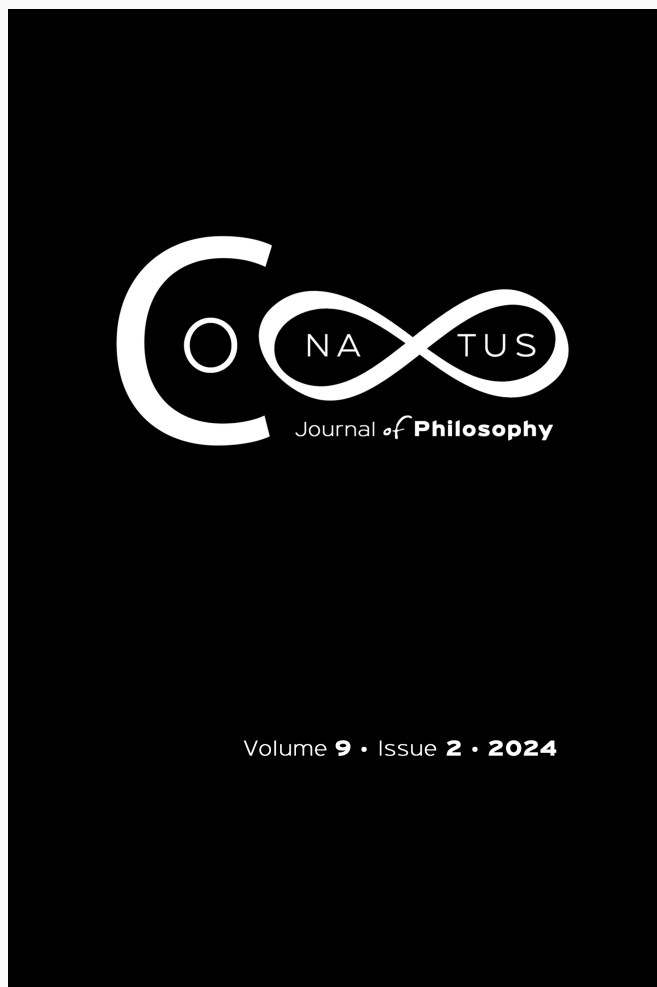


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### Four Important Characteristics of Women in Confucianism and Its Contribution to the Implementation of Gender Equality in Vietnam

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# Four Important Characteristics of Women in Confucianism and Its Contribution to the Implementation of Gender Equality in Vietnam

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## **Abstract**

*Four important virtues of a woman in the Confucian perspective include Works (being chaste, monogamous, and a virgin when married), Comportment (beauty), Speech, and Conduct (morality, Ethics). These virtues have profoundly influenced the conception of the role of women in traditional Vietnamese culture. Excessive focus on family roles and traditional values limits women's opportunities and rights in the public, political and economic spheres. However, in recent years, Vietnam has made significant progress in realizing gender equality. Investments in education, legal rights, and economic and social development have opened up many opportunities for women to participate in the public sector and contribute to the country's development. In this article, we will focus on clarifying issues such as: Presenting and analyzing four important women's virtues from the point of view of Confucianism in the pre-Qin period; Finding answers to the questions raised and pointing out the contribution of four important women's virtues from a Confucian point of view in realizing gender equality in Vietnam.*

**Keywords:** *four virtues; Confucianism in pre-Qin period; gender equality; Vietnam*

## I. Introduction

Confucianism, a long-standing philosophical system that originated in China, has profoundly influenced the social and cultural life of many Asian countries, including Vietnam. In Confucian philosophy, women are mentioned through four important virtues:

merit, tolerance, language, and conduct. These virtues are not only basic principles of Confucian ethics but also make great contributions to building a gender-equal social environment in Vietnam today. In this study, we are interested in the importance of the role of women in society from a Confucian point of view and clarify how the four virtues of a woman contribute to the construction of gender equality in Vietnam's diverse culture. The study and clarification of the four important virtues of women in Confucian philosophy and its contribution in realizing gender equality will help improve awareness and promote social measures to create favorable conditions for the all-round development of women and build a gender-equal, developed and prosperous society in Vietnam.

The research objective is to clarify the four important virtues of women in Confucian philosophy such as *Works*, *Comportment*, *Speech*, and *Conduct* in order to understand the meaning, principles and expression of each virtue in thinking and ethics of Confucianism. Analyze the position and role of women in Confucian philosophy, as well as how it affects the family and society. Evaluate how important women's virtues are encouraged and expressed in everyday life. Assess the contribution of the four virtues of women in building gender equality in Vietnam. Evaluate how these virtues support women to demonstrate confidence, courage, and participate in the political, economic, and social spheres. Based on the results of research and analysis, the work will be a scientific basis for social managers to propose specific measures, policies and programs to create favorable conditions for women to express and express themselves. promote their important virtues in society. The building of virtues will contribute to promoting and sustainably developing the progress of Vietnam.

