

Research article / Научная статья

The Problem of the Chinese Concept *Tianxia* and Education

Sergei A. Nizhnikov , Shuchun Zhang RUDN University, Moscow, Russian Federation
✉ nizhnikov_sa@pfur.ru

Abstract. In the context of contemporary ideological explorations concerning the transitional nature of the post-globalization era and the shift from a unipolar to a multipolar world order, a number of Chinese thinkers are “re-developing” the concept of *Tianxia* (“All Under Heaven”), drawing on the historical and cultural roots of the nation. This concept, rooted in ancient Chinese philosophies such as Confucianism, is intended not only to guide the strategic development of modern China, but also to serve as a framework for international communication. Prominent among these thinkers are Zhao Tingyang, Xu Jilin, Zhang Weiwei, as well as the anthropologist Fei Xiaotong. The central challenges they address include the tension between the universal and the particular, especially the relationship between China and other global powers (i.e., the national versus the universal), as well as the dynamics between the state, society, and the individual within the PRC. This study identifies the unresolved issues that arise within the framework of *Tianxia* as articulated by these authors. It also draws a parallel with the Russian intellectual tradition, where similar tensions between the national and the universal were debated by the Westernizers and Slavophiles, and reflected in the works of F.M. Dostoevsky, V.S. Solovyov, L. Tolstoy, and L. Trotsky. The paper observes how global processes influence the development of education, particularly in China, where efforts are being made to resist the homogenizing effects of globalization. It is argued that a depoliticized interpretation of *Tianxia* may offer productive insights for the development of a national education system in the PRC. Drawing on the principles of *Tianxia*, several Chinese scholars propose that global higher education should not be treated as a domain of competition, but rather as a space for mutually beneficial cooperation.

Keywords: national and universal; modern education; Chinese political philosophy; Axial Age; *Tianxia*

For citation: Nizhnikov, S.A., & Zhang, Sh. (2025). The Problem of the Chinese Concept *Tianxia* and Education. *BRICS+: Current Agenda*, 1(1), 129–138. <http://doi.org/10.22363/2025-1-1-129-138> EDN: DTULMQ

Funding. This research received no external funding.

Informed consent statement:

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study. Written informed consent has been obtained from the patients to publish this paper.

Author contributions. All authors made an equivalent contribution to the preparation of the publication. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Conflicts of interest. The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Article history: submitted July 5, 2025; revised July 21, 2025; accepted August 16, 2025.

Bio notes:

Sergei A. Nizhnikov, Grand PhD in Philosophy, Professor at the Department of History of Philosophy, RUDN University, 10 Miklukho-Maklaya St, bldg 2, Moscow, 117198, Russian Federation.
ORCID: 0000-0002-3456-2445
E-mail: nizhnikov-sa@rudn.ru

Shuchun Zhang, Postgraduate Student, Department of History of Philosophy, RUDN University, 10 Miklukho-Maklaya St, bldg 2, Moscow, 117198, Russian Federation.
ORCID: 0000-0002-5145-2774
E-mail: shuchun.zhang@mail.ru

Introduction

The Chinese concept of *Tianxia* (“All Under Heaven” as a sphere of social life) has become the subject of active discussion in recent decades, primarily as a model for an alternative world order [1]. Rooted in ancient Chinese thought, the modern interpretation of *Tianxia* envisions the creation of a new global order based on cooperation and benevolence (see [2–4], etc.). While critiquing Western approaches and contemporary international practices, proponents of *Tianxia* assert that only friendly relations between countries can bring about peace and mutual benefit. However, attempts to justify this abstract universality through the categories of national discourse, particularly in the works of one of the leading advocates of *Tianxia*-ism, Xu Jilin (b. 1957), give rise to methodological ambiguities. In our view, this structural paradox has provoked critical responses that fail to address the essential issues, contributing not only to a distorted perception of the concept itself, but also — somewhat paradoxically — to its growing presence in global political-philosophical discourse.

