Ethical Analysis of Circle Culture

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Abstract: Circle culture is the sum total of people's ideology, values, emotional attitudes, social psychology and behavior patterns formed based on circle. "Attaching importance to relations", "cherishing affection and personal loyalty", and "paying attention to ethics" are its main connotations. It has been praised for many positive values and criticized for some negative influences. Therefore, the circle culture can neither be completely denied nor fully affirmed, but should be developed rationally through inheritance and innovation, and its evil should be suppressed and its good should be promoted. To correct the circle culture, we should take equality and justice as the basis, follow the way of loyalty and forgiveness, and eliminate the improper consciousness of "one of us"; we should transform from kindheartedness to philanthropism, reverse the closed thinking of circle culture; we should strengthen personal morality, raise public virtue, eliminate the malpractice of circle culture egoism.

Keywords: Circle Culture; Relationship; Ethics

Introduction

Since ancient times, circles have been a particularly important social phenomenon in China, and Chinese people are especially willing to make circles. Circle culture plays a very important role in Chinese mainstream culture, and it can even be said to be an organizational basis of Chinese mainstream culture.

1.1 Definition of circle culture

In China, everyone lives in different circles such as relatives, fellow villagers, classmates, friends, colleagues and so on. It's just that some people have more circles and some have fewer; some people are the core of the circle, and some people may be the periphery of the circle; some circles are gradually becoming smaller and disappeared, while others are growing stronger. The whole society is the combination of countless circles. It can be said that everyone grows up and lives in circles. In China's rural society, the organization of social order and social circles is relatively important. [3] (P44) Circles are the way people exist, live and interact. In the long-term circle life, the whole society has formed certain ideological cognition, value concept, emotion attitude and behavior pattern based on circle, namely circle culture.

1.2 Influences of circle culture

Everything has two sides, and so is circle culture. On the one hand, circle culture makes the friendship between the members of the circle become morally obligatory, which leads to a fact that people have to conduct emotional exchanges by following the human relationship principle, trying to maintain their relationship and friendship. Circle culture emphasizes the moral obligation of mutual help and care, which requires the members of the circle to care for each other. Finally, circle culture is beneficial to restrain people's behavior, promote harmonious interpersonal relationship and stability of social order. The thought of valuing ethics and etiquette in circle culture requires that all members of the circle should treat people in strict accordance with the corresponding ethics and etiquette requirements. If they violate the rules of ethics and etiquette, they will be criticized or even alienated and isolated.

On the other hand, firstly, circle culture is not conducive to the formation of good social morality. Circle culture is a kind of inward - looking egoism culture with closed thinking. Its emphasis on friendship, ethics, care are set in a small circle, with a sense of internal and external relations. This awareness makes people generally favor the people who are on their own

side. Thus, a bad social moral value has been formed. Second, circle culture is unbeneficial to the cultivation of legal consciousness and the formation of a good social atmosphere. Circle culture is a kind of relationship culture, which gives birth to people's relationship thinking. As a result, when people encounter difficulties or disputes, the first thing they think of is to rely on relations or acquaintances, because they believe that human relations are more important and reliable than law. Third, circle culture goes against the development of personal enthusiasm and the formation of good personality. In order to blend into their own circle, people sometimes need to curry favor, force a smile, and they have to suppress their own opinions and pursuit, which causes the disappearance of individual independence consciousness, and it is easy for people to form the personality of obedience and dependence. As can be seen from the above, circle culture has both positive and negative effects. Therefore, we can neither completely deny nor completely affirm circle culture.

2.Basic connotations of circle culture

Circle culture is a culture formed on the basis of circles, so the discussion of circle culture should start from circles. There are large and small circles. In large circles such as the entertainment and academic circles, insiders are less close and have relatively weak emotional connections. Large circles have small circles, such as the circle of relatives, friends and so on, and these small circles have a great influence on people's daily life. The circle in circle culture is often referred to these small circles. It is a social group in which people bond based on personal relations and certain emotions.

Circle culture is formed on the basis of various circles. Exactly speaking, circle culture is the sum total of people's ideology, values, emotional attitudes, social psychology and behavior patterns formed based on circles. Circle is a kind of social existence and the carrier and foundation of circle culture; circle culture is a kind of social consciousness, which is the reflection of circles. It is formed based on circles, but also acts on circles and influences the existence and development of circles. In the differential pattern of Chinese rural society, family, clan, neighborhood and village are all social circles. [3] (P43-44) Therefore, the circle culture formed based on these circles not only gives birth to the mainstream of Chinese traditional culture, but also reflects the basic essence of Chinese traditional culture. Circle culture is the "matrix" of Chinese traditional culture. In terms of its connotation, it mainly includes "attaching importance to relations", "cherishing affection and personal loyalty", and "paying attention to ethics".

