



The Realistic Enlightenment of Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture in Labor Education

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Abstract: This paper intends to explain the practical enlightenment of Chinese excellent traditional culture in education on the hard-working spirit from three aspects, that is, the value of work is emphasized in Chinese excellent traditional culture, the tradition of farming-reading culture which advocates the combination of work and study is contained in Chinese excellent traditional culture, and the concept of "work for morality" is advocated in Chinese excellent traditional culture.

Keywords: labor education, traditional culture, enlightenment

The Chinese excellent traditional culture is rooted in the basic mode of production of agricultural civilization, eulogizes the value of labor, has the tradition of combining labor with learning, and advocates 'cultivating morality by labor' and 'strengthening health through labor'. Labor education is the living soul of Chinese traditional culture, and an important part of moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic and labor education in the new era. We should absorb the spirit from the nourishment of Chinese excellent traditional culture and lead the value orientation, to make the labor thought get modern transformation and innovation development.

1. The value of work is emphasized in Chinese excellent traditional culture

In ancient Chinese society, agriculture was the basic mode of production, and agricultural work was the main form of labor. In the development of China's ancient agricultural civilization, people created advanced science and technology and brilliant literature with the four great inventions as the most renowned representatives, leading the world. Therefore, the rulers of successive dynasties "promote what is fundamental and suppress what is incidental" and "encourage agriculture rather than trade", give importance to people's livelihood thought and encourage agricultural production. From the feudal rulers and emperors to the local officials, all of them carry the mission of "promoting agriculture". The emperor will hold a Jitian ceremony (the emperor does ploughing with his own hands) on certain days of the year, and the local officials will have corresponding actions. Xu Xing, an agronomist and thinker of about the same era as Mencius, proposed that a wise ruler should plough together with the common people before he can get food, and make meals with his own hands and deal with the national affairs. He also demanded that everyone should work regardless of their social status, which reflects the simple desire of the workers against exploitation at that time, but also has the defect of absolute equalitarianism. As the verse reads, "April is the busiest month in rural areas, people have to transplant rice seedlings after finishing silkworm-related work", "Hoeing in the paddy under the mid-day sun, sweat dripping to the soil underneath the plant. Who knows that the meals in our plates, every morsel of them comes with toil and pains", the intellectual class depicted, sympathized with or glorified work, working people and working life. [1]

Also, the Chinese excellent traditional culture advocates diligence and frugality, and contains the meaning of hard-working, pioneering and being indomitable. As the old saying goes, "when Heaven is about to confer a great responsibility on man, it will first fill his heart with suffering, toil his sinews and bones, expose his body to hunger, subject him to extreme poverty, confound his journey with setbacks and troubles, so as to stimulate his alertness, toughen his nature, eventually bridge his incompetence gap and prepare him for the task". This open-mindedness and optimism in the face of hardship and suffering is an important aspect of the Chinese people's work consciousness, work values, and work emotions. "If one works with constant efforts, he can grind an iron rod into a needle", studying by the light of reflected snow, painstaking in one's study and many other literary quotations encourage workers to be persistent and dauntless, which is exactly the same as the perseverance to hammer away until a task is done and the "craftsmanship spirit" advocated in modern times.

2. The tradition of farming-reading culture which advocates the combination of work and study is contained in Chinese excellent traditional culture

In ancient Chinese society, there was a tradition of promoting intellectuals to "farm and read to bequeath to the family" (to do agricultural work while reading or teaching). In ancient China, some scholars made a reasonable living by part-time farming and part-time reading. They make a living by farming and cultivate morality by reading. With the value orientation of "farming and reading to bequeath to the family" and the combination of farming and reading, a "farming-reading culture" was formed. There are many ancient agricultural books with high standards handed down in China, and they are ahead of other countries in the world. Because of the Chinese tradition of "farming and reading to bequeath to the family", intellectuals have both the literary skills of scholars and the practical experience of agronomists. They base on a idyll life and farming economy, both as a profession and as a commitment to good conduct. Cui Shi, born in a poor but distinguished family, was well versed in the classics and the political system when he was young and had a deep thought of agriculture as the fundamental. Based on his own experience, he wrote the Monthly Instructions for the Four-Peoples (SiMinYueLing), an agricultural book in the form of Yueling (a form of literature in ancient China). Zhang Lvxiang taught and farmed during his reclusive life. He was even more skilled at pruning mulberry trees than experienced farmers. His Supplementary Agricultural Book was rated as "one of the great works summarizing the agricultural economy and agricultural technology of the late Ming and early Qing dynasties and the most valuable heritage in the history of agriculture in China" by the modern famous agronomist Prof. Chen Hengli in his article Study of the Supplementary Agricultural Book. Intellectuals get close to labor production and working people through part-time farming and part-time reading, and compose works that reflect to some extent the life of the lower class and the joy and sorrow of working people.[2]

