

Several Cognitions on Intensifying Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture Education in Vocational Colleges

HE Guowei^{[a],*}

^[a]Associate Professor, Teaching Department, Guizhou Radio & TV University, Guiyang, China.

*Corresponding author.

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Abstract

As the soul of Chinese national culture and profound foundation of advanced socialist culture, Chinese excellent traditional culture reflects the essence of national culture. Vocational colleges shoulder the heavy task of cultivating high-quality workers and skilled talents. It is objectively necessary to regard Chinese excellent traditional culture education as a basic general education course system and scientifically integrate it in course teaching of vocational colleges. Besides, this is an important acting point and key point of course setting innovation in vocational colleges. Vocational colleges must scientifically and reasonably plan course setting of Chinese excellent traditional culture.

Key words: Vocational college; Chinese excellent traditional culture; Education; Cognition

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1. COGNITION OF CONNOTATION OF CHINESE EXCELLENT TRADITIONAL CULTURE EDUCATION

Chinese excellent traditional culture is the root of a nation and the soul of thought. It is required to learn Chinese excellent traditional culture, feel wisdom of sages and

comprehend the essence of a nation. The ultimate purpose of learning Chinese excellent traditional culture is to know how to conduct oneself, be a Chinese and be a modern Chinese. Chinese excellent culture is continuous, profound and extensive, with a history of over 5,000 years, including four books and five classics, *The Book of Changes*, *Lao Zi*, *Zhuang Zi*, *Records of the Historian*, *History of the Han Dynasty*, *Poetry of Tang Dynasty*, *Verses of Song Dynasty*, *Dramas of Yuan Dynasty*, *A Dream in Red Mansions* and *Water Margin*... All kinds of classics are countless. Such profound spiritual implication has experienced numerous hardships. It not just witnessed national prosperity, but also suffered national hardships. Trials and hardships for many years have made spirit, moral ideal, ethics, behavior, style and temperament of Chinese nation own unique charm, and these are deeply routed in the mind of Chinese descendants. A famous scholar Nan Huaijin once said, "A nation is not afraid of the destruction, but fears to forget the fundamental culture!" (Wang, 2009). Every Chinese should possess favorable Chinese traditional cultural accomplishments. We should thoroughly understand elementary knowledge and ideological connotation of Confucian classics, historical records, the works in pre-Qin period and collected works. Confucian classics should be used to deepen our culture foundation. For example, "The man of honor will strive constantly for self-improvement" in *The Book of Changes* can stimulate us to bravely accept challenges of the era and step into the future; the spirit of "gentlemen make continuous progress and treat others generously" may be applied to cultivate ourselves and construct harmonious inward world. We should improve our wisdom, understand the past and know future development direction on the basis of historical records. We should adopt the works in pre-Qin period to open up our thought and apply rich and colorful collected works to make us become more elegant. Classical literatures of Chinese excellent traditional culture mainly include:

The Book of Changes, The Book of History, The Book of Songs, The Book of Rites, Spring and Autumn Period, The Biography of Zuo in Spring and Autumn Period, The Analects, Mo Zi, Lao Zi, Zhuang Zi, Meng Zi, The Art of War, Xun Zi, Han Feizi, Selected Works of Kang Youwei and Selected Works of Sun Yat-Sen etc..

Enhancement of Chinese excellent traditional culture education is critical for carrying forward and cultivating socialist core values. The core contents of Chinese excellent traditional culture mainly involve the following: Philosophy of heaven and humanity; the Tao way follows nature; the thought of preparing for danger in times of safety; constantly strive to become stronger; honesty and trustworthiness; self-discipline and social commitment, people-oriented; the benevolent love others; honor teachers and esteem truth; harmony in diversity; change quickly; harmonious society... (Zhang, 2012). The contents of Chinese excellent traditional culture cover many aspects such as politics, military, education, rites, music, performance in society, common sense of life, traditional morality, nature, society, history and ethics. The contents which influence the culture in each aspect and lay the foundation of Chinese traditional thinking mode are extensive and profound, with precise and rigorous logic. Besides, these contents are the origin and source of Chinese culture and have guided significance for personal study and cultivation improvement. Moreover, they can improve humanity and moral cultivation and offer many state governance schemes for later generations. As well, they are significant for current family education. They not only generate far-reaching influence on the development of Chinese culture, but also exert great influence on East Asia and Europe. Chinese and foreign people who study and cognize Chinese culture must read these contents.