2.1 Attaching importance to relations

A circle is a network formed by personal connections based on consanguinity, affinity, geographical, academic and professional relationships and other social relations. [3] (P34) These personal relationships are different. This difference forms the relational consciousness of circle culture, and it means people treat each other differently according to their relationship, and pursue particularism. In interpersonal communication, that is

"We must ask who the object is and what relationship with ourselves before we can decide how to treat this thing." [3] (P42) Therefore, "attaching importance to relations" refers to attaching importance to the relationship with ourselves, whether they are "friends", "acquaintances" or "outsiders". If he is one of us, we can give priority. If he is an acquaintance, we can give as much attention as possible. If he is an outsider, it's business as usual. As time goes by, the consciousness of "priority of one of us", "dependence of one of us", "respect of one of us", and "trust of one of us" has been formed.

2.2 Cherishing affection and personal loyalty

The circle is formed on the basis of various social relations. In the long-term life and communication, the members of the circle will naturally form various real, beautiful and good relationships, such as family affection, friendship, and nostalgia. Traditional ethics regulates and guides these relationships to meet people's emotional needs and maintain the harmony of interpersonal relations, so the consciousness of cherishing affection and personal loyalty is formed. Cherishing affection and personal loyalty is that people understand the relationship between each other, and understand the required affection and loyalty between them according to their respective status. Whether and to what extent there are affection and personal loyalty determine whether and what kind of circles can be formed. Those who are affectionate and intimate with us are one of us; those who are less affectionate and intimate are acquaintances; those who are not affectionate and intimate are outsiders or even enemies. In order to become one of us, or at least not enemies, people begin to work to strengthen or

maintain their relationship with each other following the human relationship principle, focusing on moving around, keeping in touch, exchanging favors. The so-called human relationship principle is the interpersonal communication criterion of doing favors - giving favors - owe favors - return favors. The universalization of human relationship principle has formed the strong human relationship consciousness of the Chinese people. However, Chinese people's sense of valuing human relationship is circumferential. In the traditional Chinese system of morality, there is no concept of "love", such as that which exists in Christianity-universal love without distinctions [1] (P76). Chinese people only love a specific object--"friends".

2.3 Paying attention to ethics

The emphasis of human relationship prompts people to attach importance to the ethics of maintaining relationships and affection between each other. In any circle, if the members of the circle interact with each other in violation of the corresponding ethical requirements, the affection will be weakened, and the relationship will be broken when the affection is broken. For example, if the father does not act like a father and the son does not act like a son, then the affection between them will surely disappear, and finally the relationship between them will be broken. Therefore, the relationship mainly depends on the depth of affection, and the depth of affection is often closely related to ethics. Liang Shuming believed that relationships are all ethics; ethics begins at home, and does not end there...ethical relation, namely, friendship relation, is a kind of obligation relation between people. The essence of ethics lies in this affection and personal loyalty. [4] (P72) Relationship, friendship and ethics are a trinity, so valuing relationships and friendship will naturally lead to paying attention to ethics. Paying attention to ethics means paying attention to the order of the differences between friends and strangers, the far and near, the old and youth, and the upper and lower, and abiding by the corresponding ethics and morals according to the status of each other. Ethical concerns are often reflected in etiquette in daily life. Ethics requires that people attach great importance to etiquette, and politeness in their manners and behaviors, and consciously abide by the etiquette and customs of reciprocity.

3.Values of circle culture

The value of circle culture refers to the role that circle culture plays on individual and social development. In the traditional society and the present times, the influence of circle culture on people's life and social development is both positive and negative. But with the transformation of traditional society to modern society, the negative influence of the circle culture is becoming more and more obvious and prominent.

3.1 Positive values of circle culture

Compared with westerners, Chinese people have their unique circle culture, and they are focused and keen on making various circles. Whether in the past or now, this kind of circle culture is favored and respected by people because of its positive values. It can meet some needs of people and is beneficial to people's life and development.

First of all, circle culture is conducive to satisfying the emotional needs of its members, such as the sense of belonging, warmth, concern and love. As the circle culture makes the relationship and friendship among the members of the circle morally obligatory, it makes people try their best to maintain the relationship and friendship between each other following the human relationship principle, which can not only meet people's emotional needs for belonging, love, warmth and so on, but also can make people reduce and release all kinds of pressure, gain confidence and happiness. This is one of the reasons that circle culture is respected and favored by people.

Secondly, circle culture is beneficial to the members of the circle to have more opportunities to obtain social resources, realize economic cooperation and mutual assistance. Circle culture emphasizes mutual help and care, which requires its members to care for each other. Because the person is one of us or acquaintance with a certain relationship basis, if you do not help him when he is in trouble, you are not only unreasonable, but also will be criticized in the moral aspect by the people in the same circle. Therefore, trying to help others is an important expression of circle culture, and also an important moral code in circle culture.

Finally, circle culture is good to restrain people's behavior, promote harmonious interpersonal relationship and stability of social order. The thought of valuing ethics and etiquette in circle culture requires that all members of the circle should

treat people in strict accordance with the corresponding ethics and etiquette requirements. If they violate the rules of ethics and etiquette, they will be criticized or even alienated and isolated. Once isolated by the circle, people will be in trouble psychologically and in life. Therefore, circle culture can restrain people's behavior, so that people cannot be arbitrary.

3.2 Negative values of circle culture

Compared with the positive values of circle culture, its negative values are more obvious and prominent. Especially in today's society, circle culture has almost become a derogatory term for criticism.

