

On the Positive and Valuable Role of Confucianism in Constructing Well-Off Society in Modern China

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Abstract. With the rapid development of Chinese community in the path to the realization of well-off society in 2020, all Chinese citizens are striving to perform their duties. In every field, innovation as a driving force has become the most important factor to foster the progress of society. In order to build up a harmonious and prosperous society, it is imperative to inherit those valuable traditional Chinese cultures, which plays a major part in cultivating personal morality and facilitating social ethics. The paper aims at analyzing some important ideas in the Confucianism for the purpose of educating and training undergraduate students' awareness of their responsibilities. And the paper also focuses on educational, philosophical and governing ideas selected from Confucianism to strengthen the deep understanding of core value of socialism.

Introduction

Nowadays the whole world is entering its stage of globalization, which requires all countries and societies cooperate and communicate with each other in order to build the common community with shared future. China as a leading country has its responsibility in this great and important era. It is true that the Chinese government has made tremendous contributions to the world in releasing a lot of positive policies such as assisting those poor countries in developing their economy, actively handling international disputes, firmly maintaining the world peace, strongly protecting the natural environment and so on. This indicates China's greatness as a big country in the world stage. At home, China has been conducting a series of reforms in realization of national rejuvenation. The government has made commitment to lead its people to carrying out the party's ideas based on the rules and law. In the past four decades, a huge success has been made in terms of political reform and economic system.

It is obvious that China is confident with its bright future. However, the Chinese government always keep the spirit of the Chinese traditional culture that is another important content in making country stronger and prosperous. It is the spirit that encourages the Chinese people to work hard. It is the spirit that Chinese society can move forward. Therefore, in order to build up a harmonious and prosperous society, review of the core value of traditional culture should be done. The essay has selected the Confucianism to prove the significance and influence.

Confucianism -Guiding Principle in the Traditional Chinese Society

Confucianism as a concept had been involved in every circle of Chinese society for more than two thousands years. It had played a major role in shaping the Chinese culture. As Barry, Chen, and Watson noted(1960), "If we were to describe in one word the Chinese way of life for the last two thousands years, the word would be 'Confucian'. Even today its core value proposed by the Confucian influences the Chinese traditional culture to a certain degree. So Confucianism can be viewed as a guiding principle in personal cultivation and societal harmony. In order to get better understanding of the core value of Confucianism, it is important to explore the origin and history of Confucianism from the perspectives of ancient Chinese history.

In the Western Zhou Dynasty, the whole country was in chaos. There were seven kingdoms fighting with each other. Under this background, a man named Kong Zi, was an educator who toured to these countries advocating his political ideas and trying to restore those proprieties in the

Western Zhou dynasty. He was very dissatisfied with the situations and intended to reform society by looking back to the past for a good model. Actually, Kong Zi also acted as an official in the Kingdom of Lu. He had his purpose of making his country stronger by introducing his ideas on governing. However his political thought was rejected not only in his country but also in other countries. However, after his death, his successors inherited his ideas and improved and finally formed a book called the Analects. The Analects is a collection of Confucian ideas on politics, philosophy, education and governance which has a profound impact upon the traditional Chinese history. It has passed from generation to generation, paving a way for the Chinese traditional society for a long time. Even the core value on Ren and Li has been penetrating in modern Chinese community.

The Educational Ideas in the Confucianism

Confucius spent his life time in educating his students with his diligence and wisdom. He is regarded as one of the world's greatest educators in the world. In the Analects, it is easy to find his document about how to teach, how to learn and how to put learning into real situations. His ideas on education have laid a solid ground for the birth of the ancient Chinese education which is an important part of modern Chinese educational system. In today's China, curriculums designed for students are containing the traditional culture. In particular, the contemporary undergraduate students should be encouraged to read more about those statements on education so that they are able to handle problems in the real situations. The following are some famous sayings from the Analects. For example, *anyone can be educated to become the useful person regardless of the noble or humble, clever or foolish*. This statement reveals the importance of education. On one hand, it highly values the importance of learning; on the other hand, it shows the equality of education. In his time, he observed education as an important factor in promoting the ability of each individual, which is valuable to the modern society. This requires our teachers and educators should be aware of the educational equality by devoting ourselves to educating all for the development of society. This also strongly shows that no one is born genius only through his hard work. *Learning should be among each other. It is important to learn from those able and noble people and to find out one's mistakes and errors when meeting with those bad guys*. From this saying, it is important to conduct cooperative learning among students. Anyone who wants to get something achieved should learn from those who are better than him. *Someone is so immersed in work as to forget one's meals*. This idiom reflects the secret of success should be obtained through hard work, which motivates our students to strive if they want to become a useful person. *The improvement of learning should be conducted through constant review*. It means that a good mastery of knowledge needs frequent review and new thought can come out. There are many famous sayings of learning or education in the Analects. The examples above are selected only to demonstrate why Confucian on education is still prevailing in the Chinese educational field.

