

Analysis of the Contemporary Moral Education Value of the Unity of Knowledge and Action

Ju Kun

Nanjing Normal University Taizhou College, Taizhou, Jiangsu, China

Abstract: The unity of knowledge and action advocated by Wang Yangming is a viewpoint obtained by absorbing and learning from the traditional previous views. It is in line with the development direction of advanced socialist culture and ideological and political education, and has high educational and cultural value. This paper will fully explore the modern value of Wang Yangming's theory of "the unity of knowledge and action", and discusses the contemporary moral education value of this theory from four aspects, which are enhancing value identification and cultivating moral quality, practicing the fundamentals of behavior and achieving the unity of knowledge and action, paying attention to the ways and methods and providing revelations and guidances, strengthening the campus construction and optimizing the campus environment, so as to provide new ideas and new paths for the moral education reform and optimization of schools, and further improve the quality of moral education.

Keywords: The Unity of Knowledge and Action; Moral Education Value

1. Introduction

The unity of knowledge and action is very consistent with the contemporary ideological and political education system, but there are some problems in the moral education at present, such as the inadequate exploration and application of the unity of knowledge and action results in its unclear role in the contemporary moral education. Based on this, on the basis of deeply understanding and grasping the connotation of the unity of knowledge and action, how to better realize its modern transformation and empower modern moral education is worthy of our deep thinking and exploration.

2. Interpretation of the Connotation of "the

Unity of Knowledge and Action"

2.1 The Original Meaning of Knowledge and Action

"the unity of knowledge and action" mainly discusses and explains the relationship between "knowledge" and "action". In the process of people's contact and cognition of things, knowledge and action are inseparable and unified, that is "the knowledge is the beginning of the action and the action is the the accomplishment of the knowledge", which contains discussion of knowledge and action, and the knowledge is the basis and premise of action, while the action is the achievement of knowledge, and the two cannot be separated, and they are a unified whole.

Wang Yangming believes that "knowing but not doing is not knowing", which stresses that "to know is to act, and to act is to know". Knowledge is the innate knowledge of every person, but there are some differences in people's exploration and application of this knowledge, and it is necessary to seek the inner innate knowledge in continuous practice to explore the noumenon of mind. This process is that to know is to act^[1]. "To act is to know" means that action is produced under the guidance of innate knowledge, and is the concretization and important embodiment of knowledge, and the result of action can test whether knowledge is correct or not, so as to correct the idea.

2.2 The Unity of Knowledge and Action

"The unity of knowledge and action" is an important proposition in Wang Yangming's thought. He criticizes the concept of "separation of knowledge and action" in the middle period of Ming Dynasty, and is aimed at reversing the bad social atmosphere at that time. "The unity of knowledge and action" holds that both knowledge and action are the noumenon of the mind and cannot be divided into two ends. Wang Yangming believes that it is under

the guidance and drive of the concept of "knowledge" that the action is produced. Therefore, the knowledge itself is the beginning of the action, and people can practice action and know the road as long as they have the idea to explore and walk. Consciousness itself is the first stage of the process of action, and thought is the action. From the above discussion, it can be seen that the so-called "knowledge" of Wang Yangming's thought is the knowledge contained in various forms of perception such as mind and thinking, rather than limited to theories and knowledge in the general sense. From the perspective of action, the action is in the last stage of cognition, and the action is also knowledge. The so-called "action" of Wang Yangming's thought does not only refer to the practical action in the general sense, but also the human psychological behavior, and the knowledge and action is the relationship between one and two sides, which is an inseparable unity. Wang Yangming's discussion on the relationship between the two is very in-depth and thorough, which makes the concept of "the unity of knowledge and action" more rich and perfect^[2].

2.3 The Extension of Innate Knowledge

Mencius adhered to the concept that "human nature is inherently good". The innate knowledge, which means that people learn from a young age to be filial to their parents, respect their teachers and their elders, is natural-born, but not acquired. Wang Yangming inherited Mencius' concept of "innate knowledge", held that "the innate knowledge is the noumenon of the mind", and put forward that "the innate knowledge is the heavenly principles", and explained the relationship between "the innate knowledge" and "the heavenly principles". He held that the heavenly principles are the moral concepts that people are born to know, and people will naturally reveal the heavenly principles in the process of interpersonal communication and practical action, which are the innate knowledge. On the level of ethics and morality, Wang Yangming believes that "the innate knowledge is the supreme goodness". People are born with the supreme goodness and purity, and the evil deeds that occur after birth are the result of individuals masking and hiding their own innate knowledge with selfish desires, which leads to the disappearance of the original state

of innate knowledge. Therefore, it is necessary to overcome people's selfish desires and restore heavenly principles by means of "pursuing knowledge" and "investing things", so as to achieve "the extension of innate knowledge".

3. The Goal of Moral Education under the Guidance of the Unity of Knowledge and Action

3.1 Cultivating Contemporary Talents with "Ideals and Beliefs"

Wang Yangming put forward that "people must learn from the principle, and then work hard with the principle", which emphasizes the importance of determination in the learning process. Determination is a good thought that requires constant identification and persistence, and the good thoughts exist as the heavenly principles exist. Curbing personal desires and evil thoughts, and expanding and carrying forward good thoughts are aspirations. Therefore, it is required to establish a determination to learn, in order to pave the way for later study and development. Thus, the moral education should also take the cultivation of contemporary talents with "ideal and faith" as the goal, take the ideal and faith education as the key element, and encourage young people to set up lofty aspirations under the life creed that "if you aspire to be a saint, then you will be a saint; if you aspire to be a wise person, then you will be a wise person" ^[3].