Within the framework of *Tianxia*, the problem of the relationship between the universal and the particular, between society and the individual, comes to the fore. In developing a theory of international politics, *Tianxia* theorists also reflect on the individual, viewing *Tianxia* as an ideal context for human existence [5]. In particular, Xu sees the individual as the core and origin of traditional Chinese values, which he characterizes as a continuum of “family–state–*Tianxia*.” He describes this as a “social continuum centered on the ‘self’ (自我).” However, as Xu points out, the “self” in this context does not possess the

© Nizhnikov S.A., Zhang Sh., 2025



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/legalcode>

authenticity or autonomy associated with modern understandings: each person is embedded in a hierarchical network of relationships — from the family and the state to Tianxia. Only within this system does the individual acquire a kind of homogeneity. Thus, the “self”, as conceived by Xu, is not understood as a discrete, autonomous unit, but as a relational entity shaped by its connection to Tianxia. In this context, the family functions as the foundational unit of society, culturally defined and distinct from the state, which is understood as a political entity.

In contrast to Xu, the prominent Chinese anthropologist Fei Xiaotong (1910–2005) identifies the foundation of Chinese social culture as “subjectivism” (自我主义), which is self-oriented but differs from Western individualism in its “relativity and flexibility” [6, p. 54]. Flexibility here refers to a specific feature of Chinese social culture: all values emanate from the “self”, and the boundary between the individual and society is considered relative. According to Fei, the outer limit of such a society is the “ambiguous *Tianxia*”. He emphasizes that in this context, *Tianxia* should be interpreted through the lens of specific ethical relationships — those between father and son, friends, and so on. Moreover, moral and legal norms may be flexibly applied depending on the distance between the acting subject and the perceiving “self”.

Another key issue within the *Tianxia* framework is the tension between the national and the universal, a theme also characteristic of Russian culture — most notably in the debates between Westernizers and Slavophiles, and one that has become even more pressing in the era of globalization and post-globalization. As early as the second half of the 19th century, Russian intellectuals such as Vladimir Solovyov and Nikolay Danilevsky engaged in polemics on this very issue. Fyodor Dostoevsky, who fundamentally disagreed with Solovyov, maintained that universal values can only emerge from the flourishing of national cultures. Konstantin Leontiev also emphasized that diversity enriches truth, and that humanity’s wealth lies in the vivid diversity of national traditions. These thinkers opposed the erasure of identity inherent in Western globalist ideologies [7; 8].

As Fei’s account suggests, the root of Chinese social and ethical culture lies in the “soil” (in the sense of the agrarian traditions, similar to the Russian *pochvennichestvo* of the late 19th century), which is fundamentally incompatible with the notion of universal values as such. This sharply diverges from the perspective of *Tianxia* advocates, who underscore not only the universality of the concept itself but also that of generalized “Chinese” values. This raises important questions about how *Tianxia* theorists construct and argue for this universality, and how the individual is positioned within this system, particularly when their orientation toward *Tianxia* is grounded in self-referentiality.

Universalism is inextricably linked with religious traditions, while national narratives are associated with particularism. These two methodological paradigms are characterized by distinct modes of legitimation. In this article, we aim to examine the internal contradictions of the *Tianxia* system through an analysis of the argumentative strategies employed by its proponents. We suggest that the conflation of universalist and nationalist discursive tools contributes to the politicization of the *Tianxia* concept, hindering its discussion in philosophical and other non-political contexts. Nevertheless, we contend that *Tianxia* as an intellectual system can and should be discussed in apolitical circles, as evidenced by the emerging discourse on its potential application in the sphere of higher education.

Materials and Methods

In Xu Jilin's conception, the relationship between the individual and *Tianxia* requires the presence of the state as an intermediary link. According to Xu, the legitimacy of the patriarchal order and the legality of the state system cannot be self-evident; their sources must be found in the transcendent *Tianxia* and the natural order. For Xu, *Tianxia* represents a "supreme value" encompassing truth, beauty, and goodness – values that can only be realized on Earth through a material "body". He argues that this body is constituted by the patriarchal family and the dynastic state, which together embody both ethical and political structures.

