

# The Enlightenment of Cultivation Thoughts of "The Great Learning" on Sustainable Development of College Students

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**Abstract.** In the development history of ancient Chinese society over thousands of years, a cultural phenomenon of universal significance to everyone has been gradually formed. This is the culture of self-cultivation. Self-cultivation culture is a culture that emphasizes self-cultivation. It regards the idea of "Everyone can be Yao and Sun" as the starting point, and the "Saint's virtue" as a goal for self-cultivation. It shows a rich culture of self-cultivation. "The Great Learning" is an important classic of Chinese traditional cultivation culture system and "The Great Learning" is the essence of Confucian classics. It has systematically proposed "three programs" and "eight Items". Among the "eight Items", "Self-cultivating, Family-regulating, State-ordering, The land great governed." is the core content., and "Self-cultivating" is the most important one. "The Great Learning" preached: "their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. their families being regulated, their states were rightly governed. their states being rightly governed, the whole kingdom was made tranquil and happy." Zhu Xi preached: "The Great Learning" is a practice of self-cultivation and the core of the Confucian classics".

"The Great Learning" takes "Self-cultivating" as the core and puts forward "three programs" and "Eight Items". And among them contain abundant educational thoughts such as "Explore Knowledge from Investigation of Things", "sincere thoughts and rectified hearts", and "new in daily life". And these thoughts are proposed for the sustainable development and improvement of modern college students. Learning these excellent education thoughts has important guiding significance for university students to achieve sustainable development.

## The Importance of Sustainable Development of College Students

The sustainable development of college students refers to the continuous development and improvement of college students as individuals in the university stage and beyond. The goal of the pursuit is to continuously perfect, harmonious, and beautiful the individual qualities of college students.

The sustainable development ability of college students is simply the ability of to maintain their own sustainable development. This refers to the ability of undergraduates to continuously acquire the ability to use and innovate their knowledge and improve their personality. This means that individual students consciously in accordance with the laws of development of man and nature, man and society, we must keep pace with the times, constantly adjust our own behaviors, and improve the quality and level of our survival and development. So as to achieve the purpose of sustained and harmonious development of man and nature, individuals and society and realize the full development of man.

The sustainable development of university students is based on reflections on some practical issues of human development and inspired by the concept of sustainable development. The reality has the following three aspects. First, influenced by traditional education, most people still consciously or unconsciously divide a person's life into two phases. The former phase is used for learning. The purpose is to study knowledge for the latter phase. Preparations for skills, etc. work in the later stages, and work is seen only as a means of earning a living, not as a means of realizing and expressing one's own value. Since then, the development of human qualities and the improvement of their ability have been confined to the first stage, while in the second stage, little or

no development or even retrogression has occurred. Second, some people place human development only on the pursuit of external utilitarian goals, and blindly seeking only material enjoyment will alienate people into animals or tools, which will greatly limit the development of individual personality. Third, some people's development is at the expense of subsequent development. With overdrafts of mental and physical strength as conditions, although they have achieved greater and faster development at some stage of their lives, their development is not sustainable. Fourth, some people use others as a springboard for their so-called "development." These people's development is at the expense of their own human relationships, consuming their own interpersonal resources and undermining the sustainable development of their interpersonal relationships. Their development is also unsustainable.

Today is a crucial period for China to realize a prosperous and powerful China dream. As social trends change drastically, college students as the pillars of society's future will have many opportunities and face severe challenges and fierce competition. Therefore, strengthening the core competitiveness of contemporary college students and enhancing the capacity of sustainable development are important aspects of contemporary college education.

### **The Self-cultivation Thought in "The Great Learning"**

As an authoritative textbook for ancient official students, "The Great Learning" pays attention to the cultivation of students' "self-cultivation" ideas and points out from the methodological aspect to students how to do "self-cultivation," as "The Great Learning" says: "things being investigated, knowledge became complete. their knowledge being complete, their thoughts were sincere. their thoughts being sincere, their hearts were then rectified. their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated."

The first step is to ask for "Explore Knowledge from Investigation of Things" and the meaning of "Explore Knowledge from Investigation of Things" is "Extending knowledge lies in getting close to things. When things come into contact with the body, the body will feel something and the soul will accumulate experience. Therefore, it will produce comparative analysis capabilities, and people's cognitive ability will also increase". The process of "investigation of things" is the process of abandoning oneself. It constantly transcends self and ends in a perfect environment and realizes that all beings are my self-conceiving realms. The wisdom of the university is a kind of wisdom that is beyond the wisdom of everyday life that is "investigation of things". So the process of "investigation of things" is difficult because people have the limitations of their own privacy and their own realm. Once they are obsessed with prejudice, they will not observe the whole picture of things. And will not be able to get a truthful understanding. Therefore, although "Explore Knowledge from Investigation of Things" are a short phrase, it is very difficult to do so. Because it not only emphasizes the breadth of learning, it also requires depth of study. This is a requirement for students from the learning level.

The second step is to ask for requirements from the aspect of moral cultivation. As "The Great Learning" says: "things being investigated, knowledge became complete. their knowledge being complete, their thoughts were sincere. "From this we can see that "sincere thoughts" requires students to keep away from self-deception, to have a correct understanding of themselves, to be clear about their own strengths and weaknesses, and to be loyal to their own inner thoughts. Then it is "self-conceited" that pays attention to nurturing students' modest and upward mentality. The final goal is to reach "carefully and independently" that means when a person is alone, he should also stick to moral principles. This is extremely difficult to achieve.