If the spirit of Chinese excellent traditional culture uplifts, and civilization will naturally become splendid and magnificent. If the spirit of Chinese excellent traditional culture declines, civilization will fade and the society will be filled with various problems such as rational expansion of science and technology, confused the life value, superficial moral sense and conflict between human and nature. These problems need solving urgently. Enlightenment can be found out from Chinese traditional culture to solve these problems: "Extend the respect of the aged in one's family to that of other families; extend the love of the young in one's family to that of other families"; Chinese excellent traditional culture teaches us to keep harmonious: "People should not merely support and look after their own parents and foster their own children"; "the benevolent love others"; "rescue all in trouble". Chinese excellent traditional culture teaches us equality and philanthropism; "don't do to others what you don't want others to do to you", Chinese excellent traditional culture teaches us to show understanding and sympathy for others and respect others; "neither riches

nor honors can corrupt one." Chinese excellent traditional culture teaches us to stick to justice; "the Tao way follows nature", "unity of heaven and men", Chinese excellent traditional culture teaches us to respect nature.... Among numerous classical books, the advantages of opening a book can be counted one by one.

2. NECESSITY OF ENHANCING CHINESE EXCELLENT TRADITIONAL CULTURE EDUCATION IN VOCATIONAL COLLEGES

It has been inevitable to cultivate and advocates Chinese excellent traditional culture. Vocational colleges offer the course of Chinese excellent traditional culture education in order to intensify ideological and cultural foundation of historical mission sense and historical mission sense. With rapid development of modern vocational education, numerous application-oriented and skill-based students urgently need to absorb the nutrient of Chinese excellent traditional culture, continuously enrich, improve and perfect themselves. Hence, it is objectively necessary to set up the course of Chinese excellent traditional culture in vocational colleges.

Firstly, it is an unescapable appeal of educational policy and educational aim in the present stage. Current educational policy indicates that,

it is required to insist that education serves for socialist modernization construction and people, regard moral establishment and talent cultivation as the essential task of education, overall implement quality-oriented education, cultivate socialism constructors and successors with all-round development and make education satisfying.

Mid-term and long-term educational reform and development planning outline (2010-2020) proposes that, it is required to establish morality, cultivate talents, integrate socialist core value system in the whole process of national education and enhance Chinese excellent traditional culture education and revolutionary traditional education. Modern vocational colleges should strengthen Chinese excellent traditional culture education, which owns great and far-reaching historical significance for guiding students to more comprehensively and accurately realize historical tradition, cultural accumulation and basic national conditions of Chinese nation, recognizing historical inevitability of socialism with Chinese characteristics, sticking to socialism with Chinese characteristics and achieving great rejuvenation of Chinese nation.

Secondly, it is a prerequisite for deeply practicing socialist core values. Enhancement of Chinese excellent traditional culture education is an important foundation for cultivating and practicing socialist core values and implementing "morality establishment and talent

cultivation” as the essential task of education. *Education Planning Outline* stresses to give priority to moral education. Vocational education shoulders obligatory responsibility for “morality establishment and talent cultivation” as the essential task of education. With deep development of world multipolarization and economic globalization, domestic economic society transforms and reforms profoundly, and modern communication technology develops rapidly. Meanwhile, communication and fusion of various ideological cultures in the world become more frequent, and social ideology becomes increasingly active. The ideology of vocational college students is more autonomous. Their value pursuit is more diversified. Their personality characteristics are more distinct. Some bad ideological trends and moral behaviors in society impose significant impacts on students’ healthy growth. Strengthening Chinese excellent traditional culture education in vocational colleges plays an important role in guiding skilled students to enhance national culture self-confidence and value self-confidence and consciously practice socialist core values.

