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## *The Fusion of Marxism and Ancient Philosophy in the Management of the Government of China*



The triumphant Chinese revolution in 1949 introduced new variables for the construction of one's own thinking. His philosophy, which arose from the sixth and fifth centuries B.C., had in Confucius and Laozi its main exponents, although not the only ones. Since that time, China's long history has been pregnant with novel research and opinions in search of wisdom, the value of life in society, the importance of human relationships, and moral values to sustain it. Of this and many other elements the ancient philosophical thought of China is composed.

The 20th century saw the introduction of Western philosophy, in particular the ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin, which, interpreted by Mao Zedong according to his own idiosyncrasies, gave rise to a particular paradigm that supported the beginning of the construction of socialism in China. Almost at the end of the last century, the top national leader Deng Xiaoping fused traditional Chinese thought with Marxist-Leninist ideas and Mao's contributions, also introducing some doctrines rooted in the West to create a new

body of concepts that – without being comparable to any other belief or theory – support China's current ideology. on which society's potential for the future is built.

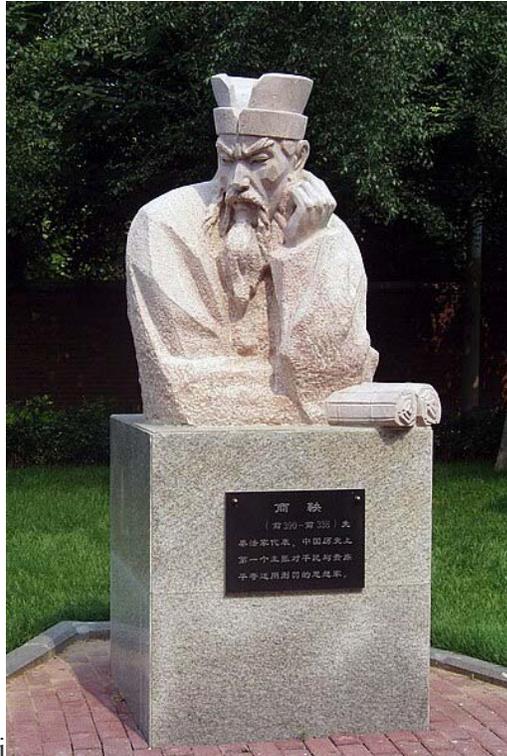


管仲

Guan Zhong (720-645 B.C.)

Marxism-Leninism, the ideology of Chairman Mao, the Buddhist religion and up to seven philosophical schools of their own have intertwined to build a peculiar and indigenous thought. One such school, with great influence today, is that of the legalists. The antecedents of legalistic thought in ancient China are given by the studies of the master Guan Zhong during the seventh century (B.C.) who formulated practical solutions for the realization of good government, a theme that became the axis of the proposals of subsequent followers of this school.





Shen Buhai



Shang Yang



Shen Dao

Han Fei Zi

Some later exponents of legalism were Shen Buhai, considered the first to work on the idea of law (fa); Shang Yang, who focused his work on the techniques of good governance (shu), and Shen Dao, whose greatest effort was aimed at finding tendencies for the use of

force as a basis for sustaining power, all of them in the fourth century (B.C.). But without a doubt the greatest exponent of legalism was Han Fei, who set out to synthesize and bring together all the ideas outlined by the followers of this school, according to which the written law is the most important thing in order for the State and the Prince to acquire and maintain power and wealth.

In Master Han Fei's book, the pinnacle work of this school, the political ideas of the legalists are exposed based on a deep knowledge of their time, detaching themselves from previous facts, since they considered that the incessant change of political and social circumstances obliges punctual analyses in time and space and innovative methods on the part of the rulers. In this regard, Shang Yang wrote that: "When the principles that guide people become inadequate in the face of new circumstances, their standards of value must change. When the actual conditions of the world change, different principles must also be put into practice."

The legalists advocated such rigid state control that, despite being staunch defenders of private property, their views left private property superlatively limited in its rights. The legalistic conception of establishing a body of explicit and publicly promulgated laws in order to be known by the whole of society clashed with the practice of government based on rites and traditions. In this sense, in a contradictory way, they pointed directly to the organization and direction of the state and to political and military success rather than to legal matters proper.

Shang Yang was particularly devoted to these matters when he played an important role as an adviser to the monarch in the early fifth century B.C., elaborating reforms aimed at guaranteeing the supremacy of the state and abolishing the privileges of the aristocracy. He also wrote a single code of compliance for the whole of society without class distinctions, organizing the government on the basis of a large bureaucracy that depended directly on the monarch.

On the other hand, through his remarkable work, Han Fei developed as never before some categories aimed at better control of society and the attainment of social harmony. Among them, the most important is the "law" previously introduced by Shang Yang, established as written rules and orders that the ruler uses to monitor and intervene in society, maintaining power over himself based on the effectiveness that is evident through two instruments of power (erbing): the application of punishments and the granting of rewards.



*A computer-generated Lenin intervenes in one of the five episodes of the series "When Confucius Meets Marx" produced by Chinese Human Television, telling them: "Whoever abandons history and culture will end up being abandoned by history and culture."*

Many of his contributions, along with those of Confucius, amalgamate the doctrine that gave the characteristics of the Chinese empire for two thousand years. The influence of the legalists' proposals was manifested in the ideological unity of the people and the government, the political and military unification of the territory, the importance of the economic well-being of the people as the sustenance of the ruler, the importance of efficiency and realism in the fulfillment of the political objectives of the government, all of which are tasks present in the management of the current government.

In this context, it is worth noting President Xi Jinping's recent statement that "The path of the socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics must be maintained with unwavering commitment." Xi stressed the idea of strengthening the construction of a foreign-linked legal system to promote "high-level opening-up," as well as being vigilant to "counter external risks and challenges."

He also drew attention to the importance and urgency of the issue, stating that the main objective of developing legal governance in foreign affairs is to safeguard the interests of the country and the people through legal methods, promote the progress of the international rule of law, and foster the formation of a community with a united future for mankind.

These ideas take on extraordinary relevance when China, on the one hand, has begun a far-reaching transformation of its foreign policy aimed at playing a more relevant role in international affairs. And on the other hand, it realizes that in its execution it will have to

undeniably confront the Western rhetoric that proposes to build an "international system based on rules", which of course are elaborated and accepted by themselves.

Xi called on Chinese citizens and enterprises to be guided by local laws and regulations when abroad and apply them to protect their rights and interests. He said efforts should be made to improve relevant measures and regulations in a way that makes life easier for foreigners living in China.

In addition, he argued that his country should actively participate in the development of international norms, as well as promote the rule of law in international relations in order to create an "open and transparent" system. He also mentioned the need to elevate effective measures and the mature experience of opening up to the outside world in a timely manner, such as the development of pilot free trade zones.

Finally, he called on China to strive to strengthen confidence in the rule of law so as to actively implement its unique concepts, proposals and successful practices in foreign policy. He also said that it was necessary to promote the creative transformation and development of China's traditional legal culture.

*[Sergio Rodríguez Gelfenstein](#) for *La Pluma*, January 26, 2024*

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