Keli, Chen Lai and Gan Yang. Their perspective is that the Confucianism should be modernized following the Modernization of China (Fang, 2008), or that a fusion of both the New Left and New Confucianism has proved the concept in Confucianism of unifying the three traditions (*tong san tong* 通三统). Gan (2005) asserted that Confucianism, Mao Zedong thought and Deng Xiaoping Theory can be connected in order to gain legitimacy from China’s historical civilization. Besides Gan Yang and Fang Keli, Chen Lai also does not limit himself to Confucian classics; he has frequently attended official symposiums, and in 2015 he gave a speech about “patriotism” to the Politburo Standing Committee. He also insisted that the development of Confucianism is led by Marxism and the CCP in mainland China. (Xinhua Net, 2016). On the other hand, Confucius

and Confucianism stand for Chinese soft power as an international brand, providing a new alternative to Western democracy. (Xue, 2009; Cheng, 2007) Throughout these scholars’ contribution to Confucianism, even the term Confucianism receives no clear definition, but parts of Confucian moral value and terms have been changed by the CCP for political and cultural use. Official propaganda has unified this cultural resurgence which included current Confucianism as “splendid traditional Chinese culture” (中华优秀传统文化). In the official narrative, “splendid Chinese traditional culture” promotes the development of socialist material and spiritual civilization and all the valuable spiritual achievements (Li, 2013). This vague term is continuously undergoing adaption by the CCP.

Xi has frequently cited the Chinese classics in his speeches as part of this revival. In official discourse, mainstream CCP propaganda has declared that they have encountered the ideological challenges in this period (Ren, 2012). In order to prevent this danger, the defense of Chinese characteristics was the only way to win this ideological contest (Ibid, 2012). For the contents of CCP member’s cultivation in Xi Jinping’s opening speech, he frequently cited Confucian classics and so-called officially defined “outstanding patriotic” intellectuals. He also reiterated this revival is China’s pragmatic use of Marxism and Socialism from his predecessors Hu Jintao’s government of harmonious society (Xinhua news, 2018). Xi appears to see nationalism as a means of offsetting the impact of slowing economic growth, which might otherwise reduce the CCP’s authority and legitimacy. Many scholars have noted the revival of Confucianism in mainland China since the 1990s, which probably could offer the CCP a new alternative foundation for legitimacy and soft power internationally (Bell, 2010; Billioud, 2009; Ford, 2011; William, 2011). The domestic resurgence of interest in traditional culture has included the construction of numerous research institutes and study societies, official symposiums, the restoration of historical sites, and an increasingly voluminous scholarship. Through this, the CCP is attempting to establish a nexus between governmental policies and this revival for “a new academic interest” among official intellectuals searching “for ways of dealing with domestic current social and political dilemmas” (Samth et al., 2018). In the creation of cultural industries of traditional culture, the potential capacity of this revival has been explained as specific Chinese culture for promoting national pride and nationalism (Liu, 2014; Cheung, 2012; Li, 2009; Zou, 2013). But at present, the effectiveness of this revival is still under question.

Facing academic skepticism, this study will examine representative quotations from Confucian classics in the speeches of three top leaders of the CCP. This interest in the classics could promote positive effects for regime stability, particularly in the case of Xi Jinping’s speeches.

Xi has sought traditional strands of Chinese faith philosophies to help his governance, not only the *Analects of Confucius*, but also relatively recondite statements displaying a deeper engagement with other classical works. The CCP's official media have praised this phenomenon as "creative transformation and utilization the Chinese traditional culture" (People's daily, 2017), and "change obscure ancient language to the popular knowledge" (People.cn, 2017). When CCP propaganda declared that "Xi Jinping citing the splendid Chinese classics manifest the spiritual power of great national rejuvenation", (People.cn, 2014) it seems elements of the Chinese classics could be included in the modern national project. Although the domestic media has attempted to track this tendency, many essays and reports have simply focused on the relevant content in government propaganda. In China, culture is manipulated by the party. Some political slogan such as the "Chinese dream" and "socialist core values", imply Confucian values. The CCP has expressed a unified vision of the ambitions of the Party and the people, at least in official propaganda. In this project of traditional revival, the party hopes to establish strong national sentiment for close connection with the people (Merics, 2016). Xi's language and style implies this approach, as the current CCP endeavors to gain public faith through reference to various forms of classical Chinese thought for establishing emotional as well as cohesive power.

This paper will argue that Xi has occupied a dominant position in the CCP's ideological work, and that he actively draws lesson from classical works which have been absorbed and changed by the party in his speeches as moral icons for Confucian values. Xi can utilize cultural aspirations to meet rising nationalism and reinforce the stability of the CCP regime. Firstly, this paper will compare Xi with his predecessors in adaption of Chinese classics, but also consider their different political effects. Examples of Xi's wider adoption of Chinese classics are distributed across many fields of governance policy, including anti-corruption efforts, "patriotic" and "moral" education, cultural development and security, all of which consolidate his paternalism. Concurrently, it is precisely that Xi has given an alternative ideology which links the CCP with historical connotations of traditional Chinese sages. His re-evaluation of these materials indicate that the party headed by Xi is using traditional concepts to impel citizens' conservative climate. These efforts are aimed at maintaining political loyalty and strengthening ideological legitimacy. Secondly, the *Analects of Confucius* and the *Quotations of Chairman*

Mao will be compared with Xi's collected works. Finally, this paper will analyze how president Xi conflates Confucianism and traditional Chinese culture with the party's political thought for the regime's stability. Although CCP propaganda still declared that the leading position of ideology is Marxism, they also broadcast many

traditional classics to describe their governance. Xi's extensive citing of classical works will help the party's revision of traditional Chinese culture to respond to social problems. But every adoption from the Chinese classics is designed to give the public a perfect guarantee at this stage, since the government in general has not changed reality in any way.

1. QUOTING THE CLASSICS IN A CHINESE NARRATIVE

This study will focus on the use of quotations by leaders of the CCP. The contents of this rhetorical approach is "quotation from the classics" (*yongdian* 用典). This is "a factual allusion, one adduces a fact to support some generalization; and in a textual reference, one cites an ancient text to support a statement" (Hsieh et al, 2015). The description of this concept dates to the earliest analyses of rhetoric by Liu Xie (c. 465–c. 520) in his *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (文心雕龙).

The reason for this writing technique's emergence is complicated, according to Luo (2002), Originally, the quotation of classical works is derived from the authors' desire to achieve a rhetorical effect. This approach commonly appears in traditional Chinese prose and poetry. Appropriate use involves citation without clarification (Wu, 2008, p.125 and Luo, 2002). "The cited ancient sentences are sparkling ladders which jump into the universe; the author is wandering though the historical space-time to get inspiration rather than locked in the language." (Ye, 1992, p.71). This traditional writing skill has become the motif in authors' minds when this coincides with sentiments in front of authors. When a quotation appears in prose or in a poem, it means the words written by author do not represent only their initial meanings, but also represent the deeper implications as determined by the reader's induction. Wu Liquan (2002) has given readers the comprehensive research about Chinese Euphemistic rhetoric and different sorts of definition of using allusions: "from a certain rhetoric purpose, the authors will apply for this kind of rhetorical technique which is the ancient stories or the modern sentences with its origin". However, it is known that the effectiveness of this writing method occurred in Chinese literary works of imperial times (Wu, 2005). In recent years, studying and applying "outstanding traditional culture" has gained favour among official leaders. Many of the CCP's top leaders are in favor of citing Chinese classics in their speeches, especially under Xi Jinping's administration. In 2013, Xi urged students of the Central Party School to study the "splendid traditional Chinese culture" in their normal life and works. (Xi, 2018) Then in 2016 and 2017, the Central Party School hosted an official symposium concerning "the approach of impelling the party cadres to learn

national studies (*guoxue* 国学)". At this symposium, many scholars asserted that both Marxism and "Chinese splendid traditional classics" belonged to national studies, and that party cadres should follow chairman Xi's speeches to study how to use "splendid culture" (Wang, 2018). A series of books and news reports have recorded CCP leaders' citing of classical Chinese works, in order to display their supposed wisdom in governance. When the politicians or the intellectuals hope to express their appeals, the range of these classical quotations has widened from literary expression to political subtext. It has enriched this terminology's implication under the narrative of modern China. The focus of this study is to examine whether the use of such allusions has developed in modern China, it is not just enhancing the effectiveness of articles or speeches. In the understanding of most Chinese social elites and intellectuals, the higher the political position that people have, the more complicated the meaning expressed in their use of allusions.