To achieve the goal above, the article will focus on clarifying issues such as: Researching and analyzing the basic ideas of Confucianism related to the role and status of women in society and the family, finding how Confucianism evaluates important women's virtues including *Works*, *Comportment*, *Speech*, and *Conduct*. Analyzing the role of women in the family and in society based on Confucian philosophy. Identifying the characteristics and behaviors of women that are encouraged and respected in this philosophy. Learning the important virtues that are expressed and developed in the lives of women in Vietnamese society. Evaluating the importance of these virtues in building a gender-equal environment. Considering the positive effects of these virtues on women's participation in the political, economic and social spheres. This research result is also a condition to open up the next re-

search direction to propose specific measures and policies to promote awareness and honor the role of women according to Confucian philosophy and propose education and communication programs to raise awareness of gender equality and encourage women to develop their confidence and potential in society.

## II. Theoretical background

It can be said that the study of four important women's virtues in general and from the point of view of Confucianism has attracted the attention of many researchers. In the following, the authors will point out some theoretical bases that have been discussed by the studies.

Confucianism is an old philosophical system in which humanism<sup>1</sup> and compassion<sup>2</sup> are core values. Like any previous views when studying Confucianism, we also believe that humanism and compassion are some of the core values that from Kung-Tzu to Meng-Tzu all refer to in the system. Studies suggest that humanism and compassion in Confucianism are rooted in respect and dignity for people.<sup>3</sup> However, in a certain aspect, we believe that the doctrine of Confucianism was formed in a certain historical condition. It was a period in which Chinese society fell into a protracted civil war. To overcome that situation, philosophical schools have begun to solve the problem of human nature. Confucian schools of philosophy believe that human nature is inherent-

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<sup>1</sup> Kang Sun, "Flowers in a Mirror: Critique of 'Confucianization of Law,'" *Asian Philosophy* 32, no. 3 (2022): 289-311; Ady van den Stock, "Liang Shuming's China: The Country of Reason (1967-1970): Revolution, Religion, and Ethnicity in the Reinvention of the Confucian Tradition," *International Communication of Chinese Culture* 7 (2020): 603-620; Shuchen Xiang, "The Symbolic Construction of Reality: The Xici and Ernst Cassirer's Philosophy of Symbolic Forms," *Journal of Chinese Humanities* 4, no. 2 (2019): 197-224; William Puck Brecher, *Japan's Private Spheres: Autonomy in Japanese History, 1600-1930* (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 167-190. See also, Georgios Steiris, "Confucius' Ontological Ethics," *Conatus – Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 1 (2023): 303-321.

<sup>2</sup> Kar-Wai Tong, "Confucianism, Compassion (Ren) and Higher Education: A Perspective from the *Analects of Confucius*," in *The Pedagogy of Compassion at the Heart of Higher Education*, ed. Paul Gibbs, 113-126 (New York: Springer, 2017); Jin Yutang, "Tongdong Bai: Against Political Equality: The Confucian Case: Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 2019, 315 pp.," *Res Publica* 27, no. 4 (2021): 675-680; Russell Arben Fox, "Bai's Confucianism and the Problem of Urban Modernity-Tongdong Bai, Against Political Equality: The Confucian Case (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020. pp. 344.)," *The Review of Politics* 83, no. 2 (2021): 270-273.

<sup>3</sup> Huaiyu Wang, "Ren and Gantong: Openness of Heart and the Root of Confucianism," *Philosophy East and West* 62, no. 4 (2012): 463-504; Xiao Qu, "Confucianism and Human Rights: Exploring the Philosophical Base for Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities in China," *Disability & Society* 39, no. 6 (2022): 1-22; Yong Li, "Confucian Philosophy of Family: Interpretation or Justification?" *Asian Philosophy* 32, no. 2 (2022): 152-163.

ly good, so they uphold morality, whose core content is humanism and compassion. Confucianism emphasizes the importance of humanism and compassion and considers these basic values necessary to maintain a stable and peaceful society. Compassion encourages people to help each other, share and live in harmony.<sup>4</sup> Confucianism focuses not only on outward actions but also on the human soul and emotions. To build a united, orderly and happy society, building personal morality is extremely important. When humanism and compassion exist in each individual and society, it is the basis for creating a peaceful, stable and respectful society. Confucianism emphasizes on four essential virtues of a woman: *Works, Comportment, Speech, and Conduct*.