Thus, as Xu emphasizes, the values of *Tianxia* are reflected in ethical and legal orders as well as in everyday life. In this context, the strengthening of the state's role, according to the philosopher, was the primary cause of the rupture in the traditional continuum and the transformation of the individual's relationship to both family and *Tianxia*. Xu points out that the sources of political legitimacy in the modern state have ceased to be transcendent, and that the legal system, having become detached from the traditional order of rituals and patriarchal relations, has acquired an autonomous character.

Xu concludes that the modern Chinese notion of the "self" is marked by a fundamental duality. On the one hand, the individual cannot transcend the ethical order of the family-state or "communicate directly with *Tianxia*", making the self-dependent on these traditional structures. On the other hand, all individuals are conceived as equal and independent "subjects of the world" (天民), capable of connecting directly to the transcendent "natural order" (天理) through their inner conscience, bypassing the established hierarchies of family and state. According to Xu, this duality has led to the "self-destruction and disintegration" of the continuum linking family, state, and world, and has laid the groundwork for the emergence of a "genuine self" (本真性自我) in contemporary Chinese culture.

In Xu's view, the rupture between the family, the state, and *Tianxia* has placed the individual, now understood in its modern sense, within a different system of identity, one in which they are linked directly to the state. The individual, once embedded in relational roles (father–son, siblings, friends, etc.), now possesses a uniform and equal identity: that of the citizen. Xu argues that the loss of the family's status as a "social intermediary" has transformed the "warm and personal" ethical relationship between individual and state into an impersonal one, governed by law and politics.

It becomes evident that Xu, in his reinterpretation of *Tianxia*, envisions the individual as autonomous from the family, the state, and *Tianxia* itself. On this basis, he sees one of the negative consequences of modernization as the emergence of an "atomized individual", detached from any relational structure and stripped of existential meaning. This, according to Xu, necessitates the reconstruction of a new order encompassing family, state, and *Tianxia*.

Drawing on the terminology of Jürgen Habermas, Xu refers to the family as the "lifeworld" and the state as the "system". He sees the crisis of the modern world in the "colonization of the lifeworld by the system" (i. e., the application of market and bureaucratic logic to lived experience), as well as in the "intrusion" of ethical principles from the lifeworld into the political domain. Therefore, the new order of family, state, and *Tianxia* must, in his view, overcome precisely these shortcomings.

It is important to note that Xu's interpretation of the state remains relatively abstract: it should not possess ultimate authority (which, for him, constitutes a core problem of modernity), yet at the same time it is a "community of fate" with intrinsic value shared by all citizens — a "part of each person's destiny." As he describes it, the modern state functions simultaneously as a political and national-cultural community. Its historical, religious, linguistic, and cultural traditions are inherited by the people who live within it and form a collective self-identity that marks each nation as a "unique 'us'" [4, p. 58].

According to Xu himself, the modern state functions as a community with a cultural dimension — one whose development should be the responsibility of each of its members. He further clarifies that both the "self" and the continuum of family-state-*Tianxia* are "variable and actively interacting elements that shape and embed one another." Therefore, the individual, in the process of "self-realization", also participates in the construction of a new and improved continuum-order, and is "obliged to contribute to the creation of their own ideal version of the nation-state" [4, p. 58].

While Xu describes an ideal world governed by seemingly logical principles ("to improve the world, one must begin with oneself"), he offers neither precise definitions of the terms he employs nor concrete guidance — such as what is meant by "self-realization" and what it actually requires. As a result, this thesis, too, ultimately takes the form of a representation — similar to the term used by Zhao Tingyang in defense of his theory in response to critiques regarding its lack of realism.

The philosophical analysis of Tianxia-ism as a whole is further complicated by the abstract and highly fluid nature of the vocabulary employed by its proponents. Concepts such as "family", "state", and "self-realization" can carry significantly different meanings and connotations depending on the context in which they appear.

Let us now revise the specific problems and key concepts within Xu Jilin's *Tianxia* theory.