2. THE USE OF CHINESE CLASSICS UNDER JIANG ZEMIN AND HU JINTAO

To examine the situation of CCP leaders' citing of the Chinese classics, quotations by presidents Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao of Chinese classical works did not get sufficient attention from academic articles and news reports about their opening speeches. Their quotations can only be traced in their personal collected works in official CCP publications. In contrast to Xi Jinping's style of speech, it appears that Hu and Jiang were not keen on citing classical works because they preferred more to emphasize economic development. Xi has cited Chinese classics with more frequency than his predecessors, but these two former CCP leaders cited classical works in domestic speeches to express their personal knowledge. They cited Chinese classics after their political slogans a few times, frequently citing classical works in diplomatic affairs; this style of diplomatic speech has been retained to this day. The CCP has told other countries that they are controlling 'China's cultural legacy.

Mao Zedong launched the "Four Olds" campaign during the Cultural Revolution, intended to destroy "old culture". This was followed by the "Criticize Lin Biao, Criticize Confucius" campaign from 1973 to 1976 (Lu, 2004). This campaign ended after three years. Even early CCP leaders were influenced by classical Chinese works. For example, Li (2016) examines this heritage in his book's preface: "After the establishment of 'New China' (The People's Republic of China), most party leaders and national leaders often cited phrases from the Chinese classics to express their expectations, wishes or warnings against corruption in their speeches for various occasions. . . . Within these quotations, not only their personal merit and knowledge expression, there are

also closely related to the reform of the country." The above comments are not without rational explanation. Just as western parties have held political campaigns to gain support in attaining policy goals, the CCP's top leaders did not just abandon all relationship with the past but selected concepts that could be broadly related to China's economic development and normative ideology. After 1989, cultural expenditure in the following years immediately increased by over 200 million RMB per year (from 1,357,000,000 RMB in 1989 to 1,946,000,000 RMB in 1992). This figure has continued to increase ever since. Even in the 2008 global financial crisis, the nation-state continued to invest more funding in the cultural sphere (Marginson, 2011). In 2010, official spending was 52,952,000,000 RMB, representing a fiftyfold rise in twenty years. (Culture Financial Planning Department, 2011). However, the reason for this increased spending on cultural affairs over the past twenty years is complicated; it means the CCP have placed increasing value on ideological control. In the ideological realm, the 1989 Tiananmen uprising reminded party leaders of the need to attend to regime legitimacy; as a result, they attempted to shift reliance on the Marxism-Leninism system toward a pragmatic ideology. More importantly, the CCP has pointed out some tactical terms which implied the Chinese classics to express Chinese modernization construction and ensured that process was under their leadership. For example, as early as the rule of Deng Xiaoping, the final aim of the moderately prosperous society (*xiao kang she hui* 小康社会) will achieve both economic and cultural prosperity in modern China. This term is derived from the Li Yun chapter of the *Book of Rites*, (Pei et al, 2015) But Deng Xiaoping did not refer to any classical works in his justification of a prosperous society. In his selected works, Deng Xiaoping interpreted prosperous society in simple language and expressed his hope of finally constructing a spiritual civilization in the process of achieving economic development: "The so-called moderately prosperous society means that ordinary people can feed themselves. I believe that our productive forces' keeps promotion, and maintain a stable rate of economic growth, we will achieve the balance of two civilizations (*liang ge wen ming* 两个文明), and building the socialist spiritual civilization (*she hui zhu yi jing shen wen ming* 社会主义精神文明) will come out." (Deng, 1994). The aim was to 'cultivate people' in the process of Chinese modernity. This was not to be achieved by fierce fighting, but on the contrary, it tried to adopt the Confucian term "moderately prosperous society".

Under the rule of Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, economic construction was a priority for economic growth. Due to economic achievements, the CCP's rule was accepted by the people. But the events of Tiananmen warned them of the potential dangers to legitimacy. (Tai, 2014, Qin et al, 2017 and Li et al, 2016). Some scholars

have given another interpretation: CCP leaders think that creating wealth to safeguard the citizen's basic living is the most important responsibility for government during the Chinese modernization process because Chinese cultural traditions still permeate the political values of the Chinese people on some issues such as standardized principles for people's behaviors (Li, 1985). These views of the CCP's economic aims has absorbed Confucianism's people-based ideology of *min ben* 民本 from Mencius: "When people have enough material and prosperity, then they will loyal to the government." (有恒产者有恒心) (Yuan, 2011; Pei et al, 2015). Therefore, in order to understand the current revival of Chinese classical allusions, the attitudes of two previous leaders' can be used as a point of reference. They not only continued the priority of economic development but also focused on the revival of Chinese cultural governance. CCP propaganda has tried to report some top leaders' self-cultivation which confirms to that of traditional social elites. As for Jiang Zemin's citing Chinese classical works, the verses and couplets frequently emerged in his speeches, so some CCP members called Jiang's quotation an "art" (Sun et al, 2008): "He is good at applying Chinese ancient culture to reply to real problems in Marxism ideology" (Sun et al, 2008 and Wu, 1996). The most frequently cited was a couplet written by the loyal minister Shi Kefa of the late Ming dynasty, used by Jiang on diplomatic occasions in 1989, 1991, and 1995 that related to his rising political views of the Chinese Great national rejuvenation and patriotism.

At the end of October 1989, Jiang Zemin, who had been just elected General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee, met with former US President Nixon in Beijing after the "Tiananmen Incident". Jiang demonstrated the CCP's intention to resist Western pressure (People.cn, 2012). He cited one couplet written by Shi Kefa: 'The few fallen plum petals are the tears of a conquered nation; the heart of previous loyal minister is broken like the fragile moon.' (数点梅花亡国泪, 二分明月故臣心). The CCP propaganda reported that some western countries led by the United States imposed so-called sanctions on China, Jiang explained that he had seen this couplet under Shi Kefa's memorial hall and that the merits of Shi Kefa encouraged his national sentiment (Ibid, 2012). Shi had refused to submit to the Qing dynasty after the fall of the Ming. Although the 1989 crackdown pressured the CCP to construct a new ideological framework, the regime tried to control rising nationalism by emphasizing national pride after 1989 (Zhao, 2003).