Thirdly, it is an important move to advocate moral rules of citizens. *Citizen Ethics Construction Program* issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China puts forward basic moral rules of citizens, i.e. “patriotism, law abiding, courtesy, honesty, unity, friendliness, diligence, self-improvement and dedication.” These rules not just reflect the unity of morality advancement and morality universality, but also embody Chinese traditional virtues, revolutionary morality and the unity of new morality generated under the conditions of socialist market economy. Article 5 of *The Educational Law of the PRC* stipulates that, education must serve for socialist modernization construction and combine with production and labor to cultivate constructors and successors with integrated development for the socialist cause. This provision confirms the primary and core position of moral education in socialism education work in the form of laws. To strengthen Chinese excellent traditional culture education is an important way to construct Chinese excellent traditional culture inheritance system and drive innovation of culture inheritance. Meanwhile, it is a basic precondition and culture support of performing citizens’ moral rules. Chinese traditional education deems ethics as the highest value orientation and puts moral education in the first place. First of all, education teaches students to conduct themselves and be a person with lofty personality.

Fourthly, it is an indispensable basic course to cultivate high-quality workers and skilled talents. Vocational colleges are obligated to overall implement educational policy of Chinese Communist Party, deem morality establishment and talent cultivation as the basic task, and strive to train and bring up qualified constructors and successors with lofty ideological quality and favorable

moral cultivation. The specific embodiment of fulfilling this responsibility is to cultivate high-quality workers and skilled talents. Therefore, the course of Chinese excellent traditional culture education must be set up. It plays a decisive role in achieving the objective of training high-quality workers and skilled talents. The essence of high quality is to well solve the significant problem that “what kind of people should be cultivated and how to train students”. The connotation is to comprehensively implement educational policy of Chinese Communist Party, to regard the improvement of national quality as the fundamental aim, to take cultivation of students’ sense of social responsibility, innovation spirit and practical ability as the emphasis and to train socialism constructors and successors with international view and all-round development. The basic objective of this course is to further improve students’ ideological and moral level and reach the functions of cultivating their taste, fostering their sense of beauty, upgrading their morality and improving their personality. Higher education is an important carrier of excellent culture inheritance and also a significant source of ideological and cultural innovation. “The function of education should be exerted actively” (Hu, 2011). Morality establishment and talent cultivation should be deemed as the essential task of vocational education. Vocational colleges should focus on the core that “what kind of people should be cultivated and how to train students”, carry out education of socialist core value system, enhance educational practice of socialist core value and guide young students to establish correct moral value. As well, vocational colleges ought to involve Chinese excellent traditional culture education in each stage, subject and teaching link of education, construct all-round and 3D education system and make every young student become useful talents. Chinese excellent traditional culture is abundant in precious and abundant education resources. To strengthen and improve Chinese excellent traditional culture education of students in vocational colleges has very important significance for facilitating their integrated development, inheriting and developing Chinese excellent traditional culture.

3. EFFECTIVE PLANNING OF CHINESE EXCELLENT TRADITIONAL CULTURE EDUCATION IN VOCATIONAL COLLEGE

Over the years, Chinese excellent traditional culture education has been valued by vocational colleges, gained great achievements and played a positive role in cultivating and carrying forward the spirit of patriotism, enhancing cultural self-consciousness and self-confidence and fostering students’ good ideology, morality and behavioral habits and laid a favorable foundation for training high-quality workers and skilled talents in modern times. In the face of new situation and new requirement,

Chinese vocational colleges cry out for scientific and reasonable planning of Chinese excellent traditional culture education.

