

Exploration of Ideological and Political Education in the Course of“Introduction to Social Work”

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Abstract: The chapter on the history and development of social work in the course“Introduction to Social Work”contains a wealth of ideological and educational materials.This article engages in an in-depth analysis of ancient thought which provide the origins of social work in China.Specifically,it discusses Confucius’concept of“Great Harmony,”Mencius’“Benevolent Love,”and Mozi’s“Universal Love.”Delving into the rich ideological and political connotations of ancient philosophies which have been inherited and used through the ages,it reveals the profoundness of ancient Chinese thought.In so doing,it suggests the practical value of these philosophies today,and continuing significance for modern society.

Keywords: Social work;Ancient thought;Ideological and political education

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1. Introduction

In December 2016,at the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Higher Education it was proposed that“we should make good use of the main channel classroom teaching,with each course guarding a certain channel and cultivating a field of responsibility.We should make all kinds of courses go hand in hand with ideological education theory courses,forming a synergistic effect.”In response to the call for the conference to“adhere to moral education and cultivate people and integrate the cultivation and practice of socialist core values into the entire process of teaching and educating people,”and in view of the fact that many college students today are only children who tend to be self-centered,private,isolated,and admire wealth while despising poverty,how can we integrate General Secretary Xi Jinping’s concept of“a community of shared future for mankind”and the goal of“building a moderately prosperous society in all respects,leaving no one behind”“The importance of“leaving no one behind on the road to common prosperity”is deeply rooted in students’worldview,outlook on life,and values.

2. Exploring the Ideological Content of Ancient Chinese Philosophies and Their Continuation to the Present in the Course“Introduction to Social Work”

In teaching“Introduction to Social Work”in the classroom,the author has been actively exploring ideological education within the curriculum.They have also made efforts to achieve a subtle and profound understanding and have tried to avoid rigid preaching of ideological education for the sake of ideological education.Teachers should cleverly and organically embed“ideological education”.Through in-depth analysis,ideological and political elements of ideological and political education that have been connected through ancient and modern times and which have been overlooked in the past are extracted and deduced.This article will examine elements of ideological education from the ancient philosophies of welfare that originated in Chinese social work and discuss them from the aspects of Confucius’“Great Harmony”,Mencius’“Benevolent Love”,and Mozi’s“Universal Love”,profoundly demonstrating the lasting significance and value of ancient Chinese philosophies of welfare today.

2.1 Ideological Elements of Confucius’Philosophy of“Great Harmony”Extending to the Present

Confucius’idea of“Great Harmony”comes from the“Li Yun”chapter of the Book of Rites,in which Confucius says:“When

the Great Way was implemented, the world was shared by people, and virtuous and talented individuals were selected to serve everyone, emphasizing honesty and harmony. Therefore, people should not only support their parents, but also raise their children. They should ensure that the elderly can continue their lives, middle-aged people can serve society, and young children can grow smoothly, so that the elderly without wives, the elderly without husbands, the children who lost their fathers in their early years, the elderly without children, and the disabled can all receive support. Men should have a career, while women should get married in a timely manner. People abhor the phenomenon of wealth being abandoned on the ground, collect and store it but do not keep it for themselves; also hating those who avoid taking part in joint labor, refuse to work for personal gain. In this way, there will be no conspiracies, no theft of property, no military unrest, and no need to close the doors of every household. This is called the "Great Harmony" society." In this way, Confucius constructed a vision of "all under heaven is for the public good" for humanity, with a focus on people, governing with benevolence and virtue, and creating a world of peace and prosperity. The "world of great harmony" can be said to be the ideal society that the Chinese nation has been striving for from ancient times to the present, and it is also a shared vision of life that humanity pursues.

"Introduction to Social Work" explores the welfare ideas embedded in the origins of social work in both Western and Chinese contexts. While the external influences primarily come from the West, the continuity from ancient times to the present connects the ancient Chinese concept of "Great Harmony" with President Xi Jinping's proposition of a "community of shared future for mankind." Currently, President Xi Jinping's "Belt and Road" initiative promotes friendly exchanges and win-win cooperation with countries worldwide, aiming to build a community of shared future for mankind and facilitate the peaceful development of all humanity. This strategic ideology reflects the real embodiment of the "Great Harmony" envisioned by Confucius in the contemporary world. The concept of a community of shared future for mankind proposed by President Xi Jinping embodies the broad-mindedness of the Chinese people throughout history, transcending national and ethnic boundaries, seeking unity in diversity, and pursuing harmony among different entities. This concept is in line with traditional Chinese notions of Great Harmony, unity between heaven and humanity, harmony among diverse nations, and unity in diversity.

In conclusion, in the course "Introduction to Social Work," through the integration of Chinese-style ideological education, teachers guide and inspire students to contemplate the rich connotations, practical values, and significance of the concept of "Great Harmony." They aim to cultivate a mindset of embracing the world, promoting kindness towards others, and working hand in hand with the world for progress and development. The impact of this education should not only reside in students' minds but also manifest in their actions, translating into tangible efforts that serve society.

2.2 Elements of Mencius's Philosophy of "Benevolent Love" Extending to the Present

The famous saying "honor old people as we do our own aged parents, care for other's children as one's own" originated from the first part of the "King Liang Hui" chapter of Mencius' collected philosophical writings. It is a well-known quote from one of the most prominent figures in Confucianism, after Confucius himself. The essence of this statement is to teach people that when caring for and respecting their own elders, they must not forget about the elders of others. Similarly, when nurturing and cherishing their own children, they should also remember to care for and protect the children of others. "Honor old people as we do our own aged parents, care for other's children as one's own" emphasizes the importance of empathy and compassion towards others. It means to show empathy and concern for others, not only towards one's own elderly and children but also towards the elderly and children of others. It is about treating others with the same benevolent heart and not solely focusing on one's own family. This concept embodies the core principles of Mencius' advocacy for benevolent governance and the universal spread of love and compassion.