This couplet was later twice cited by Jiang in the Patriotic Education Campaign in 90s. The CCP has placed emphasis on nationalism, such as the victim image of China in contemporary history. In 1991 when a Soviet reporter asked Jiang Zemin about his youth, Jiang told this story and argued that this couplet could inspire patriotism (Wu, 1996). The following year, when Jiang

inspected the Chinese Embassy in Finland, he also stressed this couplet to the staff of the embassy, arguing that if people did not have intense national sentiment to devote to their nation, there was no hope for it. (Ibid, 1996).

Two years later, the Central Propaganda Department promulgated "Guidelines for the implementation of patriotic education". These Guidelines highlighted that patriotic education should be established by a long-term mechanism to ensure its efficiency. From the three quotations of the couplet, the state-launched Patriotic Education Campaign conducted with emphasis on national glories in the 1990s attempted to warn citizens against the temptations of "western liberalism" by highlighting cultural pride for the Chinese past and the sacrifices of the CCP in liberating the Chinese nation (Guo, 2003 and Callahan, 2010). By using the couplet of Shi Kefa, the CCP hoped to rebuild its moral authority.

Furthermore, the CCP also advocated the building of nationalism since Jiang pointed out the "great national rejuvenation" (*min zu wei da fu xing* 民族伟大复兴) slogan after adopting patriotism. The aim of national rejuvenation was reaching

to be a great national state and encouraging a sense of victimhood amongst Chinese from contemporary history in order to achieve great global acceptance and power (Perry, 2013 and Gregory et al, 2016). Therefore, nationalism and patriotism were the direction of propaganda work under Jiang Zemin. However, in view of Jiang's use of calligraphy, he was in favor of giving inscriptions when he inspected schools and scenic spots. Until now, his inscriptions exist nationwide (Sohu, 2014). He may also have done this for his personal reputation.

Until Hu Jintao took over from Jiang in 2002, the concept of "great national rejuvenation" was enriched, 'The Chinese nation is a great nation with a long history and splendid culture. In the history of human improvement and development, the Chinese nation had been in a leading position for a long time. It was only in the Qing Dynasty that it turned from prosperity to decline.' (People's daily, 2011). However, this report exaggerated China's cultural achievements in the past. Hu Jintao asserted that "culture is the blood of a nation." Hu Jintao explicitly called for reviving "traditional" Chinese culture and made multiple references to the "great revival of the Chinese nation" after taking power. (China news, 2007) Starting from the Seventeenth Party Congress in 2007, the Hu Jintao administration paid significant attention to resurrecting both socialism and traditional Chinese culture as a tool to defend the degraded mind eroding Chinese society (Wenming.cn, 2012). Since CCP Politburo elites seemed to believe society was suffering from serious moral decay, (Heath, 2012), the CCP thought they should find a way to consolidating its legitimacy. To enrich this political proposition, Hu Jintao pointed his political slogan of "Harmonious society", the ultimate aim of the "scientific development concept". It could

be a huge policy project that seeks to balance China's progress of economic growth with equal emphasis on resolving social welfare issues. (Xinhua, 2004). Then, in 2006, Hu encouraged renewed popular moral education under the doctrine of the "Eight Honors and Eight Shames". Hu also named this series of concepts as a "socialist value system" which could match his theory of harmonious society. He also emphasized the mixture of Confucianism and Marxism in governing moral qualities and in national culture", (Johnson, 2017). At the same time, he also emphasized the CCP's heritage and adopted a new means of citing Chinese classical works to unify citizens' minds in following CCP political agendas. If the measure of heritage of the inner party such as the "socialism with Chinese characteristics" of Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin is also the style of Hu's speeches, Hu frequently used the rhetorical language of citing famous CCP "comrades" (Heisey, 2007). Hu often praised the patriots who were sacrificed in the liberation of China and in resistance to invaders; he loved to display to the public that he was good at finding inspirations in China's history of resistance, such as one speech at Xibaipo 西柏坡, a revolutionary base.

In 2002, Hu Jintao organized a group of officials from the Secretariat of the CCP Central Committee to inspect Xibaipo in Hebei province. Mao had once led troops there. When Hu was there, he cited a series of Chinese classics to remind CCP members of "revolutionary spirit." "Our ancestors always said, 'be prepared for danger in times of peace and use frugality to guard against extravagance (居安思危, 戒奢以俭); 'anxiety and hard work can revive a country; enjoyment and self-satisfaction can destroy the person (忧劳兴国, 逸豫亡身); and 'thrive in calamity [adversity] and perish in a life of ease' (生于忧患, 死于安乐). These proverbs of warning still play an important role in enlightening us today. It is hard for a party to flourish without a hard-working spirit. As this spirit of our party's outstanding tradition and our Marx's political character, is the key to unite the party and the people and inspire the whole Party and all the people together to revitalize the powerful spiritual force to achieve national prosperity." (Hu, 2002). In this speech, the CCP had sought to explore the traditional heritage in CCP members' education with China's long cultural history. The first proverb derived from advice from the famous chancellor Wei Zheng to Emperor Taizong in the Tang dynasty. Hu Jintao attempted to demonstrate that the CCP today has the same merit as a famous dynasty in Chinese history. Hu Jintao did not explain these proverbs, and after this speech, official propaganda gave no interpretation; it was so confused that audiences perhaps could not understand the meaning of these proverbs in that context.

Although uncommon in his career, this was enough to explain Hu's ruling characteristics, starting to revive the traditional Chinese classics works as conflated with

Chinese glorious past; this "past" also involved the CCP's anti-western history in contemporary China. This was just an experiment, because in the CCP revolutionary base, top leaders cited classical works to educate CCP members. The scope of the quotations used by Jiang and Hu remain limited; there was no good interpretation from official sources. As a result, the mixture between the two-contradictory cultures, Marxism and Chinese traditional culture, did not emerge clearly under the Jiang and Hu governments.

Nevertheless, classical rhetoric was vague in domestic speeches, but Hu Jintao and Jiang Zemin actively adopted it in the diplomatic realm; they made up a concept of Chinese characteristics and sought to use the resources of Chinese culture to display this concept. Jiang Zemin argued that if the West wanted to understand China, it is can do so from many perspectives. When he visited the United States in 1997, he attempted to display traditional Chinese wisdom and its purpose of peaceful development with classical quotations, because China aimed to improve its relationship with the US and seek economic cooperation. (Chen, 2011). When Jiang Zemin visited the United States in 1997, he gave a speech at Harvard University on "Enhancing mutual understanding and strengthening friendly cooperation" (Sohu, 2009). At the beginning of the speech, Jiang outlined his core message: "In order to promote the development of Sino-US relations . . . the United States needs to know more about China. . . . A valuable angle for understanding China is from its history and culture." (Ibid, 2009). He then introduced some of China's "outstanding merit" later in the speech and quoted the Zuo commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals (*Zuo zhuan* 左传) which dates to around 403 B.C.– 386 B.C. In China, *Zuo zhuan* is the earliest relatively mature chronicle existing today. It is an important source for pre-Qin history (Kong et al, 1999). Jiang elaborated: "The thinkers of the pre-Qin period put forward the idea of 'The most precious thing in a state is being benevolent and friendly to neighbors (亲仁善邻, 国之宝也)', (Sohu, 2009). This sentence appeared in the context of conflict between two vassal states, Zheng and Chen, in the spring and autumn period. Before the conflict, a minister of Chen made this utterance when suggesting that his king negotiate with Zheng (Kong et al, 2009). This citation was an indirect attempt to reply to idea of the "China threat". Some western pundits and scholars have advocated a strategy of "restraining" China, and doubt the possibility of a "peaceful rise." The rising powers have risen rarely without launching a major war that reorganizes the international system to express a new reality (Charles, 1995 and Robert, 2005). The rise of nationalist sentiment, accompanied by the spectacular development of economic and military capabilities sent a desired signal to the Asia-Pacific region and western countries, suggesting that China may take an aggressive path to attain its foreign policy aims (Peter,

