

# Review of Dong Zhongshu Administrative Management Thought

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**Abstract:** *The main content of Dong Zhongshu's administrative management thought is the governance philosophy of morality as the mainstay of punishment, the administrative principle of coordination between the top and bottom, and the supervision and checks and balances of administrative power. The principle of morality is to educate and implement benevolent governance; the coordination between the top and bottom is to improve the efficiency of administrative operation through the coordination between the supreme ruler and the officials and the coordination between officials at all levels, so as to ensure the effective operation of administrative power; through justice and harshness penalties and the formulation of policies for adjusting the gap between the rich and the poor to adjust social conflicts and ensure social stability; restrictions on administrative power include the restriction of "god" on the power of the supreme ruler monarch, the monarch's absolute control over the administrative power, and the relationship between officials the triple meaning of mutual supervision. In reality, Dong Zhongshu's administrative management thought played a decisive role in the prosperity and stability of the Han Dynasty.*

**Keywords:** *Dong Zhongshu, administrative management thought, morality and punishment, coordination between top and bottom, power restriction*

## 1. Introduction

Dong Zhongshu is an important figure in the history of Chinese thought. He laid a theoretical foundation for the feudal rule of the Han Dynasty and provided a direct tool for the rule of the ruling class. A new ideological system established by Dong Zhongshu became the theoretical basis for the rule of the ruling class at that time and had a huge impact on the development of society at that time. In the reign of Emperor Han Jing, Dong Zhongshu served as a doctor and lectured on "The Spring and Autumn of the Ram". In the first year of Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty (134 before), Emperor Wu issued an edict to solicit a strategy for governing the country. Dong Zhongshu combined confucianism with the social needs of the time in his famous "Countermeasures for Evaluating Virtue", and absorbed the theories of other schools to create a new ideological system centered on confucianism was adopted by Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty as the theoretical basis for governing the country. This article systematically sorts out its main administrative management thoughts.

## 2. The governance idea of virtue dominating punishment

In the ancient Chinese administrative system, the ruling class assumed an important function, that is, to teach the people and set them as Kuxu schools to teach them [1]. There are two ways to enlighten the people, one is to enlighten them through harsh punishments, and the other is to enlighten the people through ethical governance. In Chinese history, the Qin dynasty was the first way to teach people and enforce the most stringent grammar. However, this did not bring about political recognition of authority. Instead, it made the customs worse by the day, and flattery, hypocrisy and deception became political customs. At that time, the extremely powerful empire became a paper mansion, and it fell down. Later, Dong Zhongshu described it as: all officials are playing false words without regard to the truth. There is a gift of the king outside, and there is a heart on the back, forgery and deceit, which is shameless and shameless. It is also easy to use the official staff of Kaiku, to save the death degree and exhaust the people's financial resources. If the people are scattered and perished, they are not allowed to start from the industry of farming and weaving. There are so many tormentors, and the dead look at each other and rape [2]. "Government with virtue, such as Beichen, where the stars live together [3] ". If a king

wants to get the support of the people, if he wants to govern the country well, he must have virtue, and he must use virtue to influence the people. Therefore, Dong Zhongshu puts "morality" in the first place in politics. He said: "The reason why a country is a country, morality is because it is a monarch, who adheres to his virtues and attaches himself to his people; therefore, he exercises his power and rectifies his ministers [4]." The ruler must implement moral governance in national governance, use moral governance to educate the people, and use moral governance to lead the officials. Only in this way can the ruler win the support of the people and officials, and the country can govern effectively.