The Confucian concept of "benevolent love" involves cultivating moral character, showing love and care for family and people, and promoting education and enlightenment among the masses. It permeates various aspects of life, from secular to political, and sets the spiritual direction in reality. On February 3, 2019, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, President of the People's Republic of China, and Chairman of the Central Military Commission, Xi Jinping, stated in a speech during a Spring Festival gathering that throughout history, the Chinese people have advocated filial piety, love for the elderly, and the principle of "honor old people as we do our own aged parents, care for other's children as one's own." As China has entered an aging society, it is crucial to ensure that the elderly are provided for, supported, happy, and secure, as this relates to social harmony and stability. In the 2019 Asian Civilizations Dialogue Conference, President Xi Jinping emphasized, "being friendly and kind to neighbors, promoting harmony among nations", which has always been the Chinese way of conduct in the Chinese civilization. The concepts of "benevolent love" and "loving others" represent a further elevation of the idea of benevolence. President Xi's promotion of "speaking of benevolence" carries epoch-making significance and provides a powerful basis for the practice of socialist core values. In today's rapidly developing society, while people's material lives have greatly improved, there have also been phenomena of ideological fragmentation and moral decline. The virtue advocated

in traditional culture, such as “honor old people as we do our own aged parents, care for other’s children as one’s own”, is beneficial in correcting people’s biased thinking through practical actions and guiding them to “respect their own elders and extend that respect to others’ elders; care for their own children and extend that care to others’ children.”

2.3 The Ideological Elements of Mozi’s Philosophy of “Universal Love” Extending to the Present

The core concept of Mozi, a representative figure of the Mohist School, is “Universal Love.” This phrase originates from the chapter of the same name in the ancient text attributed to this figure. The original text reads, “Love one another and benefit one another.” “Universal Love” refers to an all-encompassing love that transcends hierarchies, distances, and kinship. It means loving all people as one loves oneself. The literal meaning of “Universal Love” can be understood by examining the individual characters. The character “jian” - originally depicted two bundles of grain held in one hand, which can be further extended to represent wholeness and impartiality. The Mohist School also referred to “Universal Love” as “Complete Love” or “Comprehensive Love,” emphasizing the extension of love to encompass all humanity. Mozi stated, “The circle has one center and equal radii.” Here, “equal radii” refers to the same circle. Interpreting “Universal Love” from the perspective of concentric circles, “one center and equal radii” is the best explanation of the Mohist idea of equal and impartial love. It means treating all individuals with equal love, considering oneself as the center of the circle and loving all those around oneself. The four aspects of Universal Love are filial piety, fraternal duty, kindly, and righteousness, which are manifested as love for parents, love for siblings, love for children, and love for others, respectively. Viewing oneself as the center and others as part of one’s circle and recognizing that one also exists within the circles of others, encapsulates the idea of Universal Love. According to Mozi, Universal Love involves mutual giving and benefiting: “Love one another and benefit one another.” In modern terms, it can be understood as “I love everyone, and everyone loves me in return.”

The concept advocated by “Universal Love” shares similarities with the idea of a “Community of Shared Future for Mankind.” Both represent a vision of harmony and mutual love, aiming to achieve a better world through mutual recognition and understanding. President Xi Jinping of China delivered a keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the 2nd World Internet Conference in 2015. When discussing the need for reform in the global internet governance system, he stated, “If all under heaven love one another, then the governance will be in order; if they hate one another, then there will be chaos.” To improve the global internet governance system and maintain order in cyberspace, we must uphold the concept of solidarity and mutual trust, abandon the old zero-sum mentality and winner-takes-all mindset.” President Xi’s reference to Mozi’s words addresses contemporary issues and conveys the idea of a “Community of Shared Future in Cyberspace.” It emphasizes the need for countries to work together, love and benefit one another, and promote open cooperation and shared governance in the realm of cyberspace. In his recent speeches, President Xi Jinping has frequently quoted Mozi’s ideas of “Universal Love” and the principles of “not bullying the weak and not insulting the poor.” By applying ancient wisdom to contemporary situations, we can gain new insights and guidance with significant practical value. The course “Introduction to Social Work” utilizes ideological and political education to internalize Mozi’s advocacy for universal and egalitarian love. In practical life, students are encouraged to avoid self-interest and pursuing individual gains, instead striving for mutual benefit, mutual assistance, cooperation, and win-win outcomes. By contributing their modest efforts, they can contribute to the realization of common goals and happiness for humanity as a whole. The goal is to instill in students the values of collective well-being and the importance of working together for the greater good.

3. Conclusion

The integration of ideological and political education into university curriculum is a new concept and approach that provides strong support for moral education and character development in higher education. Within the course “Introduction to Social Work,” Chinese ancient philosophies serve as a rich source of ideas and ideological elements in the field of social work. Therefore, for non-ideological courses, it is essential for teachers to conduct in-depth analysis and exploration of this content in their classroom teaching. Additionally, efforts should be made to study the important thoughts of Xi Jinping, stay informed about current political affairs, understand students’ ideological dynamics and trends, and study how better to organically integrate their professional knowledge with ideological education. Teachers can subtly influence students’ thinking, behavior, and conduct, ultimately preparing them to not only better integrate into society, but to serve and contribute to society.

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