2004). Hence on the international stage, Chinese leaders have frequently utilized traditional Chinese values which can stand for peace and a low profile because they believe that by broadcasting this traditional “peaceful pursuit” to the world, China could defuse the conception of it as a threat (Huang et al, 2006). Subsequently, Jiang cited one very famous phrase from *The Book of Changes (Yi Jing 易经)*. On Chinese tradition, Jiang said, “by observing the universal regulation, our ancestors pointed out that ‘As Heaven keeps vigor through movement, a gentleman should unremittingly practice self-improvement,’ (天行健 君子以自强不息). So the good merit from this sentence encourages Chinese people to continue unrelenting struggle and amounts of great reform..... There is only one pursuit: to complete the great national rejuvenation of China to make more contribution to the world.” (Sohu, 2009). This classical quotation had been interpreted in various ways in the past, but in Jiang’s narrative it could claim that the CCP was burdened with much responsibility in leading the state. The use of cultural appeals maintains the Communist Party’s moral and political stability by positing itself as the savior of China. (Perry, 2013). In the ambition of national rejuvenation, Jiang Zemin not only attempted to arouse the Chinese people to encourage pride in the past in order to avoid ideological discussion, but also presented a modest image to the United States.

Reconsideration of traditional Chinese culture continued after Hu Jintao came to power in 2002 (Billioud, 2009, Ai, 2014 and Heisey, 2007). Hu was also devoted to improving China’s soft power. When he gave a speech to Literary and Art Circles in November 2006, he emphasized that “the one who takes a leading position on the battlefield of cultural cultivation will gain the advance in drastic international competition.” (Hu, 2006) In diplomatic affairs, Hu was sensitive to the fact that China’s long history and cultural values, studied by most scholars as a valuable source of national soft power, had attracted not only China’s east Asian neighbours, which share a Confucian heritage, but also the wider international community. (Huang et al, 2006). In this, Hu was more likely to choose Chinese characteristics associated with being “peaceful and friendly.” He used the same quotations as his predecessor, but he chose to correspond them with the “harmony society” concept as constructed in a domestic narrative and a peaceful and friendly image in the international community.

On April 2006, Hu Jintao gave a speech at Yale University in which he cited the same sentence of *The Books of Changes* as Jiang, emphasizing China’s national rejuvenation. Maybe Hu did not hope to change the situation in China’s diplomacy. In his speech, he explained Chinese cultural attractions. (Hu, 2006). Moreover, he also cited classical phrases, the most representative quotation being for his trademark policy, harmonious society. (Ai, 2014). He stressed that “China

advocates the ‘human-oriented’ (*yi ren wei ben 以人为本*) because this merit always inherits in our history. ‘People are the foundation of a country; when the foundation is stable, the country is at peace. Between heaven and earth, nothing is more valuable than human beings.’ (民惟邦本, 本固邦宁; 天地之间, 莫贵于人)”. This sentence derived from *The Book of History (Shangshu 尚书)*, one of the five classics. In the official view, the “human-oriented” mind changed from past to present. The imperial meaning of the human-oriented mind is that the ruler must recognize the crucial influence of his people. Under imperial stability, the ruler should adopt this strategy to maintain his regime (Pei et al, 2015). Hu Jintao asserted the human-oriented mind at the 17th People’s Congress: “the human-oriented mind is guided by scientific view of development, and our party’s principle is contributing to the people. Therefore, insisting on the human-oriented means we should achieve development for the people, and development depends on people and the achievements of development will be shared by all people” (Hu, 2007). Hu mentioned the same proposition in international society: he unveiled the “harmonious world” at the Asia-Africa Summit, where he appealed for the establishment of a new international political and economic order which depended on multilateralism, mutually beneficial cooperation, and the core mind of inclusiveness (China Daily, 2005). Sometimes Hu Jintao indicated that he still drew from his predecessor Jiang Zemin some ideas such as the rise of patriotism and the great national rejuvenation, even using the same quotations in his diplomatic speeches (Bo, 2004 and Heisey, 2007). But it can be understood as a combination with the CCP’s heritage. It still was an ambiguous attitude towards traditional Chinese culture in the CCP’s governance (Ai, 2014 and Chu, 2014).

The above analysis of the international speeches of Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao’s quotations demonstrates how they cited famous Chinese classical phrases in their speeches that made efforts internationally in the ideological and cultural realms. Although some western countries have feared that the “charm offensive” of China would be a general penetrative strategy to threaten the liberal values and democratic systems of the West (Huang et al, 2006), Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao were focused on China’s economic development and avoided serious conflict (Bonnie, 2009). These Chinese leaders also recognized that traditional Chinese culture and nationalist sentiment could be cultivated by the state as ideological power to cope with western “peaceful evolution” after 1989. In Jiang and Hu’s governments, they used the Chinese classics very casually. Traditional Chinese culture occupied an important part of the cultural dimension of ‘Chinese characteristics’ in the regime before Xi Jinping’s administration (Cheung, 2012). But Chinese classical phrases cited by Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao were not give much attention by the media and academia, which is in contrast to such rhetoric under Xi Jinping.

3. XI JINPING AND THE GENTLEMAN (*JUNZI* 君子) OF CONFUCIANISM: PATERNALISTIC TRADITION AND HISTORICAL SELECTION

The Chinese classics had seen some political use by the CCP, particularly in Hu Jintao's construction of "the harmony society", but traditional Chinese cultural values were not mentioned in the CCP's ideological creeds (Bo, 2004, Josh, 2014 and Han et al, 2017). The classical allusions and phrases used in the speeches of CCP leaders were not given explicit explanation by official propaganda. Only a small number of scholars have given attention to the classical phrases in the speeches of CCP leaders before Xi Jinping's administration. But Xi Jinping frequently preaches Confucian values in his speeches. Official intellectuals not only are involved in academic study, but they are also exploring practical ways of moving towards Confucian values and recommend relevant policies (Chu, 2014, Merics, 2016 and Han et al, 2017). Besides the efforts of Xi and party academia, the party's huge propaganda machine has focused its efforts on Xi's individual image, and has given a standard explanation of classical quotations in official context via publications and reports (Perry, 2013, Javier et al, 2017 and Kerry et al, 2018). These three aspects are the CCP's new efforts of "advocating classical readings".

In order to seek the motivation behind this revival, the socialist Edward Shils's can be used to examine the social function of "traditionality" theory (Shils, 1971). Shils suggests that the function of tradition is the continuity of culture; tradition's efficacy relies on people's reverence for traditions. Furthermore, he pointed out that tradition is a cultural force with normative function and moral appeal to social behavior (Ibid, 1971). Shils's perspective of traditionality was interpreted as statement on "cultural identity" by mainstream views' in Chinese academia. The identity of a value tradition in a nation is the spiritual link that condenses the national community and the spiritual foundation for the continuation of the life of this national community. (Zhu et al, 2008 and Chen, 2017).