1. The Role of the State.

Xu's attitude toward the modern state appears ambiguous and shifts over the course of his reflections, seemingly depending on the argument he wishes to advance. In this regard, we can distinguish three stages in his thinking.

Stage 1: The Cause of the Collapse of Traditional Tianxia.

Analyzing the crisis of modernity, Xu argues that the strengthening of the state, as a product of Western liberalism, is the primary reason for the collapse of traditional *Tianxia* and the social continuum that once existed in ancient China. In this context, he characterizes the nation-state as a rationalized structure that "overrides universal values". One of the major negative consequences of this phenomenon, according to Xu, is "the supremacy of state power" [6, p. 89].

Stage 2: A Dual-Aspect Community.

As previously discussed, Xu proposes a distinction between society and the state, viewing their merger as a form of "colonization". He emphasizes the dual nature of the nation-state: while the state represents the political and legal system, the nation encompasses culturally specific and ethical traditions. From this, it follows that for Xu, the modern nation-state is simultaneously a political and a cultural entity, an assertion that appears to contradict his earlier critiques in a different context.

Stage 3: The “Supra-Moral Leviathan”.

Addressing the relationship between the state and *Tianxia* in the present day, Xu refers to the modern state as a “supra-moral Leviathan” and a “necessary evil”, whose sole purpose is the exercise of power. He contends that the legitimacy of the state no longer derives from a “transcendent religious or moral metaphysics”, but rather from the so-called unity of the state and the nation [4, p. 134]. Moreover, he views the powerful state as a dangerous entity. As he writes: “The more powerful the state becomes, the more self-satisfied its rationality, and the greater the danger that it will plunge over the cliff” [4, pp. 137–138]. Yet it remains unclear what, in Xu’s view, is inherently harmful about state power and how such dangers can be avoided, especially when every individual is expected to contribute to their own “ideal version” of the state.

2. The Place of the Individual (“Self”).

Xu conceptualizes the family-state-*Tianxia* continuum primarily as a social continuum, with the “self” at its center. However, the precise position of the “self” within this framework remains unclear.

On the one hand, *Tianxia*, for Xu, has a universal character, and only within this framework can the individual realize their “authentic self”. For Xu, the atomized individual is a “lost being”, and he envisions the way out of this condition through a newly imagined “continuum”, within which the “self” is redefined, and which is itself simultaneously reconstructed. Xu remarks: “Who am I? Who are we? Where is the nation? Where is the world? In the end, these are all one and the same question”.

In the context of contemporary China, Xu calls for the strengthening of cosmopolitanism, so that the individual may discover their authentic “self” within a “universal civilization” — that is, within *Tianxia*. He argues that the modern self is composed of three layers: (1) universal human nature; (2) shaped by particular political and cultural contexts; and (3) the concrete individual capable of making choices within the first two layers. Among these, the first layer, in Xu’s view, reflects the relationship between the individual and *Tianxia*, with *Tianxia* representing “universal humanity” and the “universal civilization” built upon it [4, p. 198].

Notably, Xu attributes to the individual self a political quality: legitimacy. He asserts that the legitimacy of self-realization “cannot be proven in and of itself or through any specific cultural-political community”, but is possible only “within the framework of universal human nature and universal values” [6, p. 67]. This, according to Xu, is the “modern way through which the ‘self’ and *Tianxia* may communicate directly, without mediation by the family or the state” [4, p. 67].

Thus, according to Xu’s concept, the modern “self” finds no place within the traditional continuum of family–state–*Tianxia*, functioning only as a component of a hierarchical structure. In modernity, the “self” exists as an “atomized individual” devoid of relational grounding or existential meaning. It follows that the self can achieve authentic self-realization only within the newly imagined continuum proposed by Xu, though he never specifies what this notion precisely entails.

Results and Discussion

The concept of *Tianxia* may be characterized as a form of universalism in which certain notions acquire both normative and universal significance. This feature is reflected in the modes and strategies of argumentation employed by *Tianxia*

theorists to legitimize their framework. A particular note is the recurrent use of “China”, albeit in a generalized and sometimes symbolic sense, as an attribute of these universal values. In Xu Jilin’s discourse on *Tianxia*, we observe structural similarities with theological forms of universalism. At the same time, he regularly invokes “Chinese values”, replacing the general concept of the state with the specific historical and cultural referent of China itself.