At the same time, Dong Zhongshu also further pointed out the specific ways that rulers use morality to govern. Dong Zhongshu believes that there are three specific ways to govern by virtue. One is to educate by virtue. "Naturally born people, nature has good qualities, but fails to be good", [5] "If you rule the world in the south, you can't help but be enlightened [6]." Dong Zhongshu believes that moral and ideological education is the most important thing for the civilization of the people, and that moral and ideological education is a national cause. The country should set up schools to conduct moral and ideological education for the citizens so that the citizens can "Noble filial brother and good manners, emphasis on benevolence and integrity and neglect financial gain." So he advocated that "university should be taught in the country, and the itch order should be transformed into the town [7] ". The second is to implement the rule of virtue. Dong Zhongshu believes that another important reason for the rapid demise of the Qin Dynasty is the gap between the rich and the poor caused by the annexation of land. At the same time, he knows that the people are the creators of social wealth. Therefore, he pointed out that the rulers should formulate corresponding adjustment policies to protect the basic lives of the people on the one hand, and on the other hand to control the gap between the rich and the poor in the society [8]. However, when formulating policies to adjust the gap between the rich and the poor, it is necessary to prevent managers from profit-making behaviors [9]. The third is the unity of thought. "The great unification of "Spring and Autumn", the constant classics of heaven and earth, the harmony of ancient and modern, the different ways of today, the different opinions of people, a hundred schools of special prescriptions, different meanings, it is the above-mentioned death in order to maintain unity; the legal system changes, the next is unknown Shou. The officials and fools think that all those who are not in the discipline of Confucius in the six arts must have their own way and do not use them. The evil theory of extinction, and then the discipline can be clear, and the people know what to follow [10]." First of all, Dong Zhongshu believes that the unity of thought is the guarantee of the stability of the country's political order, so it is necessary to "reject a hundred schools of thought and respect Confucianism" and unify the ideology and culture of the whole society into Confucianism. Only in this way can the integration of ideology, culture and politics be closer, can form a universal sense of political identity in politics, and can administrative management be carried out in an orderly manner.

"Yang, the virtue of heaven; Yin, the punishment of heaven [11]." On the basis of governing by virtue, Dong Zhongshu also affirmed the value of punishment in administrative management. Dong Zhongshu believes that state management cannot be without penalties. When using penalties to administer the country, Dong Zhongshu believes that to make a fair judgment, distinguish between the principals and the subordinates, and to measure matters and punishments, it is necessary to "to be incorruptible and to listen to litigation in accordance with the law, and nothing is achieved."

### 3. Administrative principle of coordination

In traditional Chinese ideology, the ruler is the son of the emperor, and he is the spokesperson of the heaven. Since the pre-Qin period, there has been the concept of "heaven" in Chinese ruling thoughts. "Heaven" has the ability to punish people, and people cannot contend with it. "If you are guilty of heaven, there is nothing you can do [12]." "Tianzhi" is the rules and norms of the personnel and society. Behaviors that conform to the "Tianzhi" are right, and vice versa. That is, "I have ambitions, for example, if there are rules for the round of people, and the rules for the craftsmen. The rounds of craftsman follow his rules to save the world, and the sun: 'the one who is in the middle is the same, the one who is not is not the same' [13]. Dong Zhongshu inherited the idea of heaven and man, constructed the system of heaven and man, and formed the idea of "the unity of man and nature". Dong Zhongshu said: "There are ten ends in the sky", that is, "the heavens, the yin and yang, the golden, the wood, the water, the fire, and the earth, and the ten, the number of days is complete [14]." Such a sky is not only a natural sky, but also forms a sky with moral and emotional personality, and everything must operate under the control of the sky. At the same time, the sky forms a close connection with people through the Yin and Yang and the Five Elements. Dong Zhongshu believes that the movement form of the sky is qi, "the qi of the sky and the earth are combined into one, divided into yin and yang, judged as four o'clock, and listed as the five elements." People are inlaid between the heaven and the earth,

"popularity lies in the weather when the earth is angry [15]." This first formed the principle that man must coordinate with the sky. The coordination between man and the sky is first of all the coordination between the ruler and the sky, that is, the political principle of managing the affairs of the world is first to observe the laws of operation of the sky.