In their speeches, Xi Jinping, Hu Jintao and Jiang Zemin all declared that "the Chinese splendid traditional culture is the bond of our nation". Yet Xi goes further than his predecessors. He claimed that the CCP has always been the supporter and protector of Chinese traditional culture, a view that may gain the trust of cultural conservatives (Pri.org, 2017, Merics, 2017, Yang, 2017 and New York times, 2017). While CCP propaganda never mentions the destruction of traditional Chinese culture in the 1960s, the impact of cultural revolutionary campaigns is naturally ignored, but the essence of cultural revolution is personal worship and paternalism, and this essence has influenced the current adaptation of Chinese classics (Joy, 2008; Han, et al, 2017).

The revival of classical Chinese phrases derives from the Chinese paternalistic tradition of identity to establish the paternal and gentleman figure of the Confucian hierarchy (Gregory et al, 2016, Javier et al, 2017 and Chris, 2018). In order to improve the reputation of Xi through Chinese classical values, on the one hand, the first deployment was employing the official huge propaganda machine to publicize the "Moral Vacuum" and the importance of Chinese traditional culture. (Guangming Online, 2017 and Yang, 2017). A survey among Chinese citizens of their sense of traditional culture in daily life shows that 28.9 percent of 2, 976 participants chose "very crucial," 47.4 percent interviewees picked "important," and only 3.5 percent selected "unimportant". (Pri.org 2017) Another survey by Guangming Online (2017) of "favorite TV programs", shows that almost one third (28.9 percent) of participants expressed that foreign culture had a "disadvantageous impact on traditional Chinese culture." This research indicates that it is an aspiration for people who have appealed to "spiritual meaning." On the other hand, some Confucian scholars insist that moral problems could be resolved by Confucian values because Confucianism stresses social order and family values; these values should be lead by the "sage emperor" of the country and the "father" of families.

This is the theory that the government would restore the trust from citizens (Jiang, 2003, Liu, 2014 and Tan, 2015). Some suggested that the Confucian idea of a role-based society could achieve the moral commitment by means of social role-based cultivation; different people should be required to behave properly as fit for their positions. (Israel, 2016 and Stephens, 2018) Therefore, in a country where even ordinary conversation often proceeds through obscure aphorisms from classical literature, it makes sense for Xi to demonstrate his sophistication.

Many Chinese classical phrases cited by Xi display the image of a role model for traditional values because he has reevaluated Chinese classical phrases in his speeches. For example, in his first meeting with domestic and foreign reporters after Xi Jinping took power in 2012 and at the end of his inaugural speech, he promised that "we should always insist to be intimate with people, suffer with people, unite with people; 'attend to work dawn until night' (*su ye zai gong* 夙夜在公)." (Gov.cn, 2012). Originally, this phrase appeared several times in *The Book of Songs* (*Shi jing* 诗经). It describes a tough life of labors and junior officials during the Spring and Autumn period (Cheng et al, 1991) working day and night for the ruler. Later, the phrase was used to praise a good work attitude. Therefore, Xi tried to express that he could totally devote himself to his work. To emphasize this, the "attend to work dawn until night" appeared frequently in official media. The media also made a continuous report in 2015 to evidence the diligent works of Xi. With the headline of "one thousand days of 'attending to work dawn until night'" ("夙夜在公"的一千天), this report employed

stirring rhetoric to enumerate Xi's great contributions to national development. "Since the 18th congress, the Party Central Committee and Xi Jinping have acquired striking efforts in governing the country and responded to the expectations of the people; these actions gained praise from the world. The prospects of the Chinese nation are grand" (China news, 2015). Phrases such as "attend to work dawn until night", appearing in speeches by Xi have strongly promoted his personal status, since this represents finding knowledge, moral justice and moral aspiration from classic texts (Josh, 2014). After this portrayal of Xi emerged, and the status of Xi Jinping's thought in the constitution was confirmed after 19th congress, he gained the title "leader" (*lingxiu* 领袖) as did Mao Zedong. (Javier, 2017, China Media project, 2018 and Chris, 2018). The ongoing increase in Xi's status represents his moral and political responsibilities. This is because the Chinese people still have a tendency for pursuing moral values (Merics, 2017).

These characteristics of China's leadership is established by moral concepts and authoritative relations. It is continuous with traditional values, as traditional Chinese heritage has a "long history of valuing leadership and preparing leaders on moral grounds" (Wu, 2014). In Chinese leadership, morality is the first criterion for examining officials (e.g. Li et al, 2005; Ling et al, 2000). But Chinese political tradition contains paternalistic values as well. Social elites and common people just request and relate to merit shown by their leaders or rulers unconsciously (Wu, 2014; Cottine, 2016; Gregory, et al, 2016; Rutgers, 2017).

In the early Qing dynasty, students had to learn to recite, and they often began with the *Thousand Character Classic* (*Qianziwen* 千字文), the *Three-character Classic* (*Sanzijing* 三字经), and the *Hundred Names* (*Baijiaxing* 百家姓). Students expecting to join the examinations process moved on to the Four Books and Five Classics (*sishu wujing* 四书五经), all texts containing paternalism and respect for tradition. (Gregory, et al, 2016). Chinese modern Leadership power not only comes from character as well as from duty in the regime's hierarchy. (Xiao et al, 2014) If a leader presents good morality, subordinates will follow out of respect and trust. (Wu, 2014) Chinese public leaders are cultivated by strong moral reputations rooted in traditional culture. Its regulations conform with paternalistic Chinese leadership values such as *liwei* 立威 (inspiring awe or fear), and *shude* 树德 (setting a moral role model). While political elites enjoy their power, they are required to follow classical doctrines that demand that the ruler have concern for others. (Contine, 2016). In other words, Xi has undertaken responsibility for his promises to the people, such as "the Chinese dream and the great national rejuvenation." As a Chinese leader or a gentleman (*junzi*) who has mixed his political ideology with Chinese philosophy, he must be seen to be seeking inspiration in more substantive works.

This revival of Chinese classical phrases is also about the CCP strategy for legitimacy. Firstly, the strategic level of CCP legitimacy is definitely not based on the contents or values of traditional Chinese classical phrases or Chinese tradition. To analyze the quality of the connection with classical phrases and the strategy for legitimacy, it is clear that the Chinese leadership is aware of the fragility of its Leninist institutions. Today the theory of "class struggle" has disappeared from the CCP's official discourse (Joy, 2008), but this does not mean that the CCP is released from regulating current ideology. The official and professor Ren Jie (2012) argues that "our party is also facing the problems of ideological construction such as hostile forces of the West's permeation and the influence of foreign values on our indigenous values". Behind closed doors, Xi and other Communist Party leaders are worried about how to combat inner party issues such as corruption, and whether China will suffer the same catastrophe as the collapse of the former Soviet Union. But the CCP has always applied Marx-Leninism theory to solve domestic problems (Bell, 2010). Lams (2018) suggested about this dilemma, The CCP's legitimacy is now thought to rely on its 'accordance with traditional notions of good governance'. Therefore, even in Hu Jintao's discourse, dominant observations in political discourse still repeat socialist rhetoric and insist on the Chinese characteristics of the socialist market economy, mixed with a revival of Chinese traditional values and culture. Throughout is Xi's classical reevaluation and official propaganda's insistence on a "moral vacuum".