The role of women in Confucian philosophy. There have been many researchers who believe that not only does Confucianism not promote the role of women in society, but that it also stigmatizes them.<sup>5</sup> However, we think that not all Confucian thought reflects that. The theory of four essential qualities of a woman is an example of the above statement. We need to understand that, when studying any thought, it is necessary to put it in the historical context in which it was born. From 551 BC to 221 BC in China is a historical period associated with an agricultural and livestock economy. The gender division of labor appeared and the principle of that division was based on the theory of *yin* (female) *yang* (male). The inner, weak and soft works belong to the *yin* element, and the outer, strong, and hard things belong to the *yang* element. The gender division of labor was the first division of labor in the history of society in China. When people have not been able to explain natural phenomena and they live depending on it, this division is very appropriate. And in accordance with that assignment, Confucianism has built the necessary virtues for women and considers this a framework for them to follow. Women are positioned and valued

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<sup>4</sup> Robin Stanley Snell, Crystal Xinru Wu, and Hong Weng Lei, "Junzi Virtues: A Confucian Foundation for Harmony within Organizations," *Asian Journal of Business Ethics* 11, no. 1 (2022): 183-226; Zimo Wang, Danrui Zhang, and Zikai Zheng, "Cross-Cultural Differences in Empathy and Relevant Factors," *Journal of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences* 10 (2023): 197-202; Zhuran You and A. G. Rud, "Humility and Competition in Confucianism and Daoism: Lessons for Today's Education," *Journal of Moral Education* 53, no. 3 (2023): 1-15.

<sup>5</sup> Wenjian Xu, Yuxia Huang, Wanjie Tang, and Michelle R. Kaufman, "Heterosexual Marital Intention: The Influences of Confucianism and Stigma among Chinese Sexual Minority Women and Men," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 51, no. 7 (2022): 3529-3540; Hwa Yeong Wang, "Women Who Know Ritual," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 49, no. 2 (2022): 113-124; Yixin Ling, "Implicit Gender Inequality in Secondary School Textbooks Under a Confucianism Educational Idea Value," in *2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Education, Language and Art (ICELA 2022)*, 475-485 (Amsterdam: Atlantis Press, 2023); Sabrina Ardizzoni, *Hakka Women in Tulou Villages* (Amsterdam: Brill, 2022), 131-155.

as mothers, wives, children and key to maintaining family balance. The Important Qualities of Women in Confucian philosophy help women display good qualities and contribute to harmony in society.

Research on the importance of gender equality.<sup>6</sup> If we want to build progressive society,<sup>7</sup> we must start with the advancement of women.<sup>8</sup> Researchers assert this because they have recognized the important role and position of women. The advancement of women in access to education and personal development will help build a community of wisdom and support the overall development of society. Ensuring equity and advancement for women in the workforce will increase productivity and competition, and create a diverse and open working environment. The participation of women in management and leadership positions ensures diversity of perspectives and opinions in decision-making, helping to create innovative and adaptive solutions to modern challenges. Women often take on an important role in taking care of the family and society. Women's progress in recognizing and promoting the values of humanism, gender equality and compassion

<sup>6</sup> Regina Veckalne and Tatjana Tamboveceva, "The Importance of Gender Equality in Promoting Entrepreneurship and Innovation," *Marketing i Menedžment Inovacij* 14, no. 1 (2023): 158-168; Delfina Fatihayah and Marudut Bernadtua Simanjuntak, "Analysis of the Importance Gender Equality in the 'Kartini' Movie by Hanung Bramantyo," *LITERACY: International Scientific Journals of Social, Education, Humanities* 1, no. 2 (2022): 83-93; Beniamino Cislighi, Asha L. Abeyasekera, Amiya Bhatia, and Jessica K. Backman-Levy, "The Next Generation of Gender Equality Work: Reflective Action for Health and Justice," *Frontiers in Sociology* 7 (2023): 1-3; Faniya Avzalovna, "Generation Equality: A Global Plan to Accelerate the Pace of Gender Equality," *Mental Enlightenment Scientific-Methodological Journal* 1 (2022): 1-7; Chen Luo and Songyu Jiang, "The Knowledge Map of Gender Equality in Cross-Cultural Communication: A Bibliometric Approach," *Heliyon* 9, no. 6 (2023); Muhammad Shahid Riaz Moazzam, "Impact of Gender Equality on Social Development," *Journal of Policy Research* 9, no. 1 (2023): 257-263; Uswatun Khasanah and Hadi Sasana, "The Significance of Gender Equality in Economic Growth," *Research Horizon* 2, no. 2 (2022): 374-380.

<sup>7</sup> Veerabhadram Bhukya, "Corporate Social Responsibility Practices in the Top Ten Indian Companies and Its Impact on Community Development," *International Journal of Humanities, Management and Social Science (IJ-HuMaSS)* 6, no. 1 (2023): 33-48; Lily Zubaidah Rahim, "The Gordian Knot of Ethno-Religious Nationalism: Unsettled National Questions and Contested Visions," *Muslim Politics Review* 1, no. 1 (2022): 79-106; Vitalina Babenko, Liudmyla Yemchuk, Larysa Dzhulii, and Hanna Tsymbaliuk, "Information and Communication Technologies in the Product Quality Management System of Industrial Enterprise," *Journal of Information Technology Management* 14 (2022): 104-120.