In the pre-Qin Confucian political thought, the emphasis is on "three guiding principles and five constants, the emperor, the minister, and the father and son." Dong Zhongshu inherited the pre-Qin Gang and Chang ideas, and on this basis further emphasized the coordination between the emperor and his subjects. "The righteousness of the ruler, the courtier, the father and the son, and the couple are all related to the ways of yin and yang. The ruler is yang, the minister is yin; the father is yang, the son is yin; the husband is yang, and the wife is yin. The three principles of the king's way can be found in the sky. The sky is yang. , For the warmth to live; the earth out of the yin, for the clear to make it. If it is not warm, it is not clear. However, the number of points is warm and cold, and the cold is one. Moral education and punishment are still this is also the case. Therefore, the saint loves more and less strict, and honours his morals and simplifies his punishment to match the sky [16]." Dong Zhongshu believes that the administrative path originates from the heavenly path, and the supreme ruler must abide by the heavenly path and be in harmony with the heaven. In the same way, the entire political system must be coordinated from top to bottom. The ruler obeys the way of heaven, and the courtiers must obey the "kingly way", and they must implement the will of the supreme ruler in an orderly manner. That is to say, "In the time of heaven and man, the two are united into one, the same but the same reason, the movement and the benefit, the obedience and the acceptance, which is called the virtue [17]."

#### **4. Administrative power to restrict supervision**

Dong Zhongshu first gave supreme power to the ruler of the country. At the same time, he believes that the country must be long-lasting and stable. It is not enough for the monarch to have the supreme power. The monarch should also be given authority. The way to gain authority is for the monarch to do "the will of heaven." In fact, as early as the Zhou Dynasty, in order to give legitimacy to the source of power of the Western Zhou Dynasty, Zhou Gong proposed the idea of the source of power legitimacy that "fate is not arrogant", and that the monarch must abide by the "will of heaven" to gain authority. On this basis, Dong Zhongshu used the authority of heaven to restrict the sovereignty of the sovereign and proposed the theory of catastrophic notification. Dong Zhongshu believes that since the monarch is ordered by the heavens, he must entrust the heavens as the highest authority and "respect the heavens as the father and walk the way of heaven [18]." Therefore, in Dong Zhongshu's administrative management thought, he clearly emphasized the check and balance of the power of the supreme ruler, and the power of the supreme ruler was checked and balanced by the heavens and the gods. This idea of restricting and supervising the power of the monarch is effective to a certain extent in the traditional theocratic society, and it also has important practical significance.

In addition, in the checks and balances on the power of officials, Dong Zhongshu put forward the "three guiding principles and five permanent principles", emphasizing that "the monarch is the ministerial key", the political center of the whole country, "the monarch is the origin of the country, and the cardinal of all things is spoken and acted [19]." Therefore, this forms the absolute control and checks and balances of the supreme ruler's power over the various administrative powers. At the same time, Dong Zhongshu also emphasized that the three officials and the nine officials each fulfill their duties and check and balance each other. He proposed: "Make the princes, the county guards, and the two thousand stones each choose the sages of the officials and the people, and each of them will pay the tribute to the guards, and to observe the power of the ministers; the sages who tribute will be rewarded, and the tribute will be unworthy. There is punishment for those who do. If the husband is the case, the princes and officials have two thousand stones to seek the kidneys. The land under the earth can get officials [20]." From here, we can clearly see that Dong Zhongshu forms mutual restriction and supervision through the establishment of management at all levels to ensure the normal operation of administrative power.

#### **5. Conclusion**

Dong Zhongshu's administrative management thoughts of main punishment and auxiliary, coordination between upper and lower levels, and restriction and supervision of administrative power, to a certain extent, played a decisive role in the stability and prosperity of the Han Dynasty. Go on the road to heaven, and control should be natural. While admiring the supremacy of the power of the ruler,

Dong Zhongshu also pointed out that the power of the ruler must be restricted, the ruler must conform to the law of nature, and the public power should not be reckless. At the same time, he further pointed out an important function of administrative power, which is to ensure social justice. He believes that the ruling class must formulate policies to prevent the gap between the rich and the poor in society and promote social equity. In reality, Dong Zhongshu's series of administrative thoughts have progressive significance in the history of ancient Chinese administrative thoughts.

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