Yan Zhitui, an ancient Chinese litterateur and educator, taught his offspring in The Yan's Family Rule that "the most fundamental thing in the life of people is to grow crops for food, and to plant mulberry for clothing", and that the fundamental of survival is to make a living on one's own. Yan Zhitui especially opposed the bad habits of intellectuals who despise work, have neither learning nor skill, and love ease and hate work. He encouraged his offspring to be practical, be pragmatic, study productive labor, and unite concern for social reality with the pursuit of knowledge and learning. Xu Heng, a Yuan Dynasty neo-confucianist, made the famous assertion that "the first priority of scholars is to make a living". He believed that scholars must first solve the problems of life and that making a living is the material basis for pursuing studies. Only after solving the problems of life can one not hinder his study and moral cultivation. Zhang Fuxiang advocated that both farming and reading should be emphasized, and that "farming is the first thing in one's life". He believed that farming could keep one's good character and benefit his morality. Zeng Guofan, a politician and militarist of the late Qing Dynasty, also admonished his family in his letter home, "our children must emphasize both farming and reading to keep the traditions of our ancestors, and should not be affected by the bad habits in the official circles. They should not take sedans or ask servants to get water and draw tea. They should collect firewood and clean feces with their own hands. And they should also learn to transplant seedlings and extirpate weed." These are vivid examples of the combination of work for a living and study in Chinese excellent traditional culture.[3]

3. The concept of "work for morality and physical health" is advocated in Chinese excellent traditional culture

Tao Yuanming, or Five-willow Gentleman lived in seclusion in his homeland and composed many pastoral poems that have been passed down through the ages. He not only wrote about his joy and peace of mind when he was tilling by himself, but also offered new insight into the meaning of work, that although it is hard, a life of self-reliance and hard work is fulfilling and happy. Everyone has to earn their own living struggle hard. If one does nothing, how can he solve the problem of food and clothing?

One can develop a good morality and keep physically fit by working. Jing Jiang, a wise mother, pointed out when teaching her son to be frugal and not to seek ease and comfort, "one who works will think, which makes them kind-hearted; one who does not work will become indulged, and then he forgets his kindness, and breeds evil." This indicates the two different functions of moral cultivation, i.e., the good is cultivated by work, and the evil is caused by ease. One can stimulate kindness through thinking and summarizing in work, while comfort and pleasure can easily lead to the development of evil due to the lack of restraint. Yan Yuan, a thinker and educator in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, exposed the disadvantages of traditional education, which was seriously detached from reality, and he attached importance to the role of work in cultivating talents. Not only did he believe that scholars should work in agricultural production, but he also emphasized education on the hard-working spirit for students, believing that work could make people "correct their minds" and "cultivate their moral character", remove evil thoughts, and also make them work hard to overcome laziness and

lethargy. He also believed that work has a sporting dimension. Labor helps strengthen one's body and is an important way to maintain health, which coincides with the core idea in the new era that education on the hard-working spirit helps enhance intelligence, establish morality, strengthen physique and cultivate aesthetics. In his *Memoirs for Beginners I*, Zhang Lvxiang said, "one who can do agricultural work asks nothing from others, then he knows the sense of shame. And one who knows the hard of agricultural work does not ask others for unreasonable help, then he knows to practice comity." A combination of work and honesty and honor contributes to the great order throughout the land. Wang Huizhu, a scholar of the Qing Dynasty, criticized the view that "young children should not work" in his family instruction *Shuangjietang Yongxun*, "if one wants his children to become great, he must first make them learn to work." He believed that the children must first learn to work in order to achieve success.[4]

It is important to note that the ideas of respecting the work value, encouraging working hard, honest and creative work, and improving moral integrity and physical fitness in traditional culture are in line with the production base and social system in ancient times. Today, the world is in the midst of a great change unprecedented in a century, and China is entering a new era, which is a new historical orientation for our country, and the ideas of work in traditional culture must be viewed and absorbed dialectically. In traditional culture, work mostly refers to "toiling one's sinews and bones, and exposing his body to hunger", and the value and significance of honest, diligent and creative work to people, to life and to the country still need to be promoted and advocated. However, under the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, we should continue to develop and illustrate the contemporary connotations of work practices, work skills and work concepts, inherit the essence of culture, promote the creative transformation and development of work ideas in traditional Chinese culture, resist the impact of decadent and backward culture, and promote the mechanism of education on the hard-working spirit to keep pace with the times and give new opportunities. In addition, we should improve the adaptability and effectiveness of education work, and enhance cultural confidence with vivid practical sensibility and Chinese discourse system.[5]

4. Conclusion

Education on the hard-working spirit is an important part of education for morality, intelligence, physique, aesthetics and labour skills, and it is the living soul of traditional culture, and excellent traditional cultural festivals can be valuable opportunities for education on the hard-working spirit. Schools can organize activities such as kite making, embroidery, making rice dumplings, making dumplings, making sweet soup balls, paper cutting, lantern making, etc. during Spring Festival, Qingming Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival and other folk festivals and seasons, which not only reflect the charm and aesthetics of traditional culture, but also meet the psychological and practical needs of the public. Also, schools can incorporate intangible cultural heritage projects into campus and textbooks so that students can feel the joy of work and creativity and be inspired by traditional culture. In addition, traditional Chinese culture can be integrated into education on the hard-working spirit throughout school education. Traditional culture elements can be added to Chinese, ideological and political theory courses, and physical education courses, and the teaching mode of education on the hard-working spirit can be expanded in conjunction with the teaching needs of other disciplines and curriculum groups, to enhance the practical perception of students and improve the teaching effect. Moreover, colleges and universities can organize students to explore traditional Chinese cultural stories, practice in cultural study, and volunteer in education on the hard-working spirit, which helps the innovative development of education on the hard-working spirit.

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