Addressing this issue, the present article examines two ideal-typical models of argumentation through a comparative lens: a religious model (illustrated through the thought of Leo Tolstoy) and an ideological one (exemplified by Leon Trotsky). By comparing the ideas of these two major figures of Russian philosophy with the argumentative strategies of *Tianxia* theorists, we aim to demonstrate how universalism and group identity shape the structure and trajectory of argumentation, and how these two approaches intersect in the writings of *Tianxia* proponents.

Tolstoy’s philosophy is known for its anti-clericalism as well as its deeply religious orientation. His writings frequently address topics of existential and moral urgency, such as God, ethics, and the nature of goodness. The same logic underpins his aesthetic theory. In his essay *What Is Art?*, Tolstoy repeatedly elaborates and refines previously stated theses, using such reiteration as a method of affirming their truth. Ultimately, the proof of his key claims lies in the declared universality of certain values and the ideal of the common good.

Critiquing institutional Christianity, Tolstoy argues that the rejection of “true Christianity” by the upper classes led to a rupture between “aristocratic” and popular art. Christianity itself and its derivatives (Christian art, the Christian ideal, Christian consciousness, etc.) are used by Tolstoy as synonyms for goodness and morality, yet he does not consider it necessary to provide a formal justification for this equivalence. On the basis of this association, he concludes that “Christian art is only that which unites all people without exception — either by evoking in them a consciousness of their equal position before God and one another, or by arousing in them the same feeling, even the simplest one, as long as it is not contrary to Christianity and is common to all people without exception” [9].

Leon Trotsky, by contrast, rarely appeals to universal values or the common good — indeed, he frequently critiques such notions outright [10]. Trotsky’s model of argumentation, which may be described as ideological, expresses disagreement with opponents in a distinct manner: whereas Tolstoy critiques his irreligious contemporaries from a moral high ground, Trotsky positions himself on an equal but oppositional footing vis-à-vis representatives of other social classes. This rhetorical strategy, employing sharp, binary distinctions, finds expression in his essay *Their Morals and Ours*, where he writes: “Jakob Walcher, under a knowingly false pretext, refused to provide testimony to the Dewey Commission that would have been unfavorable to Stalin. The rotten morality of these people is merely the product of their rotten politics” [11].

Thus, in both models of argumentation, the distinction between the “in-group” and the “out-group” plays a central, if not the defining, role as a rhetorical device for reinforcing one’s own position. These “non-logical” strategies are characteristic not only of theological or ideological schools of thought. When it comes to complex and difficult-to-prove subjects such as the existence of God, even representatives of neopositivist rationalism, like Bertrand Russell, occasionally depart from their proclaimed analytic rigor and resort to rhetorical techniques aimed at undermining

the credibility of their opponents' theses. Depending on the context, such techniques often result in logical fallacies.

For example, in the well-known philosophical debate with Catholic priest Frederick Copleston (1948) on the existence of God, Russell repeatedly employs argumentative strategies that, from the perspective of informal logic, are typically classified as fallacious. Consider the following statement:

"Well, of course, the question 'Is there a cause of the world?' is a meaningful question... Suppose, for example, that you take as your subject 'a round square that exists'. Then the statement 'a round square exists' would be something like an analytic proposition. But there is no such thing as a round square" [12, pp. 288–289].

Here, Russell appears to attempt to demonstrate the non-existence of God by equating Him with the logically contradictory notion of a "round square". At least two fallacies are present in this argument: *petitio principii* (begging the question) and false analogy. If the argument is directed not at the thesis itself but rather at the opponent, one might also detect elements of *ad hominem*, although this would depend on the intent of the speaker.

In summary, the primary characteristic of both the theological and ideological models of argumentation lies in the invocation of unverifiable universality as a means of establishing one's own superiority. As shown in previously conducted analysis, the concept of *Tianxia* exhibits features of both models.

