

The Contents and Approaches of Chinese Traditional Culture Education for College Students

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Abstract—The key focus of Chinese excellent traditional culture education for college students is what message is going to be delivered and how to facilitate the learning. From the perspective of the content, the concept of self-cultivation, the view of making friends, the philosophy of life and the conception of learning are the main contents of Chinese traditional culture education for college students. In the aspect of the approach, it requires top down initiatives, taking advantage of existing resources and integration along with collaboration.

Keywords—college students; Chinese traditional culture education; contents; approaches

I. INTRODUCTION

Strengthening the education of Chinese excellent traditional culture for college students is an essential part of enhancing the socialist education with Chinese characteristics as well as the propaganda and education of the China Dream. It has great and far-reaching significance to guide students to understand the Chinese history, traditions, culture and basic national conditions, to recognize the historical inevitability of socialism with Chinese characteristics and to keep the belief of realizing the China Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation by sticking to the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics. To improve the effectiveness and the pertinence of the education should discard the dross and select the essential, and critically inherit the essence of Chinese traditional culture in the continuing exploration of practical approaches.

II. THE CONTENTS OF CHINESE TRADITIONAL CULTURE EDUCATION FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

A. The Concept of Self-cultivation: Striving Unceasingly with Perseverance

In Chinese traditional culture, the most important relationship one needs to deal with is his or her own self. Striving unceasingly is the core of traditional concept of self-cultivation. It is also a tradition carried out by Chinese nation in the past and present. It has not only contributed to the 5000-year civilization, but has also inspired Chinese people in the pursuit of a brighter future. Striving unceasingly requires self-improvement and self-respect through hard

work and innovation. It is demonstrated in many ancient Chinese myths, for instance the ancient Emperor Dayu, who regulated the water and saved his people from the flood through three-year struggling. Those myths of striving unceasingly stand as the spiritual backbone and pillar of Chinese nation, which is also the engine of China's development. Striving unceasingly emphasizes the perseverance. Chinese ancestors observed the celestial movements day after day, year after year without cease, which inspired that human being should always work with perseverance until the stars above stop moving. "A journey of thousand miles begin with single step", one of the traditional Chinese idioms, attaches great importance to the perseverance. College students are in their golden age, which is a critical period to learn skills. Thus, they should strive unceasingly with perseverance in self-improvement, and fight for a promising future and contributing to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation with their youth and wisdom.

B. The View of Making Friends: Being Respectful and Honest

Respect is one of the basic principles of Chinese traditional culture. Interpersonal communication in ancient time highlighted the respect in both behaviors and attitudes. Confucianism accentuates pure innocence while Taoism stresses on being earnest, while they both call for honesty in life. "A gentleman only has to act earnestly, do nothing wrong, and be respectful and polite, and all men in the world are his brothers", this sentence from The Analects argues that being respectful could bring friendship all over the world. Besides, Zhu Xi, one of the most significant philosophers of the Neo-Confucian school in the Song and Ming dynasties, proposed as "Respect is the primary idea of the holy philosophy and this fact will never change." In addition, the Chinese traditional culture also asks for being honest and sincere in dealing with interpersonal relationships. "Keep promises with friends" in The Analects and "A hedge between keeps friendship green" said by Zhuangzi (a pre-Qin philosopher), both require being honest and sincere in making friends. After entering into college, communication between students and their parents become less because of the distance whereas the communication among students themselves increases, for instance handling independently

their relationships with roommates who are with them all the time. However, in real life, a considerable number of college students have problems such as interpersonal tension, hostility and even conflicts. Thusly, being respectful and honest is the golden rule for college students' interpersonal interaction and is conducive to the harmony of interpersonal relationships. In general, this concept is of great significance for college students to promote their friendship and to build a decent friend zone with their peers.

C. *The Philosophy of Life: Being Cautious and Down-to-earth*

For the ancients, demeanor is the yardstick of one's level of moral accomplishments. A true person must have extreme high standards and requirements of his words and deeds, which includes being cautious. Shijing (Book of Odes) tells people to be cautious of what they say because "A flaw in a mace of white jade could be ground away, but for a flaw in speech, nothing can wipe off". The Spring and Autumn Annals warns people that making irresponsible remarks is the cause of mischief. "The difficult problems must be dealt with while they are yet easy; the challenging problems must be dealt with while they are yet small" (from the Tao Te Ching) shows that attitudes determine everything, no matter the problem is difficult or not. Action is the premise of success while the down-to-earth attitude makes success desirable. "Truth cannot be reached in a silent discussion while morality cannot be practiced in hollow words", "A gentleman should study extensively, inquire prudently, think carefully, distinguish clearly and practice earnestly", these words represented the core values of the Chinese traditional philosophy of life. On May 4th, 2014, President Xi Jinping mentioned in a conversation with teachers and students in Peking University, "college students should be down-to-earth both in work and life and it is necessary to take hardships as challenging opportunities and to do things of no matter great or trivial seriously and steadily." In the ideological and political education, Chinese traditional philosophy of life which includes being cautious and down-to-earth should be applied to helping college students step steadily on the path of growth.