<sup>8</sup> Katie Olsen and Danielle LaGree, "Taking Action in the First Five Years to Increase Career Equality: The Impact of Professional Relationships on Young Women's Advancement," *Gender in Management: An International Journal* 38, no. 7 (2023): 925-941; Ifeanyi Mbukanma and Kariena Strydom, "Challenges to and Enablers of Women's Advancement in Academic Careers at a Selected South African University," *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 21, no. 12 (2022): 44-64; Aki Lida, "How Do Women 'Shine?' Exploring Professional Women's Perceptions of 'Women's Advancement' in Japan," *East Asia* 41, no. 1 (2023): 1-24.

can pervade society as a whole and promote common development and progress. The advancement of women has a great positive impact on many aspects of society and creates favorable conditions for building a progressive, just and sustainable society. The promotion of gender equality and women's rights is not only a moral goal but also an opportunity and benefit for society as a whole.

From the recognition that the role and position of women is very large from family to society, the research on equality is carried out in many different fields. Labor and employment: research on gender equality in labor and employment<sup>9</sup> focuses on the disparity between men and women in wages, career opportunities, and labor rights. Research on gender equality in education<sup>10</sup> studies the disparities between men and women in accessing and completing education, the preferred fields of study by each gender, the educational deficit between men and women, and the status of training and development.

Research on gender equality in politics<sup>11</sup> focuses on women's participation and representation in government and decision positions, disparities between men and women in power and political influence. Gender equality researchers in politics are interested in the extent of women's participation in political activities, including voting participation, participation in political organizations, and participation in political activism. The researchers also fo-

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<sup>9</sup> D. Svitovenko, "Normativna osnova principu gendernoї rıvnosti u zakonodavstvu Ukraїni pro pracyu ta zajnyatist'," *Naukovij visnik Uzhgorods'kogo nacional'nogo universitetu. Seriya: Pravo* 2, no. 72 (2022): 286-290.

<sup>10</sup> Jana Lindner, Elena Makarova, Deborah Bernhard, and Dorothee Brovelli, "Toward Gender Equality in Education: Teachers' Beliefs about Gender and Math," *Education Sciences* 12, no. 6 (2022): 373; Elaine Unterhalter, "An Answer to Everything? Four Framings of Girls' Schooling and Gender Equality in Education," *Comparative Education* 59, no. 2 (2023): 145-168; Gunay Babayeva, "Gender Equality in the Education System of Azerbaijan Republic," *Collection of Scientific Papers ΛΟΓΟΣ*, 261-263 (Paris: 2022); Olga A. Rorintulus, Imelda Lolowang, Aprillya Alwien Suoth, Pritania Moku, Devilito Tatipang, Blessy Wilar, and Geral Pratasik, "Women's Struggle to Achieve their Gender Equality in Pride and Prejudice and Jurnal Ph. D Mama: A Comparative Study," *Klasikal: Journal of Education, Language Teaching and Science* 4, no. 2 (2022): 197-208; Sriharini Sriharini, "Gender Equality in Education," *The Journal of Inventions Pedagogical and Practices* 1, no. 1 (2022): 15-20.

<sup>11</sup> Petra Ahrens, Phillip M. Ayoub, and Sabine Lang, "Leading from Behind? Gender Equality in Germany during the Merkel Era," *German Politics* 31, no. 1 (2022): 1-19; Rebecca Tildesley, Emanuela Lombardo, and Tània Verge, "Power Struggles in the Implementation of Gender Equality Policies: The Politics of Resistance and Counter-Resistance in Universities," *Politics & Gender* 18, no. 4 (2022): 879-910; Ayşe Güneş and Çağlar Ezikoğlu, "Legal and Political Challenges of Gender Equality and Crimes against Women in Turkey: The Question of Istanbul Convention," *Women & Criminal Justice* 33, no. 1 (2023): 14-27; Gefjon Off, "Gender Equality Saliency, Backlash and Radical Right Voting in the Gender-Equal Context of Sweden," *West European Politics* 46, no. 3 (2023): 451-476.

cused on the proportion of women in parliament,<sup>12</sup> other governing bodies and political decisions, as well as the distribution of political power between men and women. Studies suggest that, in the current state of affairs, there are still gender disparities in politics, including disparities in participation, representation, and advancement opportunities between men and women. We do not refute this view of the studies, but perhaps a more comprehensive view of it will be possible if we put gender in the correlations when researching. In recent years, studies have also assessed the effectiveness of policies and laws related to gender equality, including measures to encourage women's political participation, limit discrimination and other policies aimed at increasing the role and representation of women in politics. Studies also confirm that stereotypes against women's leadership ability in some countries have been removed. However, studies have not shown that gender regulation is one of the factors that limit their capacity. In Vietnam, studies related to gender equality also show that the government has recognized its role and importance. The government considers the emancipation of women as one of the key tasks for a sustainable development of the country.

