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### **Interpretations of Confucianism by Contemporary Chinese Government**

Confucianism has been by the ruling class throughout the Chinese history as a tool for social harmony. Different interpretations by different rulers has been made in order to make such ideology to serve the best interest of the ruling class. There is no exception with the current Chinese government, despite its criticism for Confucianism decades ago. Ever since Xi Jinping, China's new leader, starts his term, Confucianism has been emphasized in multiple occasions when he referred to such ideology as one of the most important parts of Chinese culture. It is especially obvious in one article published by CPC News, one of the official news agencies for the Communist Party of China, back in 2014.

The article reports on Xi's speech in Commemoration of the 2,565th Anniversary of Confucius' Birth, during which he pointed out that the as one of the "excellent traditional cultures", Confucianism has a great role to play because of the ideas such the "five virtues" manifested in the Analects. Moreover, Xi emphasized that the meaning of Confucianism is that it is an important way to understand how Chinese people formed the special spiritual values. He later

further extended the Confucianism to an important piece of the identity of “Zhong hua min zu”, which gives it the new usage in this new era.

Although it may sound bizarre for a government to promote for an idea they were once extremely opposed to, using Confucianism as a bond for the country is in fact self-explanatory. Just like the American value is based on “freedom” and “democracy” as well as being the nation favored by God, China also needs a core value to support itself under drastic change, and the government chose the idea of “Zhong hua min zu” with the emphasis of Confucianism, which was invented over two thousand years ago — a time long enough to manifest the long history of Chinese civilization and thus making the citizens proud. What makes the Confucianism texts reverent today is the special representation of the Chinese culture, as a form to bound the whole nation together with the idea of “Zhong hua min zu”. When the KMT overthrew the Qing government back at the beginning of 20th century, it used “Five Races Under One Union” as the core idea to unite everyone together. Later when the CPC took control of the mainland, the idea of “Liberating the world” with the idea of Communism became the motivation. However, everything changed when Deng Xiaoping promoted an opening market, which is indeed opposite to what the government was trying to emphasize earlier. Since 1978, the government has been searching for the new core idea for the nation, and it finally chose “Zhong hua min zu”(which could be seen as another form of “Five Races Under One Union”), in which Confucianism plays a big part in the cultural identity part.

Therefore, in the contemporary era, the use of Confucianism, despite different co-existing interpretations, is to address the issue of self-realization, or as a form of Chinese national identity of the long history it has in order to defend against “cultural invasion” from other cultures. For long there has been a lack of the “Chinese Culture” in the self-identity for the Chinese people, therefore something from the past that addresses the long history of Chinese history is essential in the modern era. Moreover, the text is still valuable for the various concepts in the Analects that emphasizes the legitimacy of the ruling class, while the government is trying to interpret in a way such that it serves the best interest of ruling, as well as making the people of the nation unite together. While in the past decades the CPC was trying to undermine the influence of Confucianism, it is without doubt that it plays an important role in modern day Chinese politics.