3.1 Teaching Team Building

The teaching team with rational structure for Chinese excellent traditional culture education is eternal vitality of modern vocational colleges. It is imperative for vocational colleges to train a strong backbone team teaching Chinese excellent traditional culture. For teacher admittance to vocational colleges, the proportion of Chinese excellent traditional culture should be increased in the examination of teacher qualification for vocational and technical education, and the course of Chinese excellent traditional culture should be set up in vocational colleges. These are an important guarantee for vocational college teachers to firmly master basic knowledge of Chinese excellent traditional culture. For integration of scarce educational resources, teachers with the background of Chinese excellent traditional culture education should be encouraged to take active part in vocational education and teaching activity, which is an effective approach to fully utilize effective educational resources. For development of new resources, vocational colleges which own certain conditions should be encouraged to set up master studio, increase the proportion of traditional culture teaching and research talents in excellent talent supporting plan of modern vocational colleges, young teacher training plan of higher vocational colleges, other talent plans and “10,000 people plan” teaching teacher appraisal and election of vocational colleges, train and cultivate a group of famous teachers and leading talents for the course of Chinese excellent traditional culture in modern vocational colleges. These are strong moves to make sure vocational colleges effectively supply teachers for Chinese excellent traditional culture education course. For creating the atmosphere of Chinese excellent traditional culture, vocational colleges ought to strengthen Chinese excellent traditional culture education training for all teachers and increase the proportion of Chinese excellent traditional culture contents in philosophy and social science teaching and scientific research program of vocational colleges, advanced study and training of backbone teachers for ideological and political theory course, and political advisor backbone training. Moreover, vocational colleges should increase the training content of Chinese excellent traditional culture in teacher and president quality improvement plan of vocational colleges, and boost the ability of vocational college teachers to teach Chinese excellent traditional culture. All these measures are a fundamental guarantee to reinforce endogenous force of Chinese excellent traditional culture education in vocational colleges.

3.2 Course Classification

In general, course setting of vocational colleges can be divided into general education course, professional

education course and practical education course. General education is a kind of quality-oriented education or common education in vocational education stage, i.e. teach all students in vocational colleges basic language, history, culture, science and humanity etc.. The teacher of this course teaches fundamental knowledge. In accordance with the course setting overview of vocational colleges, the nature, characteristics and significance of Chinese excellent traditional culture education course, this course can fall into general education course.

Chinese excellent traditional culture education course as a general education course contributes to training personality traits of skilled students, expanding their scope of knowledge, enhancing their sense of social responsibility and sense of mission and continuously enriching them with the culture content which adapts the era. Such general education with rich connotation is not just a kind of course setting, but also an educational thought. Meanwhile, it is also a kind of educational view, educational concept and educational state. The thought of Confucian school which is close to general education mainly includes two aspects. On the one hand, in terms of cultivation direction, gentlemen, “sages” or “scholars” own complete personality—the unity of knowledge and practice, connection of learning and thinking, wisdom, benevolence and braveness; on the other hand, in terms of educational content, “erudition” is required, and extensiveness and connection are valued (Zhang, 2006). For modern vocational and technical education, it should give students all-round education and training, and educational contents contain professional education and non-professional education, with the purpose of cultivating human freedom, harmony and integrated development. Li Manli applied “ideal type” method to preliminarily construct the concept of general education from three perspectives: nature, purpose and content. With regard to the nature, general education is a constituent part of higher education and it is also non-professional education that all college students should receive. About the purpose, general education aims to cultivate social people and national citizens with comprehensive development who takes active part in social life and own the sense of social responsibility. As for the content, general education is an extensive, non-professional and non-utilitarian education of elementary knowledge, skill and attitude (Cai, 2004). Chinese excellent traditional education course as general education can teach skilled students how to think, learn and analyze problems in a comprehensive manner, promote their wisdom and loyalty, and contributes to improving happiness index.

3.3 Course Content Arrangement

Promotion of excellent traditional culture and construction of socialist core value system facilitate each other (Wang, 2011). Chinese excellent traditional culture intensively reflects language customs of Chinese nation, cultural