The Philosophical Views in the Confucianism

Confucius was the most influential philosopher in ancient China. It has established a philosophical thought system including the concept of heaven, the concept of man, epistemology and methodology. Benevolence was the core value of Confucius' ethics in the spring and autumn period. In Confucian eyes, he proposed benevolence is the criteria to judge a person's morality and personal cultivation. That is to say, one should love his parents, love others and love himself. This philosophical view has profound influence on the harmony between family members and social order, which benefits the development of Chinese society. The famous saying *kejifuli* says that *one should control his desire and restore the courtesy*. The principle values the cultivation of the mind should focus on the collective. That is to say, when personal desire and social fair behavior norms conflict, one should restrain personal desire, and abide by the social norms, which leads to the harmony of society. The Confucian philosophy still has a wide range of influence and tenacious vitality in our real life, affecting people's values and ways of thinking. In particular, his thought of

"self-sacrifice and return to courtesy" requires that when getting along with others, words and behaviors should conform to various ethical and social norms, and take "courtesy" as the standard so as to achieve interpersonal harmony.

The Governing Idea in the Confucianism

The rule of virtue is a political theory of moral self-discipline. This is the main political theory of Confucianism, also the dominant political theory in ancient China. For more than two thousand years it dominated the ancient Chinese society. It embodies the great wisdom of Confucius. That is why Confucius is regarded as a sage. When deeply researching and exploring theory of *rule of virtue*, it was important not only for political thought in ancient China, but also for today's cultural and political construction. The thought of "*rule by virtue*", initiated by Confucius, refers to the improvement of people's moral quality through the cultivation of rites and music, and the transformation of abiding by the social hierarchy order and its behavioral norms into a kind of self-consciousness, so as to achieve the goal of national peace and security. The central idea is to moralize the people so that they are willingly persuaded, not to be intimidated by harsh laws and punishments. The rule by virtue was also a political proposition strongly advocated and developed by both Confucius and Mencius. Later, Confucianism developed and carried forward this thought of rule by virtue, which had a great influence on traditional politics. In Confucius time, his governing idea was accepted by some kingdoms. In the following dynasties, rulers adopted his concept of governing. For example, in the Analects, Confucius advocated that *generosity can get the support of the people, integrity can get the appointment of others, diligence can get results, and fairness will make the people fair. Inspiring people's conscience with moral education and regulating the order with the ceremony should be performed, which the public will both comply with the order and know shame. Governing a country should be very careful just like cooking tasted fish.* In the Book of Rites, Li is defined as the order that everything is in place. Confucius placed emphasis on Li with the aim of preserving social order, stability and harmony.

Nowadays there is a strong atmosphere of improving the traditional culture in China. The Chinese community is developing in a healthy and active way in accordance with some positive ideas in the Confucianism. It is pleasing to see that a harmonious and prosperous society is approaching with the leadership of the Chinese government. It is also pleasing to see that schools in different levels have presented the traditional Chinese culture to the students.

Conclusion

Confucianism is deeply rooted in the traditional Chinese soil. As descendants, it is our duties to inherit those positive ideas and to put them into the practice. The educational, philosophical and governing ideas in the Confucianism can be viewed as the guiding principles in cultivating each individual. It is important to have this awareness of knowing the national treasure. With the development of Chinese society, in particular, in the process of constructing moderately prosperous society, promoting traditional culture has been a major theme. In schools, teachers should be responsible to impart those values in their teaching of students. The saying goes like this: if you want to do your business, you should learn how to be a moral man. To be a moral man requires lifelong practice in cultivating one's character and mind.

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