First of all, circle culture is not conducive to the formation of good social morality. Circle culture is a kind of inward - looking egoism culture with closed thinking. Its emphasis on friendship, ethics, care are set in a small circle, with a sense of internal and external relations. This awareness makes people generally favor the people who are on their own side. Thus, a bad social moral value has been formed. At the same time, this kind of "biased" ethics will form double moral standards, and they use very different moral standards to distinguish between themselves and others.

Secondly, circle culture is unbeneficial to the cultivation of legal consciousness and the formation of a good social atmosphere. Circle culture is a kind of relationship culture and human association culture, which gives birth to people's relationship thinking and human association thinking. As a result, when people encounter difficulties or disputes, the first thing they think of is to rely on relations or acquaintances, because they believe that human relations are more important and reliable than law. The Chinese, as a race, are unable to have any faith in a system. For a system, a machine, is always inhuman, and the Chinese hate anything inhuman [2] (P100). It is such idea that seriously inhibit or stifle the formation of people's legal consciousness and legal thinking.

At last, circle culture goes against the development of personal enthusiasm and the formation of good personality. The value orientation of circle culture is harmony and prosperity. This is not only reflected in ethics, but also regulated, constrained and guided by ethics. For the harmony and prosperity of the circle, its members should be loyal to the circle and not speak for outsiders or betray the circle. You should respect your teachers and elders and safeguard their dignity. This situation is more serious in traditional society. Thus, in order to blend into the circle, people sometimes need to curry favor, force a smile, and they have to suppress their own opinions and pursuit, which causes the disappearance of individual independence consciousness, and it is easy for people to form the personality of obedience and dependence.

As can be seen from the above, circle culture has both positive and negative effects. Therefore, we can neither completely deny nor completely affirm circle culture. Just as some scholars have said, the 'relation society' and 'human association society' have their advantages and disadvantages. We should analyze and study them objectively and find a way to give full play to their advantages and reduce their disadvantages.

4.Correction of circle culture

To restrain the negative influences of circle culture is to govern circle culture, that is to suppress its evil and promote its good on the basis of inheriting and developing its positive values.

4.1 Restraining the negative influences of circle culture

Firstly, we should follow the way of loyalty and forgiveness based on equality and justice and eliminate the improper sense of "one of us". The primary content of circle culture is the consciousness of attaching importance to relationship. This consciousness brings people closer to each other and binds them together. However, this kind of consciousness has an improper tendency towards oneself and outsiders because of the emphasis on giving priority to one of us, and the lack of equality and justice. Therefore, it must be checked and eliminated.

Besides, we should make a transformation from kindheartedness to philanthropism, reverse the closed thinking of circle culture. Circle culture is a kind of inward - looking egoism culture with closed thinking. This kind of thinking will make people only identify with a small circle and lack a great vision, which is extremely inconsistent with the open and highly dynamic modern society. Therefore, it is necessary to reverse the closed thinking of circle culture, so that people can accommodate and care for everything with an open and inclusive heart. In order to cultivate this mentality, we should take ethics as the core and realize the transformation of the whole social culture psychology.

At last, we should strengthen our personal morality and eliminate the disadvantages of circle culture egoism. Circle culture is a culture of egoism. Egotism, the doctrine in which all values are centered on the self. [3] (P31) Egoism is an important cause of such problems as double moral standards. Therefore, we should eliminate the disadvantages of egoism of circle culture with virtue. That is, we should revise and correct the unreasonable part of our personal morality in private communication.

4.2 Promoting the positive influences of circle culture

Compared with personal morality, public virtue can resolve the selfishness of egoism with public spirit. Therefore, to promote the positive influence of circle culture, we should raise public virtue. Cultivating public virtue is to cultivate people's public moral quality, and the core is to cultivate public spirit. Public spirit is the value core of public virtue, which contains equality, self-discipline, responsibility, tolerance and other qualities consistent with public virtue. Its value orientation is based on taking national interests and public interests first, respecting for other people's interests, and thinking all things equal. The goal of it is to maintain social fairness, to show moral care and to take public responsibility. [5] Therefore, cultivating public virtue is mainly to make citizens form the moral consciousness of the public spirit. This moral consciousness can allow individuals to be able to respect and care equally with friends, acquaintances and strangers.

Conclusion

Circle culture is highly praised for its positive values and criticized for its negative values. To correct the circle culture, we should take the principle of loyalty and forgiveness as the bottom line, strictly observe "no encroachment" and "no coercion", and eliminate the improper consciousness of "one of us"; we should take tolerance and philanthropism as the lofty moral spirit, cultivate the spirit of openness and inclusiveness, and reverse the closed mindset of circle culture; we should strengthen our personal morality, raise public virtue, cultivate citizen's good virtue, and eliminate the malpractice of circle culture egoism. Of course, to correct circle culture, we should not only rely on ethics, but also strengthen institutional construction. Ethics provides ideological guidance and value basis for the institutional governance of circle culture, while institutional construction can provide a strong institutional guarantee for the ethical governance of circle culture.

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