In the context of the intense political debate surrounding the concept of *Tianxia*, its philosophical significance has also found expression in other domains. One of the earliest such applications can be seen in scholarly discussions of higher education. Research suggests that the *Tianxia* framework offers an alternative to methodological nationalism, which continues to dominate the Western academic tradition.

For instance, Lin Yang and Lin Tian [13], in their critique of the dominance of Western paradigms in global higher education, argue that principles such as neoliberalism, market logic, competition, and performance indicators hinder a more pluralistic understanding of globality. In contrast, four core components of *Tianxia* — "one world", "harmony in diversity", an ethic of global governance, and an ecological worldview — provide a framework for reimagining globality in the context of higher education. According to the authors, this framework enables educational development independent of national interests, and instead grounded in universal human values.

A number of researchers, based on interviews with Chinese experts and an analysis of Chinese academic literature on universities' international influence, demonstrate how Chinese universities articulate their global ambitions through the concept of international influence (国际影响力), which is closely aligned with the principles of *Tianxia* [14]. It is observed that *Tianxia*, as a worldview emphasizing interdependence and diversity, distinguishes the developmental model of Chinese universities from Western models grounded in competition and nationalism. Instead, it advocates mutual benefit and cultural sensitivity over rivalry and expansionism. Guided by *Tianxia* principles, these authors suggest that global higher education should not be seen as a competitive arena, but rather as a space for mutually beneficial cooperation and the pursuit of the common good.

In another study, Lili Yang, Simon Marginson, and Xin Xu propose the use of *Tianxia* as a “heuristic model” for rethinking global higher education [15]. According to the authors, *Tianxia* is beneficial for educational development in that it offers an ethical foundation for international cooperation in education, and a values-based alternative to Western-centric models, oriented toward the common good rather than nationalistic interests. Emphasis is placed on the idea that a global educational system grounded in *Tianxia* is inherently inclusive, culturally sensitive, and ethically driven.

Although the scope of literature on this subject remains relatively limited, such depoliticized interpretations of *Tianxia* reveal its potential as a coherent philosophical system. In a context where both proponents and critics often frame *Tianxia* in terms of the Chinese nation-state and its association with China’s political regime, the discussion of *Tianxia* in non-political domains contributes to the “reframing” of the concept as a genuinely philosophical idea.

According to the French philosopher René Guénon, the opposition between East and West is one of the defining features of the modern world [16, p. 43]. The contemporary development of the *Tianxia* concept, as well as the criticism it has provoked, is to some extent grounded in this very dichotomy. Although *Tianxia* originally emerged in Chinese history as a political term designating “the world”, it was long used to describe the sphere of influence of Chinese culture. In the modern era, this limited interpretation has come to be perceived as a form of nationalism, which has contributed to the politicization of the concept, a process characteristic of modernity. Numerous critics have addressed the national coloring of the allegedly universal *Tianxia* [17–19].

Conclusion

At the same time, *Tianxia* theorists frequently defend the universalist aspirations of the concept by referring to Confucian universalism as one of the intellectual products of the “Axial Age” (K. Jaspers). Indeed, Confucius’ idea of “moral governance” and Mencius’ concept of “benevolent politics” can legitimately be interpreted in universalist terms. In this context, moral cultivation and the development of a corresponding educational system play a central role. It is worth recalling that Chinese civilization is the most ancient surviving culture in the modern world, and it was within its framework that both the “Golden Rule of Morality” (“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”) and the system of meritocratic civil service examinations were first formulated.

This reveals a profound connection between education and morality, a connection that has been severed in the contemporary education system, with destructive consequences for society as a whole. Character formation and moral development became even more crucial than professional training. Education cannot be separated from ethical cultivation, a principle now being rediscovered through renewed attention to “traditional values”, many of which originated during the Axial Age but are, in essence, timeless and shared across all advanced human civilizations. These values are preserved in the great religious and philosophical traditions of the world, among which Confucianism and its concept of *Tianxia* may be included.

