

On Principles and Modes of Governance in Confucian Political Philosophy:
Toward a Modern Formulation

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In exploring nature of Confucian political philosophy in Confucian texts I repudiate Jiang Qin's idea of political Confucianism (政治儒学) as excluding and opposing moral Confucianism of mind and nature (心性儒学). Instead I consider a theory of mind-nature as essential for a virtue-centered moral-political philosophy whether in Classical Confucian or in Neo-Confucian traditions. In other words, we must see centrality of virtues as basis for both personal moral cultivation and political governance in a network of inner and outer relationships to do with motivation and conduct of human persons in overlapping circles of family, society and government.

Next, I reconsider Mou Zongsan's distinction between the way of political principles (zhengdao 道) versus the way of political governance (治道) in Confucianism. I assert in spite of Mou that the classical ideals of a world of grand unity (世界大同) and a commonwealth of public good (天下为公) may still serve as core visions and guiding directions for Confucian political governance. Thus I argue In dissent from Mou that we can see how a Confucian zhengdao of benevolence and justice (仁义) leading to a Confucian zhidao of propriety and norms (礼法) is articulated in a continuum of ends and means.

With this background understanding I shall show how there exists both a historical advance and a theoretical transformation from the model of 德政礼治 (Rule by Virtue and Propriety / Ritual) in Classical Confucians to the model of 德政理治 (Rule by Virtue and Principle / Reason) in Neo-Confucianism as articulated by Zhu Xi. I shall also pinpoint the reason for modern emergence of a model of 德政法治 (Rule by Virtue and Law / Norm) since the return of Confucian values to the political scene after 1919.

In order to see the meaningfulness of this transformation, I shall undertake analysis of these three modes of governance in reference to textual idioms of neisheng waiwang (内圣外王), and neide wai fa (内德外法) and estimate the relationships between morality and law, moral cultivation and political governance, in a resultant unity which is characteristic of Confucian philosophy of man and the world. In this connection I shall critically evaluate Steve Angle's proposed paradigm of a rule of Sagehood and Danial Bell's argument for Confucian elitism, in light of a deeper analysis of relations of heaven, ruler and people as we known from *Book of Document*, *Book of Changes*, and *Record of Rites*. This will lead to a better formulation of the model of governance by inner virtue and outer law in contemporary China in meeting the needs of both the people and the state. I shall call this new model as rule by virtue, law and benefits of people (德政法治民惠)