Research on the qualities of a good woman.<sup>13</sup> This study argues that women need to be educated in the necessary virtues through practice so that they can master themselves. Women with good qualities will be shown through family and work.<sup>14</sup> Research into the virtues of women helps identify the positive traits that are essential to building a stable and progressive society. The study of the essential qualities of women helps us to recognize the qualities and competencies necessary for women to thrive and thrive in the social environment. This can promote women's personal and professional development and facilitate their entry into different fields.

The development of criteria for the required virtues of women will be an important condition in realizing gender equality. This helps

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<sup>12</sup> Chang-ling Huang, "Substantive Representation of Women in Taiwan: Why Is 42% Not Enough?" in *Substantive Representation of Women in Asian Parliaments*, eds. Devin K. Joshi and Christian Echle, 70-89 (Abington and New York: Routledge, 2022); Ruwanthi Jayasekara, "Toward Advancing Substantive Representation of Women in Parliament: Case Study of Sri Lanka," in *Substantive Representation of Women in Asian Parliaments*, eds. Devin K. Joshi and Christian Echle, 226-245 (Abington and New York: Routledge, 2022); S. Nysanova, Venera Nauryzova, and Zhadyra Zhagypar, "The Main Priorities of State Policy in Relation to Women," *Bulletin of the Khalel Dosmukhamedov Atyrau University* 65, no. 2 (2022): 112-120.

<sup>13</sup> P. Suganya and Kavitha Prabhakaran, "Imposing of Womanhood on Indian Women in Githa Hariharan's Novel 'The Thousand Faces of Night,'" *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education* 14, no. 3 (2022): 1675-1678.

<sup>14</sup> Bobbi Thomason, "Ideal or Idiosyncratic? How Women Manage Work-Family Role Conflict with Focal and Peripheral Role Senders," *Organization Science* 33, no. 3 (2022): 901-925.



promote gender equity and encourages society to value and respect women's contributions. It is also a scientific basis for formulating policies and measures to promote gender equality, ensure equal rights and opportunities for women, and create favorable conditions for women to participate in key fields. political, economic and social. Recognition and appreciation of the positive qualities of women play an important role in creating a diverse and harmonious society. Four important female virtues from a Confucian perspective can assist women in demonstrating confidence, courage, and participation in social, economic, and political activities. Assess how these virtues contribute to building a gender-equal environment and promoting the inclusive development of Vietnamese society. Based on the theoretical bases presented above, we will conduct research on Confucian philosophy and the role of women in it, thereby recognizing and evaluating the role of four important virtues of the Confucianism. women and their contribution to achieving gender equality in Vietnam.

### III. Research method

The article aims to clarify four important virtues of women from the point of view of Confucianism in the pre-Qin period and its contribution to the realization of gender equality in Vietnam. This. In order to well implement the research objectives and tasks, the article must implement historical rigor, comprehensiveness and multi-dimensionality, considering it in the development process of Confucianism as well as Vietnamese history.

When studying the four important virtues of women from the point of view of Confucianism in the pre-Qin period and its contribution to the realization of gender equality in Vietnam, the authors approach the research problem from a different angle. *dialectical philosophy; philosophy in politics; Philosophical history* to analyze and interpret the contents. Also use the following specific methods:

*Historical-logical method:* This article uses this method to examine and evaluate four important virtues of a woman from the point of view of Confucianism in the pre-Qin period in the era in which it was born. On the basis of historical data to draw the regularity of its movement and development.

*Methods of collecting information and documents:* The author collects documents such as books, newspapers, magazines in Vietnam and other countries about four important virtues of women from a Confucian point of view. pre-Qin period and its contribution to the implementation of gender equality in Vietnam to prove its statements.

*Analytical and synthesis method:* This article uses this method to analyze the four important virtues of women from the point of view of Confucianism in the pre-Qin period and its contribution to the realization of gender equality in Vietnam. On that basis, generalize and synthesize the evaluations.

#### IV. Research questions

To study the topic of four important women's virtues from a Confucian point of view and its contribution to the realization of gender equality in Vietnam, the article poses three questions as follows: a. What are the four important virtues of women in Confucian philosophy and how are they evaluated in traditional Vietnamese culture? b. How do the four essential virtues of a woman contribute to building a gender-equal social environment in Vietnam? c. How to combine Confucian philosophy with contemporary principles to ensure sustainable development and gender equality in Vietnamese society?