References / Список литературы

- [1] Zhang, S. (2025). *The Tianxia Concept and Morality in Modern Chinese Philosophy* [Doctoral dissertation, RUDN University]. Moscow. (In Russ.)
Чжан Ш. Концепция «Тянься» и мораль в современной китайской философии : автореф. дис. ... канд. философ. Наук. М., 2025.
- [2] Zhao, T. (2009). *Investigations of the Bad World: Political Philosophy as First Philosophy*. People's University of China Press. (In Chin.)
- [3] Zhao, T. (2016). *A Possible World of All-Under-Heaven System: The World Order in the Past and for the Future*. Citic Publishing House. (In Chin.)
- [4] Xu, J. (2017). *Family, Family, Nation, and Tianxia: Individual, National, and World Identity in Modern China*. Shanghai People's Press.
- [5] Nizhnikov, S., & Zheng, Y. (2021). Specificity of the ancient Chinese worldview and the place of person in it. In *Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on Contemporary Education, Social Sciences and Humanities (Philosophy of Being Human as the Core of Interdisciplinary Research) (ICCESSH 2021)* (Vol. 575, pp. 137–143). Atlantis Press. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210902.023>
- [6] Fei, X. (1992). *From the Soil: The Foundations of Chinese Society* (G. Hamilton & W. Zheng, Trans.). University of California Press.
- [7] Nizhnikov, S.A. (2021). Two visions of identity: Fyodor Dostoevsky and Vladimir Solovyov. *Scientific Annals of the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, Iasi (New Series), Sociology and Social Work Section*, 14(2), 55–62. <https://doi.org/10.47743/asas-2021-2-657>
- [8] Nizhnikov, S.A. (2021). "Russian Idea" of F.M. Dostoevsky: from soilness to universality. *RUDN Journal of Philosophy*, 25(1), 15–24. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-2302-2021-25-1-15-24>
- [9] Tolstoy, L. (1951). *What is Art?* State Publishing House of Fiction.
- [10] Nizhnikov, S.A., & Shafikov, R.A. (2024). Ethical views of L.D. Trotsky: the problem of violence. *Sotsium i Vlast = Society and Power*, (2), 76–90. (In Russ.) <https://doi.org/10.22394/1996-0522-2024-2-76-90> EDN: KDIKTW
Нижников С.А., Шафиков Р.А. Этические взгляды Л.Д. Троцкого: проблема насилия // Социум и власть. 2024. № 2(100). С. 76–90. <https://doi.org/10.22394/1996-0522-2024-2-76-90> EDN: KDIKTW
- [11] Trotsky, L.D. (2022). Their morals and ours. In *To Revolutionaries: An Anthology of the Late Trotsky* (pp. 252–296). Moscow: Alistorus Publ. (In Russ.)
Троцкий Л.Д. Революционерам. Антология позднего Троцкого. М. : Алисторус, 2022. С. 252–296.
- [12] Russell, B., & Blackburn, S. (2004). The existence of God: a dispute between Bertrand Russell and Father F.C. Copleston. In *Why I am not a Christian* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- [13] Yang, L., & Tian, L. (2022). Rethinking the "global" in global higher education studies: from the lens of the Chinese idea of *tianxia*. *Oxford Review of Education*, 48(4), 536–553. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2022.2079617>
- [14] Yang, L., Shen, Y., & Fan, L. (2024). Global aspirations of Chinese universities: towards a world-centred *tianxia* (all under heaven) imaginary of global higher education? *Higher Education*, 90, 649–666. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-024-01340-9>
- [15] Yang, L., Marginson, S., & Xu, X. (2022). "Thinking through the world": a *tianxia* heuristic for higher education. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 22(2), 139–155. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2022.2098696>
- [16] Guénon, R. (1946). *Aperçus sur L'initiation*. Les Éditions Traditionnelles.
- [17] Callahan, W.A. (2008). Chinese visions of world order: post-hegemonic or a new hegemony? *International Studies Review*, 10(4), 749–761.
- [18] Chu, S. (2022). Whither Chinese IR? The Sinocentric subject and the paradox of Tianxia-ism. *International Theory*, 14(1), 57–87. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752971920000214>
- [19] Giedrius, Č. (2022). The collective imagination and the limitations for the Tianxia to replace the Westphalian world order. *Politologija*, 105(1), 133–157. <https://doi.org/10.15388/Polit.2022.105.4>

Проблематика китайской концепции Тянься и образование

С.А. Нижников , Ш. Чжан 

Финансирование. Настоящее исследование не получало внешнего финансирования.