D. *The Conception of Learning: Combination of Erudition and Deliberation, Unity of Knowledge and Action*

In the ancients' view, only when one read broadly, he would not be in the dark about past and present and would be able to distinguish between right and wrong of different matters in life, or else he would be like the deaf and blind. Deliberation based on erudition. Without deliberate carefully, the knowledge cannot be totally digested, thus the learning would result in vain. Consequently, learning demands combination of erudition and deliberation as Xunzi (a pre-Qin philosopher) said, "If the gentleman studies widely and each day examines himself, his wisdom will become clear and his conduct be without fault." The conception of learning in Chinese traditional culture also put the accent on the unity of knowledge and behavior, spotlighting that practice is a key criterion to examine the effectiveness of learning and the purpose of learning is to guide practice. Xunzi stressed that "He who knows it but has not put it into practice, although

he is well grounded in it, will certainly be reduced to beleaguered straits." Moreover, Zhu Xi said that "Learning knowledge without exercising it in action is like walking in dark," They both pointed out the value of the unity of knowledge and action though from different angles. Since learning is the bounden duty and mission of college students, the Chinese traditional conception of learning, including combination of erudition and deliberation as well as unity of knowledge and action, has practical value in enhancing the education of learning conception for college students.

III. THE APPROACHES OF CHINESE TRADITIONAL CULTURE EDUCATION FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

A. *Top Down Initiatives*

Firstly, consolidate the construction of curriculum and instructional material. Higher education institutions should combine their actual conditions and advantages in the revision and compilation of teaching materials of Chinese excellent traditional culture. They should strengthen the part of Chinese excellent traditional culture in curriculum and personnel cultivating programs. Setting up compulsory courses of Chinese excellent traditional culture and including more relevant contents in the courses of Philosophy and Social Science major and other related majors to enhance the education of Chinese traditional culture.

Secondly, strengthen the discipline construction. Schools should strengthen the construction of disciplines related to the Chinese excellent traditional culture and set up specific research projects. Moreover, protection and development of significant cultural heritage should be continued, as well as to study and exploit more thoroughly on the rich connotation of Chinese excellent traditional culture. Therefore, Chinese traditional culture can well evolve with innovation to adapt to the present world.

Thirdly, enhance the construction of campus culture. Campus culture is a great carrier of the Chinese excellent traditional culture education. Therefore, its function as a "sub-classroom" needs to be given a full play, in the way of integrating Chinese excellent traditional culture with the construction of campus culture, which includes to popularize the traditional operas, calligraphy, fine arts and sports in campus, to run a project on study of Chinese classics and to set up open courses of traditional culture.

B. *Taking Advantage of Existing Resources*

First, take advantage of Internet. Contemporary college students are the natives and the major users of Internet. So Internet must be well utilized to integrate Chinese excellent traditional culture into the network propaganda, service and culture. Patriotism, the spirit of struggle, fraternity and integrity in Chinese traditional culture are the essence that to be popularized with the tool of Internet. For instance, to create healthy online cultural works and spread on new media like WeChat and Weibo.

Besides, make good use of traditional festivals, for example, the Spring Festival, the Lantern Festival, the Tomb-sweeping Festival, the Dragon Boat Festival, the

Chinese Valentine's Day, the Mid-Autumn Festival and the Double Ninth Festival, etc. To hold solemn and meaningful celebration and commemoration on these traditional festivals, and to educate students about the traditional culture accordingly and properly.

Lastly, take the whole society as platform. The responsibility of inheriting and developing the Chinese excellent traditional culture should be allocated to every village, enterprise, community and other grass-root organizations. To make full use of libraries, cultural centers, museums, art centers and galleries in the inheritance and development of traditional culture.

C. Integration and Collaboration

To begin with, there should be an integration of teaching and research for they are an organic entirety. In the Chinese traditional education, educators have to be sensitive about the problems they confront and have deep study in related researches. Besides, it is necessary to apply the latest research achievements to the instruction of relevant subjects. Therefore, the course of Chinese traditional culture could be more attractive to students.

Moreover, combine the class with extracurricular activities. Social practice is an effective carrier of strengthening the Chinese traditional culture education and plays a beneficial and complementary role in classroom teaching. A long-term mechanism of combining traditional culture with social practice should be constructed and higher education institutions should carry out activities of traditional culture for students according to their own strength and advantages. Activities as leading students to visit traditional villages, houses and architectures, historical buildings, revolutionary culture memorial sites, agricultural heritage sites, industrial heritage sites, patriotic education bases and historical sites could be direct and impressive for students to learn about the traditional culture.

The last point is the collaboration between schools and families. To give full play to the role of family, the Chinese traditional culture education has to attach great importance to the Parents Committee and Family Education and Guidance Agency. It is crucial to combine the school education and family education, which means to create traditional culture experience, which can involve participation of both parents and students, including thematic education activities, voluntary works and other public welfare activities. It is through the practice of excellent Chinese traditional virtues that the Chinese traditional culture been fully promoted. Also, parents should set examples through their own words and deeds, and thus to run a family trait of being patriotic and law-abiding, complying with social morality, treasuring family ties, managing the household industriously and thriftily, and living in peace with neighbors. Thence the Chinese traditional culture can be carried forward with the positive family education atmosphere.

IV. CONCLUSION

Strengthening the outstanding traditional culture education of college students is the need to hand down

Chinese culture, to cultivate and practice the core values of socialism, and to implement the fundamental tasks of moral values establishment and people cultivation. To do this, we must bring the essence of the traditional culture into full play, and actively explore the effective methods, as well as continuously improve the pertinence and effectiveness of traditional culture education for college students.

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