Xi successfully describes the PRC as an essentially Chinese system, completely in accord with China's own national character (Perry, 2013 and Lam, 2018). In addition, the CCP has tapped into a consistent domestic narrative considering that even if China's economic and growing strength prove that China's position in global affairs is not equal. China is still playing a weaken role in international community. (Qin et al, 2017). At this stage, Xi's speeches accord with nationalist aims by citing Confucian moral values and classical phrases about the government's responsibility to resolve issues in people's daily life (Kerry et al, 2018 and Lams, 2018). Socialist ideology has been conflated with daily issues in modern-day China and with China's cultural and philosophical tradition. Officials and the common people all admit that the classics quoted by Xi correspond with China's realities. As for the CCP's orthodox doctrines, the content of its 'strategic narratives' does not deviate from essential faith in Communism. Xi also stressed that the "political corrects" such as the "four self-confident" theory. Xi also suggested the construction of people's faith. The expression "citizens have faith, state has hope, country has power" (人民有信仰, 民族有希望, 国家有力量) (People.cn, 2017) is of great value for the CCP propaganda media and combines with a straightforward 'strong China' narrative. The slogan states that a country

can only become powerful if people have a firm belief and faith in its future. That can be achieved by constructing a spiritual civilization, spreading both ‘excellent Chinese traditional culture’ and core socialist values. Xi Jinping demonstrates his efforts to repack traditional culture right there and then, recruiting Confucian paternalistic values (Xinhua News, 2015).

Nevertheless, this cultural self-confidence was clarified: “the most crucial core of a country’s comprehensive strength is cultural soft power.” “We must insist on our self-confidence in the theory, path and institutions [of Chinese-style socialism],” “Fundamentally, we also need to have cultural self-confidence” (Xinhua, 2015; People’s Daily, 2014). The CCP’s Cultural self-confidence’ has been added to the ‘three confidences’, being called ‘ideological confidence’. The adjustment in official discourse of the CCP legacy is also shown in altered descriptions of Chinese traditions in reevaluations of the doctrinal foundation. That is the ruling legitimacy into a new orthodoxy of the Party being fixed on Chinese traditional classics and proximate to Confucian moral values. (Lams, 2018). But overall, the top three confidences explicitly demonstrate communist characteristics.

Most importantly, conveying these ideas in an easily acceptable way, Xi’s rhetoric attempts to be more valuable and effective in inspiring people. The rhetorical approach of could contribute to social solidarity (Burke, 1962). Domestically, the integration of innovative and conservative intentions in the Chinese official narrative of the fourth-generation leadership is still obvious in the discourse of the Xi administration aimed at the Chinese population. Zhai (2018) also asserts that if there is a decline in traditional values, it will surely weaken the trust of institutions in government officials. Nevertheless, traditional values in the political arena are changing slowly, and their authoritarian nature supports political trust in the current regime, even the western liberal value has widespread broadcasted. Many Chinese citizens express poignant criticisms of their political system – from rampant corruption to government inaction. But a few charges that the system does not belong to China (Perry, 2013). Rather than articulate such problems to the detriment of a socialist system, disgruntled citizens are sensitive to ascribe the mistakes among the system to injustices rooted deeply in the soil of Chinese culture – nepotism, bureaucratism, preference for rule by man over rule of law, and remnants of the imperial system. (Zhai, 2018) Chinese citizens still choose to trust current institutions because they think the central government has the power to solve problems suffered by China. Sometimes, if the central authority sacrificed the reputation of a local government, mainstream media would criticize the local governor for his loss of an official’s morality (*guande* 官德). (Perry, 2013, Willy, 2016 and Zhai, 2018). Although traditional Chinese values seem to impair the strategy for legitimacy, a series of

publications about the classical quotations of Xi Jinping are the first such works since the reforms of 1978. Official discourse provides the standard orthodox interpretation of some Chinese classical works. The most representative work is *Classical Aphorisms of Xi Jinping* (习近平用典) published in 2015. This book has evolved into another set of doctrines for the CCP. In May 2018, “The first leading cadres learning the Chinese classics” (领导干部学国学) reading group of the Central Party School, the CCP members will be taught the Incorruptible education (*lian zheng jiao yu* 廉政教育) in the party school, the stories disinterested officers in imperial China is included to party’s teaching handbook together with revolutionary seniors. Moreover, CCP members have been demanded to study the Chinese classics to improve their governing ability and follow the spirit of Xi. Yet traditional values cannot be the source of the CCP’s legitimacy if the regime cannot resolve any real issues. It is a cultural barrier that CCP revived to protect the stability of an institution. The organizers of this club, Wang Jie and Zhu Kangyou, transformed “national study” to “pragmatic study” (实学) and advocated that “reading is a lifestyle of CCP members.” (Wang, 2013)

Communication between current political authority and the glorious history of the nation is built on the emotional bond of people with traditional political values. For example, Xi cited the poetic works of Bai Juyi of the Tang dynasty: “Sincere emotion is the crucial element for moving people’s hearts.” (感人心者, 莫先乎情)

This sentence is cited by Xi in his 2017 Spring Festival speech. Xi emphasized that sincere emotion should be led by socialist core values, but also needed to be cultivated by Chinese traditional merit (Xi, 2017). This classical sentence originally expressed the concept of good skill in writing poetry. The official interpretation is “Pay more attention to sincere emotion is always Chinese people’s merit. Xi Jinping is such a person; he never forgets his relatives and friends.” (People’s Daily commentary department, 2018) In this narrative, Xi explicitly cited the classics to highlight the Chinese nation’s traditional emotion. He has implied that the people and he reach an emotional consciousness together. Another unique characteristic of Xi’s quotations is that he not only cites familiar Chinese classics such as *the Analects of Confucius*, but he also uses more complicated Chinese poetry or proverbs such as this quote from Bai Juyi. Because most people do not understand such works, Xi and the CCP can easily present their own interpretation. Citation of more sophisticated Chinese classics also demonstrates that Xi is a knowledge leader of China, and therefore he and his team are able to work for the Chinese people.

It is believed that the current CCP bears responsibility for “the great national rejuvenation” because they (the central government and its leaders) inherit the traditions and moral conduct of the past. But teaching

CCP officials the Chinese classics will shift the position of current dominant ideology. (Kang, 2014 and New York times, 2014) It seems likely that the CCP impaired the foundation of party culture, Marxism-Leninism, in order to transform the root of its legitimacy from Chinese communist doctrine to Confucian moral values. But Xi also needs to reach a balance between the New Left and the liberal faction, particularly from the New Left which believes that social income inequality derives from the capitalist market economy (Lams, 2018); Xi has enriched the extent of the historical portrayal of the Chinese nation's resistance to western invasions. This has extended to the late nineteenth century, where all Chinese people were supposedly united, and has led to a rise in the reputations of Nationalist leaders like Chiang Kai-shek (CCTV.com, 2017). To mark the 200th anniversary of Marx's birth, Xi gave a speech to reassert the CCP's dominance over society and pointed out the consolidation of devotion to the founding principles of Communism. (Xihua New, 2018). Though Xi has used traditional values to raise his own standing, it is also a rational political resource as evidenced by a CCP declaration: "We are not only chosen by the people; we are also the inevitable choice as selected by Chinese history."

4. THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY IMPLIED BY "CLASSICAL APHORISMS BY XI JINPING"

In Xi Jinping's frequently citations of Chinese classical phrases, apart from the revival of traditional moral values and paternalism is the CCP's adoption of a new political philosophy and rhetoric style. This is especially well illustrated in the book *Classical Aphorisms of Xi Jinping*. It is the first book offering an official interpretation for fusing the thought of top CCP leaders and classical texts, but it follows form and style of two famous works: *The Analects of Confucius* and the so-called little red book, *The Quotations of Chairman Mao*. The preface, "Draw Power from Chinese Culture", shapes Xi as a Confucian gentleman in learning and applying traditional morality and calls on the nation to construct the present and future with those values in cultural civilization. (People, 2017). "Contemporary communists are engaged in a great struggle with many new historical features. We are rooted in the fertile soil of Chinese culture and have confirmed the tendency of period. . . . Therefore, in the relay of achieving the "Chinese dream", we will write the new chapter." (People's Daily commentary department, 2015).