#### V. Research results

The four virtues of a woman from a Confucian point of view are *Works, Comportment, Speech, and Conduct*, also known as the four virtues. These four virtues have been adjusted over time, but here we only focus on the pre-Qin period (before 2021 BC). As we have mentioned above, the first division of labor in China was done by gender and took the theory of yin and yang as the criterion for identification. In order to fulfill these criteria well, it is necessary to propose four important virtues that are recorded in the Classic of Rites.<sup>15</sup> The four virtues of a woman were born during the Zhou dynasty and were later recorded by Confucius in the Classic of Rites. A woman should have four virtues: merit, tolerance, speech, and conduct.

*Work* is the work of the *yin*, these jobs require softness, ingenuity, and lightness. According to this assignment, things like: housework, work that requires meticulousness, this job has the purpose of providing nutrition and regenerating labor for family members. To prepare for housework, it is necessary to carry out tasks such as selecting food, preparing, cooking and arranging meals. The work of cleaning and cleaning the areas in the home space and the items requires the

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<sup>15</sup> Guojie Luo, *Traditional Ethics and Contemporary Society of China* (Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore, 2023), 267-294; Zhiping Liang, *A Study of Legal Tradition of China from a Culture Perspective: Searching for Harmony in the Natural Order* (Singapore: Springer Nature, 2023).

ingenuity and assurance of women in organizing family life. First of all, women know how to stay at home, skillfully arrange household chores and raise children. Not stopping there, women's work is also shown in sewing and embroidery skills.

*Comportment* is the face and appearance of a woman. Dung is a harmonious combination between the inner beauty of a woman's soul, affection and tolerance. Goodwill, compassion, patience, and a supportive spirit are the elements that make up a woman's inner beauty. Furthermore, Dung is also the beauty expressed in the outward appearance, with a lovely and cute face and body. It is also the manners shown in behavior, laughter and in daily activities. A woman's dress is neat, discreet, dignified, her hair is neat. A woman who meets the standards of using dill is a woman with a serene appearance, gentle, shy, reserved, dignified appearance. Clearly content for women is the beauty of the harmony between content and form, in which content determines form.

*Speech* is communication. According to Confucianism, women's words play an important role in building a peaceful, harmonious and humanism family and social environment. In Confucian philosophy, *speech* is valued and appreciated, because it can have a strong impact on the spirit and emotions of the people around, and at the same time create great influences on the social environment. festival. Women's words have an impact on communication and interaction in the family. It can help create a supportive and harmonious communication environment in the family, helping members feel loved and cared for. Women often have the role of role models and inspiration for the next generation in the family. By using positive and righteous speech, they are able to convey the values of humanism, compassion, and compassion to their children and those around them. Women's words can play an important role in mediating conflicts in the family and society. It can help promote understanding and understanding between the parties and act as a mediator to resolve difficult issues.

Confucianism is not only limited to the positive aspects of speech but also believes that words can also bring about bad consequences if not used correctly and responsibly. Therefore, in Confucian philosophy, humanism and compassion are important virtues that are encouraged to use words in a thoughtful and positive way, providing support and creating a harmonious environment for the family and society.

*Conduct* is morality. According to the Confucian point of view, women need to have certain virtues and virtues to show their role such as compassion, tolerance towards those around them, showing sharing

and caring for them. Empathy and concern for the difficulties and needs of family members. Truthfulness and honesty in behavior and communication, not hiding or deceiving others. Patience helps women face and overcome difficulties and challenges in daily life. Responsibility is a virtue that helps women realize and properly perform their roles and duties in the family. Consistency and determination will help them overcome difficulties and complete the household chores. *Conduct* shows the basic moral qualities of women, first of all, loyalty to her husband, make sacrifices for her children, and compassion for everyone around her. A virtuous woman from the Confucian point of view is someone who is always patient, diligently takes on her husband's household responsibilities, and is faithful to her husband.

Among the four important virtues of a woman from a Confucian point of view, *Conduct* is the most important. *Conduct* is a basic requirement, a must for women. From an early age, girls are seriously trained to practice these four virtues. A virtuous woman must be filial to her parents and kind to her brothers. Confucianism believes that "filial piety" to parents must be based on "love" and "respect." Caring for your parents should come with respect; without respect, it cannot be considered filial. The four essential virtues of a woman from a Confucian point of view have a close relationship with each other, serving as a premise for each other to create an ideal female role model.

