

Thesis Title Han Fei Tzu's Legalism and Maoism :
 A Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation aims at a comparative study of Han Fei Tzu's Legalism and Maoism under these headings : the nature of man, political ideals, economic ideals, educational ideals, and the ideals of militarism. The question of how much Maoism was related to and influenced by Han Fei's Legalism was also examined.

From the study it was found that Han Fei was of the view that all men were born equal but their selfish nature caused conflicts and inequalities and Han Fei, accordingly, held that only strict enforcement of laws could effectively control human behaviour. Judgment of human values was to be made by reference to the consequences of actions. People in a state, according to Han Fei, must be skilful in battle as well as in farming and their education

must be under government control and in service of the state. And in the administration of the state, the king exercises absolute power with the laws as efficient tools of ruling. The king must inculcate the public spirit in the people. The highest end of government is to achieve an ideal society which, in Han Fei's view, is a society of people enjoying all sorts of equalities and common wealth or welfare. In this society or state people need not keep private property and can live without any needs of laws.

Dealing with the same issue of human nature, Mao Tse Tung holds that all men were born equal and economic conditions create the inequalities among them. This fact is seen in the diversification of people in the state. According to Mao, people can be made equal by means of revolution of workers and peasants who become a majority. In matters of education, it is the state who sets policies and directions with emphasis on practices. In addition, knowledge of political parties and ideologies is an essential part of the people's education. Above all, the unity of the people and harmonious relationships between the people and the military constitute the basis for the revolution of the society.

The supreme end of government, according to Mao, is the Communist Society which is a classless and stateless society without private ownership of property. All people are treated equals.

From the analytical and comparative study of the social philosophical views of Han Fei Tzu and Mao Tse Tung, their

similarities and differences, we have found that largely both the thinkers hold similar views. Both recognize the importance of economic problems and therefore hold that the state should take control over the economy of the country and introduce land reform. Both advocate centralization of power with authorized agents under direct control. Both dreamed of an ideal society where there was perfect peace which needed no laws.

The similar aspects of both thinkers' views on politics and society may be due to the influence of ancient sages who stressed the humanistic concerns for human welfare and the practical benefits of any philosophical principles employed in the solution of social as well as individual problems.

As to the differences of views, they are differences of times and places. Han Fei and Mao lived in different periods of history and in different social environments, therefore, the details of the ways and means to implement their social planning naturally differed.

With reference to the hypothesis of the research : Maoism is a revival of Han Fei's Legalism, we know for sure that Mao Tse Tung was influenced by Han Fei's thoughts through his knowledge of emperor Ch'in Shih Huangti who applied Han Fei's political thoughts in the reformation of his Empire. Thus it can be said that the political and social thoughts of Han Fei and Mao are indirectly related. However, from the political point of view, Maoism may be regarded as a further step in the development of politics in China.