ABSTRACT

This study aims at clarifying the misconceptions of others on Mencius' thoughts on Ethics, which are either misunderstood or distorted purposely by some scholars and rulers to serve their ends. Many have mistaken Mencius' thoughts on Ethics to be a set of out-dated, unrealistic teachings which put constraint on the development of human characters. In this study we clarify these misconceptions and evaluate Mencius' thoughts for their significance and importance to modern society.

Mencius lived in a time of war and disorder in which the very evilness of Man was revealed. Mencius saw the need for improvement in human relationships. He was inspired to go on to elaborate Confucius' thoughts on Ethics into a solid school of thoughts with eternal truth. In the book Mencius ( 孟子 ), human relationships are classified into five areas, namely between:

(1) Parents and Children
(2) Lord and Subject
(3) Marriage partners
(4) Siblings
(5) Friends

All these relationships are equal irrespective of sex, age or status. Respect for the individual is the cornerstone of this concept of human relationships.

This study analyses and evaluates Mencius' thoughts on Ethics, giving them a new perspective in our modern society. The study also point out how we can develop these thoughts by modifying them so that they can take on modern values in our modern society. This will give these 'eternal truths' more meaning and significance in our highly technological and sophisticated society.