The influence of the four essential virtues of a woman in Confucian philosophy on Vietnamese women. Confucianism was introduced into Vietnam quite early, according to Dai Viet historical records, the Western Han Dynasty around 110 BC to 39 AD. The content of Confucianism introduced and propagated into Vietnam during this period was the thought of Thien Manh, the thought of respecting the army for great unification, promoting the authority of the king and the theory of four virtues. The process of introduction and development of Confucianism in Vietnam is the process of being modified to suit the national culture and the consciousness of the authorities. In order to maintain its dominant position, the Vietnamese feudal state used Confucianism as the dominant ideology, as a tool to educate the people, and to build people to serve the Vietnamese feudal society. For women, the four main virtues are the standards for them to follow. However, in Vietnam, this concept is creatively absorbed and applied, not stereotyped as in China.

In Vietnam, morality is always a value that is honored by everyone. Moral quality is a value that belongs to human nature and is prioritized over other values. It is placed in the highest position. Those

cultural traditions have regulated the reception and at the same time changed the doctrines imported into Vietnam from outside. Most of the doctrines, ideologies and religions in the process of existence and development in Vietnam had to change some of their contents. This modification aims to align with Vietnamese cultural traditions, where values like gratitude, respect for origins, and honoring meaningful connections are central. However, Vietnamese women throughout history have been strongly influenced by the theory of four virtues. This impact is one of the causes leading to gender inequality in feudal society.

In-depth study of the four essential qualities of women in Confucianism has shown us that these virtues are very necessary and meet the social needs at the time of their birth. However, the process of development and the purpose of the government's manipulation made it transform. This change is not due to the movement of doctrine but to the will of the authorities. Four important virtues of a woman from a Confucian point of view have strongly influenced Vietnamese women both in the past and in the present.

Gender equality is based on four important Confucian virtues in Vietnam. Global Gender Gap Report 2023, Viet Nam, with a score of 71.1% and a global rank of 72<sup>nd</sup>, continues its gradual progress towards gender parity. With scores of 0.749 for Economic Participation and Opportunity, 0.985 for Educational Attainment, 0.946 for Health and Survival, and 0.166 for Political Empowerment. Vietnam's Global Gender Gap Index increased from 0.705 score in 2022 to 0.711 score in 2023, up 11 places, ranking 72<sup>nd</sup> in the world.<sup>16</sup> To reach this achievement, the government has proactively guided ministries, sectors, and localities to implement gender equality strategies and programs. The system of legal documents and policies is completed in the direction of ensuring the principle of gender equality. The National Assembly promotes the review and integration of gender equality considerations in proposals for the annual Law and Ordinance Development Program, as well as in law and ordinance projects submitted for approval, ensuring feasibility, clear responsibilities, and proper resource allocation. Many legal documents related to gender equality have been developed, revised, and contributed to ensuring and promoting gender equality. The Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control (amended) has made an important contribution to perfecting the legal system, creating a legal corridor for domestic violence prevention and control and supporting victims, ensure human rights and promote gender equality. The mainstreaming of gender equality issues in the formulation and

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<sup>16</sup> World Economic Forum, *Global Gender Gap Report 2023* (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2023).

implementation of policies, laws, programs, plans, schemes, etc. has been seriously implemented. Communication on gender equality has been enhanced with active participation from central to local levels, contributing to raising awareness and actions of authorities at all levels, among cadres, civil servants and people. on gender equality.

In 2022, the female employment rate is expected to reach 49.04%, reflecting a 5.64% increase compared to 2021. However, employment in industrial zones is projected to decrease by 0.18%, while the percentage of female business owners in the industry is on the rise. The fact that women have stable jobs has led to a shortening of the average number of hours a day of unpaid housework and care for women compared to men (women work 2.35 hours/day, men work 1.32 hours/day). Domestic violence in 2022 has 3,921 victims of domestic violence, of which 12.27% are men, 87.73% are women, gender violence is detected and support services are sought. increasing day by day. At Vietnamese government agencies in 2022, there are key female leaders, accounting for 15/30 agencies, an increase of 3.4% compared to 2021. The government has female key leaders at 25%, and there are 3 ministers, 12 deputy ministers and equivalent.

To build a gender-equal society, the Vietnamese government has included the content of gender and gender equality in the curriculum in the national education system. To have a beautiful mind, one must start with learning. Currently, in Vietnam, there are regulations, children have the right to study. Children who attend primary school in public educational institutions do not have to pay school fees. The percentage of female students who are newly recruited at colleges and universities next year is higher than the previous year, specifically in 2021, women will account for 34.5%, up 2.9% compared to 2020. Trend of female participation in universities Courses to improve qualifications are increasing, in 2019 the proportion of women with a master's degree among master's degrees holders accounted for 44.2%, and doctoral degrees among doctoral degree holders accounted for 28%. It is estimated that this proportion will change in 2023 with the proportion of women holding a master's degree among those with a master's degree at 50%, with a doctoral degree among those with a doctorate degree at 30% (data provided by the 2023 government report). Health care for maintaining a beautiful body is also gaining attention; according to a report from the Ministry of Health, the percentage of women seeking health and beauty services is steadily increasing.