Normally for a book dedicated to speeches and writings of the Communist Party's general secretary, the volume would contain quotations from Marx and Mao. However, reading like an individual guide for doctrine, it is divided into chapters on miscellaneous aspects of governance and filled with Xi's classical proverbs. In

establishing canonical values, by following the pattern and structure of *The Analects of Confucius*, the editors tried to accommodate Xi's sovereign moral authority. Because the huge propaganda machine that is the People's Daily is under party control, all books which collect Xi Jinping's quotations only appear as People's Daily publications. For example, besides *Classical Aphorisms of Xi Jinping*, there are "Xi Jinping tells stories" and "Xi Jinping, The governance of China". the authors of these books were not Xi Jinping; they were all written by the commentary department of People's publication, one of the 23 subordinate departments of the People's Daily (People.cn, 2018). The collective name, commentary department of People publication, rather than the name of an individual is used to sign articles. Only official media or work-units can give the correct meaning of Xi's quotations in his speeches. Before giving an interpretation of Xi's quotations, they would seek permission from the same level Party committee that issues them. (People, 2018 and Zhihu, 2016) In other words, the party manipulates interpretation of Xi's quotations in official central publication approved for issue in domestic China.

In comparison with *The Analects of Confucius* and *The Quotations of Chairman Mao*, Xi's works has at least two similarities. From a stylistic point of view, all three consist of quotations. Although the spreading dynamics of *Classical Aphorisms by Xi Jinping* is less than the other two Chinese famous quotation. Because of the information globalization of the internet period, Xi's domestic discursive speeches could affect international influences. So as his speeches in international affairs. (Klimeš, 2018). Since the publication of Xi's work in February 2015, it has been translated by official media into 14 versions in the United Kingdom, France, Russia, Japan and Portugal, with a total of nearly 2 million copies distributed. In May 2018, a second volume was published (CPC, 2018). To compare, the other two books also enjoyed the very large sales in worldwide, also exerted huge influences. (Tan et al, 2008) Xi's work achieved such grand circulation because it was edited by the most crucial domestic official press., *Quotations of Chairman Mao* was the product of personality cult, and came from the inner material of the CCP (1967). Chairman Mao demonstrated his willness for a personality cult when, commenting on Lenin's "dictatorship", he cited Lenin's words: 'If you proclaimed my dictatorship, it means your willingness for dictatorship.' (Inner party, 1967). Subsequently, the PLA newspaper was the first to come out with *Quotations of Chairman Mao*, which was given to troops (Xing, 2008). From then, the learning of Mao's quotations spread nationally through the CCP's propaganda efforts. Both *Classical Aphorisms of Xi*

Jinping and *Quotations of Chairman Mao* concern the topic of governing China, and the contents are derived from their writings or speeches.

From the time Xi worked as a secretary of prefectural Party committees, he has continued to focus on publishing his own experiences and discourses. These materials have become the learning material for CCP members today (Xi, 2018). It is evident that the series of articles and speeches published by Xi and Mao constructed their theory on the system of governance.

The Analects of Confucius, is the root of historical Confucian doctrine. Yet it still contains many narratives of Confucius and his disciples and descriptions of his environment. The quotations include a reporting clause such as “Confucius said (子曰)”, or “Zengzi said (曾子曰)”. “The book *The Analects of Confucius* is a collection of what Confucius and some of his disciples said”. (Li, 1995) Most scholars believe that *The Analects of Confucius* represents the memory of Confucius’ students, and was compiled from their records into twenty chapters. The real intention of *The Analects*’ editors was cherishing the memory of their teacher Confucius (Yang, 1980 and Zou, 2010).

The motivation is totally different in Xi Jinping’s case. Some scholars collected and studied Xi’s quotations for propaganda use. Officials often support professional academic resources in the effort to exploit them for proper cultural governance and secure research funding (Perry, 2013 and William, 2015). For example, academic resources are focused on the theoretical establishment of Xi Jinping thought in domestic China by the Propaganda Department. But the essential purpose of both books is similar, since both attempt to highlight a political philosophy. This point appears clearly in the names of chapters.

However, in the twenty chapters of *The Analects*, no connection seems to exist between the chapters because their names were added under imperial China. Nan Huaijin (2012) argues that these statements were originally a whole article, but were cut in the editing process. Overseeing *The Analects*, every single chapter name is selected from the first quotation of this chapter. This point is agreed by some Chinese scholars. Li (2007) and Zou (2010) assert that the contents of *The Analects* are not coherent, and that the names of the chapters do not have substantive meaning. But these arguments are doubted by scholars who argue that the main theme of the *Analects* are benevolence (*ren* 仁) and the rites (*li* 礼). They see coherence in structure throughout the book. Since the temperament of readers can be cultivated, this book is half religion and half philosophy; people normally get to know Confucius through *The Analects* (Li, 1994, Zhang, 2017 and Guo, 2018).

The commentaries of the famous Confucian Zhu Xi of the Song dynasty suggest that “the first chapter Xue er (studying) represents the foundational meaning; it is the door of accessing the morality, the most crucial responsibility for the students” (Zhu, 1992). The first chapter of *The Analects* narrates the importance of

studying, which is the foundation of becoming a good official. Other contents also recorded the skill and knowledge needed for governing the people (Zhang, 2017). The “studying” style in the party is very popular. The main director of the commentary department of the People’s Daily, Yang Lixin (2018), stated that “president Xi continuously absorbs wisdom from Chinese classics to serve the people. We party member should follow the new tendency of the period and should also study Xi’s art of quoting Chinese classics.” For example, Xi quoted the famous Confucian scholar Xunzi in the opening ceremony for the Central Party School in 2013: “Scholars maybe not be officials, but officials do need to study.” (学者非必为士, 而仕者必为学) The current meaning of this sentence is that party officials should actively follow the orthodox line to protect the party’s reputation. (People.cn, 2015) This tendency of the CCP utilizing has started to increase.

Although CCP members are forced to study Xi’s publications even as they appear in new editions, the essence of this model relies on the fusion of authoritarian works of the past. The CCP has trained officials and members to follow Xi’s quotations. Not only is this a way to maintain their loyalty; it also implies the authority to use these Chinese classics to respond to current social issues such as social equality and justice, rule by law, and nationalism.