The third part asks students to rectify hearts from the perspective of spiritual realm. Rectifying hearts refers to the removal of all kinds of uneasy emotions, which is not covered by material desires, and maintains the self-cultivation of the mind's determination, quietness, safety, and care."The Great Learning" has repeatedly stressed that "if a man be under the influence of passion he will be incorrect in his conduct.", that is you want people to overcome emotional interference and strictly implement the ethical norms. The most important thing is to grasp and correct the emotional heart. The key is to expand the mind and expand the heart from the personal

heart to the general heart. If you can regard people's heart as your own heart, then this heart is a general heart, and you will correct the bias of mind and body. Rectifying heart means that the heart is returning to its former clear and kind. This general heart is in harmony with the spirit, and it is smart and tactful. It is precisely because of we will not have negative psychological feelings in our daily lives.

Thin as "The Great Learning" is, it condenses deep self-cultivation wisdom. As a book of enlightenment of Confucian personality cultivation, "The Great Learning" has become the starting point and the most basic teaching material of university education after the Song Dynasty. The "self-cultivation" it emphasizes is a process of perfecting human nature in all aspects, a process of elevating one's own personality and a process in which the ego moves toward the ego. Under its influence, it has cultivated countless outstanding talents both internally and externally in ancient China and has accomplished brilliant and splendid Song and Ming Confucianism. "The Great Learning" is a systematic work of ancient Chinese cultivation culture. It takes the theory of human nature as the theoretical basis, moral self-discipline as the basic model, and spiritual realm as the ideal pursuit, then forming the theory of human nature, moral self-discipline and spiritual realm. And this trinity thoughts still has important guiding significance in modern talent education.

### **Enlightenments for Sustainable Development of Contemporary College Students**

With the social fastly changing, knowledge is accelerating development. Promoting the sustainable development ability of college students is the most important thing for contemporary college students. The "self-cultivating" idea of "study method", moral self-discipline and spiritual realm proposed by The Great Learning has important reference significance for the development of contemporary university students' sustainable education.

Firstly, reading widely and cultivate the explored spirit of university students. "Explore Knowledge from Investigation of Things" has always been the method of scholarship emphasized by Confucianism. The Confucian traditional thinking thought that the way to acquire knowledge lies in investigation of the things. After investigate the things, the knowledge can be understood by oneself. The college students are in the golden stage of acquiring knowledge during the schooling period. Under the premise of good professional courses, reading the books will not only gain extensive knowledge, but also increase wisdom and enhance self-cultivation. At the same time, when reading a book, it is necessary to achieve "information" and to have the spirit of inquiry, not only to understand, but also to combine knowledge and theory, combine theory and practice, reasoning, and explore the deeper layers of knowledge. thing. Only in this way, when we come back to the reality from the book, we can truly distinguish right from wrong, distinguish between good and evil.

Secondly, to be sincere and independent, and to improve college students' moral culture. In real life, most people understand the concept of sincerity, and are often considered to be a kind of attitude and way of doing things with people - to treat each other with sincerity. The "sincerity" in the The Great Learning is more of an individual's own real state of existence, affirming his true thoughts, and directing himself to the heart, not deceiving himself. This point is well worth pondering and studying for contemporary college students. On the basis of "self-modest, The Great Learning immediately put forward "Of course, the gentleman must be careful about his independence."

"Caution of alone" is an important concept of Confucianism. It is an important method of personal moral cultivation, and it is also a key link in assessing a person's moral standards. This means that people of high moral character can follow a certain ethical norm and do not do anything that violates the principles of morality and life when they are unsupervised in their own activities. It can be seen that caution and independence is a sentiment, a kind of self-cultivation, a self-discipline, and even more magnanimous. "Caution of alone" virtue has far-reaching practical significance for the cultivation of college students' self-disciplined spirit. In order to have the virtue of being "Caution of alonet," college students should be cautious and cautious in their daily behaviors, seriously completing everything, strict requirements and self-disciplining at all times.

Thirdly, rectifying heart and determining to improve the psychological quality of college students. In traditional Chinese culture, the emphasis has been on the cultivation of "Heart Character" and it has been used as the main mode of "self-cultivating". Rectifying heart means that it is not disturbed by emotions and mediate your emotions rationally, and maintain a good attitude continuously. Under the influence of the modern environment, modern college students' psychological capacity is generally weak. And they cannot correctly face setbacks and failures. Therefore, "Rectifying heart" is very important for college students both in their studies and in practice. Secondly, "positive heart" also means that the subject is not shielded by material desires and maintains the determination, calmness, security, and care of the soul. Confucius said: "I am 15 and interested in learning." For college students, setting goals and working tirelessly is also an essential element of sustainable development.

In the current era, in addition to imparting knowledge, universities are required to teach students the ability to achieve sustainable development. After entering the community in the future, they can rely on these outstanding cultural and soft qualities to continuously learn and improve themselves. People said that "It is better to teach the fish than to give it to the fish". University students' education for sustainable development should be comprehensively promoted from the three aspects of the study of the law, moral cultivation and psychological quality.

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