Заявление об информированном согласии: информированное согласие было получено от всех участников исследования. Письменное информированное согласие на публикацию данной статьи было получено от пациентов.

Российский университет дружбы народов, Москва, Российская Федерация
✉ nizhnikov_sa@pfur.ru

Аннотация. В ситуации современных идеологических исканий, связанных с переходным характером постглобализационной эпохи – переходом от однополярного к многополярному миру, – ряд китайских мыслителей, опираясь на историко-культурные корни своей нации, разрабатывают концепцию Тянься («Поднебесная»). Предлагая данную концепцию, уходящую к истокам конфуцианства и другим древнекитайским учениям, они стремятся решить проблемы целеполагания развития не только КНР, но и выдвинуть ее в качестве проекта для международной коммуникации. Ключевыми сторонниками данного подхода выступают такие мыслители, как Чжао Тингян (Zhao Tingyang), Сюй Цзилинь (Xu Jilin) и Фэй Сяотун (Fei Xiaotong). Основные проблемы, стоящие перед авторами концепции: соотношение общего

Вклад авторов. Все авторы внесли равный вклад в подготовку публикации. Все авторы прочли и одобрили окончательную версию рукописи.

Конфликт интересов. Авторы заявляют об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

История статьи: поступила в редакцию 5 июля 2025 г.; отрецензирована 21 июля 2025 г.; принята к публикации 16 августа 2025 г.

Сведения об авторах:

Нижников Сергей Анатольевич,
доктор философских наук,
профессор кафедры истории
философии, Российский
университет дружбы народов,
Российская Федерация, 117198,
Москва, ул. Миклухо-Маклая, д. 10,
копр. 2.
ORCID: 0000-0002-3456-2445
E-mail: nizhnikov-sa@rudn.ru

Чжан Шучунь, аспирант кафедры
истории философии, Российский
университет дружбы народов,
Российская Федерация, 117198,
Москва, ул. Миклухо-Маклая,
д. 10, копр. 2.
ORCID: 0000-0002-5145-2774
E-mail: shuchun.zhang@mail.ru

и частного; соотношение Китая и других мировых держав (национального и общечеловеческого), а внутри государства – общества и индивида. В данной статье выявляются те проблемы, которые оказываются трудноразрешимыми в рамках концепции *Тянься*, как она представлена в творчестве упомянутых мыслителей. Проводится некоторая аналогия решения проблем соотношения национального и всечеловеческого (общечеловеческого) в русской культуре, что выразилось в споре западников и славянофилов, творчестве Ф.М. Достоевского и Вл. Соловьева, Л. Толстого и Л. Троцкого. Анализируется, как международные процессы влияют на развитие образования, прежде всего в КНР, где разрабатываются меры, противостоящие глобализационным и нивелирующим тенденциям. Показано, что деполитизированная концепция *Тянься* может быть продуктивной для развития системы национального образования. Руководствуясь принципами *Тянься* ряд китайских авторов предлагает рассматривать высшее образование в мире не как арену соперничества, а как пространство для взаимовыгодного сотрудничества.

Ключевые слова: национальное и общечеловеческое, современное образование, китайская политическая философия, осевое время, Тянься

Для цитирования: Nizhnikov S.A., Zhang Sh. The Problem of the Chinese Concept Tianxia and Education // БРИКС+: актуальная повестка. Т. 1. № 1. С. 124–128. <http://doi.org/10.22363/2025-1-1-129-138> EDN: DTULMQ