3.2 Cultivating Contemporary Talents with "Mission and Responsibility"

Wang Yangming put forward that "the key to knowledge lies in action, and the knowledge cannot be acquired without action." Only through the practice, the good is externalized into virtue, and the conscience is constantly clear, can we truly achieve the goal of "extension of innate knowledge". In the new era and new journey, cultivating contemporary talents with a mission and responsibility is the "target" of education and moral education tasks. Chinese youth, as a generation of bright stars leading the tide of the times, must shoulder the heavy responsibility of the times, make a difference in the changing times, and actively participate in the practice stage of the Chinese dream and the world dream, in order to contribute to the process of Chinese-style modernization.

3.3 Cultivating Contemporary Talents with "Excellent Skills"

Wang Yangming put forward that "people need to go through the trials and tribulations of events in order to become calm and achieve the state of being able to maintain a calm mind, whether in motion or stillness." Only after continuous grinding in practice, can people have excellent skills. The skills and abilities mastered by individuals directly affect the limits of their future life development, and also determine the extent of their promotion of social and national construction. Only by mastering excellent skills can people have the ability to put ideals, beliefs, mission responsibilities and noble sentiments into practice. Therefore, moral education in the new era should take cultivating contemporary talents with "excellent skills" as the goal, so that the new generation of youth can use new methods, learn new knowledge, master new skills, and can think and analyze problems with long-term vision and new career, so as to promote the problem to be solved well, and then become "fighters" in the new era.

4. Enlightenment of Contemporary Moral Education from the Unity of Knowledge and Action

4.1 Enhancing Value Recognition and Cultivating Moral Quality

As the saying goes, "no one can stand without virtue", the key of students' moral education and moral education lies in virtue achievement. The virtue achievement is an important proposition and goal of moral education, and to establish themselves with virtue is an important quality necessary for young people in the new era. Under the background of the new era, the socialist core value is the concrete expression of "virtue", which is in line with the current ideological concept and moral cognition. To this end, the school should run the socialist core values through the whole process of moral education of college students, weld them in the "innate knowledge", and strengthen students' inner value identification, so that students can clearly understand and deeply grasp the connotation and essence of socialist core values, and form corresponding "knowledge", so as to further practice these values in actions after internalizing them, and then grow into socialist

successors and socialist cause builders with good moral characters.

4.2 Practicing the Fundamentals of Behavior and Achieving the Unity of Knowledge and Action

Wang Yangming's thought of the unity of knowledge and action emphasizes the importance of practice. It means that when implementing moral education, schools should not only pay attention to theoretical teaching and explanation, but also to build a sufficient platform for students' moral education practice, so that students can have more opportunities and possibilities to practice innate knowledge. On the one hand, schools can arrange volunteer activities suitable for students' age and major, or sign internship agreements with social enterprises, so that students can participate in social life in a close distance, and apply moral knowledge to moral practice, so as to complete the closed loop of moral education that combines knowledge and action. On the other hand, students themselves should take the initiative to carry out moral practice, dig deep into their inner value pursuit, form a correct cognition of their future, and choose the right direction of life and strive for it, so that they can deepen their cognition in practice, effectively achieve internalization in the heart and externalization in action, and realize the dynamic unity of knowledge and action.

4.3 Paying Attention to Ways and Methods and Providing Revelations and Guidances

Wang Yangming advocated that "dividing restrictions according to individual needs", and advocated that moral education should flexibly choose teaching methods according to different individual characteristics and carry out targeted teaching. Therefore, school moral education should always adhere to the "student-oriented", pay attention to ways and methods, give revelations and guidances, and encourage students' moral "construction and development by themselves"^[4].

Firstly, teachers should flexibly use case teaching method, emotional cultivation method, scenario simulation method and other methods to stimulate students' learning interest, mobilize students' learning initiative, fully tap students' moral potential, cultivate students' critical thinking ability, and improve the effect of moral education teaching. Secondly, the

educational content should be life-oriented, and the relatively abstract and obscure content in moral education theory should be transformed into a form that is easy for students to understand and absorb. Besides, the legal knowledge, ideological and political ideas and moral norms should be connected with the real life of students, so as to help students seek answers from life and make students grow healthily under the guidance of moral education theory. The third is to make full use of modern teaching technology. It is necessary to connect online and offline, and to expand the space of moral education. And it is necessary not only to maintain the equivalence of theory and practice in the process of moral education, but also to maintain the equivalence of online and offline, network and reality in the process of moral education.

4.4 Strengthening Campus Construction and Optimizing Campus Environment

Wang Yangming put forward the idea of "enlightening and inducing good", and demanded that "the extension of innate knowledge" should follow the law of individual physical and mental development, and should not force the formation of "false innate knowledge", but should obtain satisfactory results under the inspiration and guidance, and draw out people's "true conscience". Therefore, we should pay attention to unconscious recessive education and exert positive influence on students by optimizing campus cultural environment.

On the one hand, there is a need to create a campus environment with good surroundings atmospheres, and create a campus landscape with profound cultural heritages. To this end, schools can achieve the purpose of ideological education imperceptibly by repairing the buildings such as the party building hall, the party history hall, and the school history hall, posting celebrity portraits and words, life and

stories on the campus culture wall and exhibition wall, and placing celebrity sculptures. On the other hand, from the school system, academic activities, cultural and sports activities, admission and graduation ceremony, etc., the teaching style, learning style and school spirit of the unity of knowledge and action can be formed, and a humanistic spirit, harmonious, free and upward campus cultural atmosphere can be created, so as to promote the purification of students' minds and further improve their ideological realm under this environment.

5. Conclusion

Through the analysis of Wang Yangming's idea of the unity of knowledge and action, we can seek a new path for the reform and development of moral education and apply its beneficial components to moral education teaching, which can better guide the moral education, help students strengthen their ideals and beliefs, and establish socialist core values, and make students become outstanding youth with consistent conducts and excellent characters.

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