ABSTRACT

Xunzi (荀 子 313 - 230 BC) is one of the greatest Pre-Chin Confucian philosophers. He advocated that human beings had desires and they were innately evil. He proposed the use of Li (礼) to constrain the evil nature. As he was different from Confucius and Mencius, he was sometimes considered as a collateral branch of confucianism.

Being considered as a collateral branch of confucianism, Xunzi's great philosophy was sometimes neglected by scholars. For example, his economic thoughts were sometimes misinterpreted and neglected. Thus, this Academic Exercise aimed to examine his thoughts in proper perspective, arouse interest as well as apply his keen insightful thoughts to the modern society.

From his concept of desire, Xunzi affirmed the pursuit of wealth. He was very clear that enriching the people is more prominent than enriching the state. In enriching the people, he proposed the adept use of manpower to develop the natural resources. Tax rate should be lowered and the period of national service shortened. Division of people was deemed to be very important. He proposed the division of people into different professions and different classes. Through such divisions, an individual's desire will be satisfied. The remuneration each gets will correspond to his job, contributions and talents. Each profession will coordinate with one another and everyone works together as an entity.

Although the society has changed, we can say that Xunzi's economic thoughts are still applicable. Thus, more studies should be made on his great thoughts.