5. WHEN THE CHINESE CLASSICS CITATION ENCOUNTERS THE REAL SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Despite Xi’s frequent use of classical allusions to advance cultural government, some classical texts are vague and have varying interpretations. A single example will demonstrate that the Confucian classics can be interpreted diversely. “Ren (仁) as containing love, respect for others, dutifulness, loyalty, self-mastery, propriety and benevolence,” as the stated interpretation. As the interpreters engage in dialogue with the canonical texts, their personal values will be modified and changed. (Xie et al, 2017). According to Chinese official statistics, in January 2017, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) issued a “Guideline on carrying out the development project of inheriting and developing China’s splendid traditional culture”, which emphasized “to better integrate China’s splendid traditional culture into all aspects of production and life.” (Gov.cn, 2017). Chinese classical citations of Xi are collected by the mainstream media such as People’s Daily and Xinhua News Agency. Some part of their meaning is changed in Xi’s speeches. In general, when Xi quotes Chinese classics in relation to social problems, it delivers rhetorical value rather than substantive action. In official discourse, the cultural and China’s philosophical tradition are

originally dialectical. Now the propaganda of the CCP-state attempts to lead public opinion with one voice. They strengthen argumentation patterns based on traditional Chinese notions of governance. At this stage, consolidated ideological governance over individual values, beliefs, and loyalties is the more important work for the CCP ideological department (Lam, 2015; Klimeš et al, 2018). For example, when Xi faced a focused question on income distribution, he cited *The Analects of Confucius* to give the public a commitment, “We should make the ‘cake’ big, but also arrange it equally. ‘Do not worry about the equal distribution of wealth rather than the amounts of population; Do worry about the peaceful living of citizens rather than the poverty’ (不患寡而患不均, 不患贫而患不安): this concept was rooted long ago in our society. We should improve social equality and justice and do whatever we can to gain new development in aspects of education, employment, healthcare, retirement pensions, and housing.” (Xi, 2014). “This concept was also the primary understanding of sharing in Chinese descendants’ thought” (Xi, 2015).

This passage from *The Analects* addresses equalitarianism and harmony, meaning the warlord should keep a balance with citizens’ property in order to maintain social stability. (Nan, 2012) In Xi’s adaptation, he cited this classic to echo the contents of his reports in 18th CPC national congress, “to implement that the achievements of development are shared by the people, we must delve reform of the income distribution system” (China Daily, 2017). The CCP has successfully adapted this concept from a comment on equality to a concept of modern governance. The official interpretation of this has argued that “Xi Jinping citing this sentence perfectly expresses the requirement of common enrichments, the Chinese citizens’ common idea of thousands of years.” (People’s Daily commentary department, 2018) In the context of Xi’s speeches, this adaptation of a classical source seems not so vague; he hopes this sentence will inform citizens that even in a market economy, traditional values can guide the government in solving current livelihood issues.

This influence can also support top-level decision making. In Xi’s speeches, he has cited many Chinese classics to express “change” and “reform”. It is one rational alternative theory to describe some changes such as “the constitution and terms”. In 2018 at the 13th National People’s Congress, an amendment to the constitution of the People’s Republic of China was approved. It deleted the limitation on presidential terms. (Sohu.com, 2018) The latest version of *Classical Aphorisms of Xi Jinping* recorded one classic quoted by Xi in CCP central Politburo 19th collective learning session about the amendment of the constitution: “If the law could change with the times, the country will get good governance; if the method of governing could coincide with the current society, the ruler will contribute to its achievements (法与时转则治, 治与世宜则有功)

(People’s Daily commentary department, 2018). This is only one classical sentence that has been connected with the change of constitution. It is a quote from the legalist philosopher Hanfeizi. The official interpretation claims that Xi’s citation referred to the national constitution. The national constitution should follow the times and evolve. The superstructure of the constitution should change according to the needs of the people. (People’s Daily commentary, 2018) But some western scholars such as James Mann and Francis Fukuyama fear that the increasing power of Xi Jinping will generate a “bad emperor” situation in China, because Xi could manipulate legislation such as a change of the constitution and reinforcement of media censorship. (James, 2007 and Fukuyama, 2018) Therefore, the positive interpretation by an official discourse has pointed that the available change of constitution. the quote in this speeches also implies that the CCP has followed an inherited right from the Spring and Autumn period, the ruler’s right to change laws.

Finally, Xi’s citing of Chinese classics in diplomatic contexts does not only influence international affairs. More importantly, Xi wants to encourage nationalism with China’s glories in a domestic narrative. They give China’s models to other countries, such as “One Belt, One Road” and “community of shared destiny”. When Xi visited Arab state league headquarters in 2016, he cited *Mencius* to express China’s decent image:” (The gentlemen) must establish the righteous position and walk the righteous way in the world.” (立天下之正位, 行天下之大道) (People’s Daily commentary department, 2018) In addition: “Instead of looking for a proxy in the Middle East, China promotes peace talks” (Gov.cn, 2016). This sentence was originally a requirement to a gentlemen’s merit. Xi thus compared China to a decent gentleman whose effect is “righteous” in international affairs. Domestically, this sentence not only expressed a peaceful and positive image of China, but also implied the pursuit of order and power. Mencius’ theory of kingcraft (*wang dao* 王道) means that China could execute the kindness to others and maintain its merit as a leader. People.cn (2017) reported that in “the Chinese 5000 years history, CCP’s 95 development and 38 years of opening reform, all three achievements could have the capacity to announce that we are capable of being the facilitator of a new international order and international security.” From research of Chinese indigenous traditional values, Ye et al (2018) examined the people’s use of traditional proverbs in mainland China and found that the samples preferred phrases relating to diligence, integrity, and self-preservation in daily life. Furthermore, the samples also concentrated more on the leadership and hierarchy values. Perhaps encouraging cultural nationalism with its traditional values in domestic China results in something easier to control. This perhaps stands in contrast to anti-Japanese sentiment in the past (BBC, 2017). Therefore, the government has used in propaganda China’s glories and

praised China's rising position in international society. From this sort of quotation, China's model and image are given new roots, to be found in traditional Confucian values of harmony and righteousness. Meanwhile, the government has attempted to avoid argument in the ideological sphere (King, et al, 2017).

CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the different adaptations of Chinese classics in speeches by Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping. From the vagueness and lack of order in Jiang's speeches to the Hu Jintao government's use of some concepts of traditional Chinese culture to construct the political ideal of the "harmonious world", now the Chinese classics are frequently used in Xi's speeches and official propaganda work on the interpretation of Chinese classics is well established. Besides newspapers and internet propaganda, the CCP has also published collected works which record Xi's adaption of Chinese classics to enhance his reputation. He has made himself a Confucian gentleman, an icon of traditional Chinese society for others to emulate. This paternalism is basic to Chinese traditional hierarchy and leadership value. Xi frequently emphasizes the morality required in Chinese classics for control over officials and government. Through comparison with works of Confucius and Mao; it was demonstrated that Xi's canonical publications as continuously renewed utilize aspects of the past works. Xi's works conflate Marxism with notions from the Chinese classics to solve real social issues. Finally, this study examined some current adaptations from traditional Chinese classics used to connect the reality of social equality and justice, rule by law and nationalism. These adaptations respond to focused issues, but represent the Xi Jinping governments' commitment.

At present, Xi and the CCP have developed a rhetoric style in Xi's speeches and official narrative. The CCP has evidently adapted Chinese culture as a new alternative for the foundation of its legitimacy. It is trying to transform its legitimacy to a root in adapted Chinese traditional values. But this sophisticated system fuses contradictory ideologies. On the one hand, the CCP has declared that it should insist on the banner of Marxism, but elements originally foreign to Marxism have been included; this model has less attraction in China. On the other hand, the CCP has announced that it is the loyal protector of traditional Chinese culture, but fails to admit its own past destruction of Chinese traditions.

In the future, the CCP will continuous to think about how to fulfill its commitment to Chinese people with such ideas as the "Chinese dream". Then, in the transformation of the process of legitimacy, Xi will keep balancing the needs of the New left climate. After all, the public still responds better to economic and political reforms rather than to a demonstration of classical Chinese knowledge.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very grateful to my supervisor Nathan Woolley. He gave me many suggestions during the process of completing the draft of this study and gave me much crucial advice on the relevant English translations.

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