Language is a means of communication to perform functions such as: information function; the function of creating relationships; enter-

tainment function; self-expression function. In order to have a good medium and convey these functions, besides studying in class, women also look to centers to develop language skills to increase verbal persuasion. The sending of women to attend missions, study, survey, exchange of experiences and seminars abroad in recent years has also been focused. Taking classes to train women's soft language skills not only helps them to convince those around them, but also opens up opportunities in finding the right job for them. With the rate of 41.85% female cadres working in foreign affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam, it has confirmed the very important role of women in all activities.

Women have a great role in organizing the family, they are also the ones who have a great influence on their children. In daily communication activities, the woman plays the role of a counselor, who is responsible for the psychological atmosphere of the family. Communication visits, educational communication takes place every day by the experience of grandmothers, mothers, and wives are definitely indispensable. In particular, the more these communication activities take place in traditional Vietnamese families, the more meaningful they are. Vietnamese women have clearly demonstrated their gender roles in children's education, formation and personality development. Mothers have a great influence on the growth of their children. Building virtue for women has become one of the core tasks for the Vietnamese government.

It is clear that the four important virtues of women from a Confucian point of view have made certain contributions to the realization of gender equality in Vietnam. These four virtues have been applied flexibly, in accordance with the historical, cultural and human conditions of Vietnam. In recent years, Vietnam has made significant progress in realizing gender equality. This progress is not only thanks to the efforts of the government but also the contribution of women through their activities.

## VI. Discussion

Assessing the Four Important Virtues of a Woman from a Confucian point of view including *Works, Comportment, Speech, and Conduct* requires a specific historical perspective. We believe that the birth of the theory of four virtues is associated with the division of labor by gender. This division of labor was the first to appear in Chinese history. From the point of view of Confucianism of the pre-Qin period, here are four important virtues that a woman should cultivate and adhere to in order

to be a good person. These qualities are especially important for the family, community and society as a woman is seen as the foundation of the family, with the important responsibility of taking care of her husband, children and family.

Contribution of the Four Important Virtues to the realization of gender equality in Vietnam. In the past, views from Confucianism may have created limitations and injustices for women in Vietnamese society. This injustice did not have many causes, including the government in feudal dynasties. During the feudal period in Vietnam, women were often viewed as subservient to men, and their role was often limited in participating in social, economic and political decisions. This injustice and limitation have contributed to limiting the potential and contribution of women in society.

Today, investment in education has helped raise the level of education and knowledge of women. More and more women are entering higher education and professional careers, enabling them to participate in the public, economic and political spheres. Policies and laws have been established to protect women's rights and ensure gender equality. Legal protection has helped reduce restrictions and discrimination against women in work, family and society. Economic and industrial development has also opened up many employment opportunities for women, helping them to enter the workforce and contribute to the development of the country. The awareness of gender equality has been increasingly raised in society, and many people have realized the importance of women's role in promoting the comprehensive development of the country.

Four Important Women's Virtues from a Confucian point of view have had a profound influence on social thought about the role of women in the past. However, to realize gender equality in Vietnam, there needs to be a change and progress in social awareness, while ensuring the rights and opportunities for women in all areas of life.

## VII. Conclusion

The four important virtues of a woman from the Confucian point of view of the pre-Qin period represent the characteristics of traditional Chinese culture and are one of the great cultural heritages of mankind. These four virtues have had a profound influence on the conception of the role and status of women in the traditional culture of Vietnam. *Works, Comportment, Speech, and Conduct* are valuable virtues, contributing to the formation of women's character and capacity in taking care of their families, building a harmonious family environment and contributing to the development of so-



ciety. festival. However, as mentioned in the presentation, this view created some limitations and injustices for women in the feudal period. The focus on the peculiarities of family roles and traditional values has limited the power and freedom of women in society, limited their opportunities and rights to participate in various fields. public, political and economic sectors.

In recent years, Vietnam has made significant progress in realizing gender equality. Investments in education, legal rights, economic and social development have opened up many opportunities for women to participate in the public sector and contribute to the development of the country. The awareness of gender equality is also increasing in society, helping to change old and limited notions about the role of women. To achieve gender equality in Vietnam, it is essential to foster a fair social environment that embraces and respects diverse values while ensuring rights and opportunities for women. Efforts to improve education, sustainable economic development and ensure the legal rights of women are important for creating an equitable and thriving society. Ensuring equal opportunities and quality education for women, along with promoting awareness of gender equality and the value of diversity, will help build an inclusive society where women can freely express their potential and make maximum contribution to the development of the country.

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