tradition, ideology and affective commitment, aggregates moral rules, ideological morality and value orientation that Chinese nation generally approves and extensively accepts and possesses very abundant ideological implication. In a bid to enhance Chinese excellent traditional culture education for vocational college students, vocational colleges should take promotion of patriotism spirit as the core, deem family-country affection education, social care education and personality cultivation education as the emphasis, strive to perfect their moral traits, cultivate their ideal personality and improve their political accomplishment. These which are associated with the contents of socialist core values belong to the scope of ideological and political courses of vocational colleges, enrich and deepen the contents of ideological and political courses. Course arrangement of vocational colleges should closely focus on the following aspects. Firstly, vocational colleges should carry out family-country affection education with such key content that “Every man has a share of responsibility for the fate of his country.” Such education can guide vocational college students to profoundly realize that Chinese Dream is the dream of every Chinese. Additionally, they should regard prosperity of the motherland as the greatest honor, deem national decline as the largest disgrace, enhance national identity, cultivate patriotic emotion, establish national confidence, form the common ideal of achieving great rejuvenation of Chinese nation by unremitting endeavors and train themselves to be Chinese people with self-confidence, self-esteem and self-improvement. Secondly, vocational colleges should carry out social care education with the key point of helping each other and making others succeed before one’s success. Such education can guide vocational college students to correctly deal with the relations between individuals and others, between individuals and society and between individuals and nature, and learn to keep kindness in mind, understand others, respect the old, love the young, rescue the disabled, help the poor, care for society and respect nature. Besides, it can cultivate collectivism spirit and ecological civilization consciousness, form a favorable habit of dedication and charity, and train them to be Chinese people with high quality, civilization and loving heart. Thirdly, vocational colleges should carry out personality cultivation education with the key point of having a firm and sincere aim, and advocating virtue and strong persistence. Such education contributes to guide vocational college students to make a clear distinction between the right and the wrong, observe law and discipline, be tough and generous, and make progress. Additionally, it can consciously carry forward Chinese national excellent moral thought, help students form good moral traits and behavioral habits and culture them to be Chinese people who know honor and disgrace, keep good faith and dare to innovate. Fourthly, vocational colleges should carry out education of responsibility sense

and mission sense to inherit and promote Chinese excellent traditional culture. Such education contributes to cultivate vocational college students to love Chinese excellent traditional culture and enhance rational knowledge and self-confidence of Chinese excellent traditional culture. In this way, students can cognize contemporary China and treat external work in a more comprehensive and objective way, realize the uniform relationship between national prospect and personal value achievement, and consciously maintain national dignity, security and benefit.

3.4 Credit Regulations

Credit which is used to indicate the learning quantity required by a student to gain a certificate and diploma or reach certain level is a score unit obtained to successfully complete a subject. Besides, it is also a unit of measurement applied to calculate students’ learning quantity. According to the semester, the special credits of each course and practical link are subject to the provisions of professional teaching program. Chinese excellent traditional culture education as a basic general education course should be provided with certain credit regulations, once it is set up in vocational colleges.

The course of Chinese excellent traditional culture education should have an objective, rational and scientific criterion on credit regulations of vocational colleges. Chinese excellent traditional culture education which belongs to the scope of general education is a general education course. In particular, as a basic course of modern vocational colleges, Chinese excellent traditional culture education has its far-reaching significance and great function. Its position and role in course setting of vocational colleges should be same with *Introduction to Mao Zedong Thought* and *Theoretical System of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics*, and *Ideological and Moral Cultivation & Legal Basis*. All of them are equally important and indispensable. They give play to different functions from diverse aspects and perspectives, form educational complementation and overall improve personality. Their fundamental purpose and ultimate objective are consistent. Any general education course should be parallel to *Introduction to Mao Zedong Thought* and *Theoretical System of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics*, and *Ideological and Moral Cultivation & Legal Basis*, as long as it serves as a fundamental course in professional and skilled talent training scheme. Generally, 2*18 or 3*18 class hours can be established, and at least 2 credits can be gained. Hence, once the course of Chinese excellent traditional culture education is set up in vocational colleges as a basic general education, it should imitate the class hour and credit standards of *Introduction to Mao Zedong Thought* and *Theoretical System of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics*, and *Ideological and Moral Cultivation & Legal Basis*. And, vocational colleges should arrange the course for 2-3 class hours per week in detail in accordance with practical

conditions of colleges, i.e. 36-54 class hours in one semester and 2-3 credits.

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