

Enlightenment of Zhang Zai's Education Concept on Private College Teachers

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Abstract: Educational concept of learning put forward by Zhang Zai contains rich and comprehensive education concept. Its education ideological system is very consistent with the teaching objective: people-oriented, all-round implementation of quality education, moral education and moral cultivation as the first in China at the present stage, which is also highly consistent with the current national education ministry's ideology of holistic education. This paper will sort out and analyze Zhang Zai's main education thoughts and theoretical system from three aspects, and the reference value and enlightenment effect of his education concept on private colleges and universities teachers' self-improvement.

1. Introduction

As one of the founders of Neo-Confucianism in Song and Ming Dynasties, Zhang Zai was also a famous educator in the Northern Song Dynasty. His theory had a great impact on the establishment of neo-Confucianism and the development of education theory in Song Dynasty. Zhang zai, on the basis of inheriting and carrying forward the education thought and fine tradition of ancient educators since the pre-Qin Dynasty, and summarizing the long-term education practice, combined with his own social, political and philosophical views, put forward many insightful and unique views on education purpose and function, education in early childhood, moral education and other aspects, which had a great impact on education and education thought at that time, especially in the Ming and Qing Dynasties and even today, which is worth further study and summary. Understanding Zhang Zai's education concept has a very high reference value and great enlightening effect on improving the self-cultivation of teachers in private colleges and universities.

2. Education Concept proposed by Zhang Zai

2.1 Incisive moral education

Zhang Zai inherited and carried forward the traditional moral education thought of Confucianism, and also put forward a whole set of moral quality education and cultivation theory. Moral education has always been the top priority. To set the heart for heaven and earth, to set up the way for the livelihood of the people, to go to the saint to continue learning, and to create peace for all generations is the principle of Zhang Zai's regularly educating students, as well as the main summary of his moral thought. Among them, the most incisive ideas of moral education are "determination", "combination of action and cultivation", "from knowledge accumulation to the perfection of moral cultivation sincerity" and "from the perfection of moral cultivation to knowledge accumulation".

(1) Aspiration Education as the Basis

Zhang Zai ever said that for people who are interested in learning, the most terrible thing is losing ambition and failing to persist bravely. Once the learner has ambition, that is, there is a steady stream of driving force, they also have the source of motivation to do a good job in learning. A learner without ambition easily loses the way forward and gives up sooner or later. Aspiration education is to set down the heart and set up a good will. In this way, no matter how many difficulties and big obstacles one encounters, he will have the power to overcome with his willpower.

(2) "Collecting Righteousness and Nourishing Temperament" and "Combining Practice and

Cultivation” as Ways of Moral Practice School of Guan Zhong established by Zhang Zai recorded that only by gathering righteousness, can one cultivate his temperament, which is the only way to improve one’s morality. Only when one is persistent in gathering righteousness and nourishing temperament, can he ultimately change his temperament. Its core is the goal of moral education -- “self-restraint and obeying rites”. Zhang Zai advocates self-restraint. He thinks that learners’ self-education is very important and an significant condition for them to become virtuous people or even saints, which coincides with the self-cultivation of moral will in modern education psychology. He exhorts learners to learn to control their own selfish thoughts so as to be selfless.

“Combination of practice and cultivation” is the fundamental point of Zhang Zai’s thought of moral education. In his opinion, “combining practice and cultivation” means that “collecting righteousness and cultivating temperament” must be combined with practicing in person. Zhang Zai believes that if learners want to cultivate their morality, they must practice by themselves. Zhang Zai also states that in order to achieve moral perfection, it is necessary to achieve the unity of “words means taking actions, actions means practice, and practice should be in line with the reality”.

(3) “From Knowledge Accumulation to the Perfection of Moral Cultivation” and “from the Perfection of Moral Cultivation to Knowledge Accumulation”, the Process of Moral and Intellectual Cultivation also reflects that the improvement of moral and cultural quality is always closely interdependent, which is what we often refer to in education today as “the unity of virtue and wisdom”. One can achieve the gradual perfection of moral cultivation by means of accumulating knowledge first. Learning knowledge and improving cultural quality is the fundamental way to improve moral cultivation of learners. “From Knowledge Accumulation to the Perfection of Moral Cultivation” illustrates that improving moral cultivation first can help to understand the world knowledge and principles more deeply, and thus deepen the understanding and learning of knowledge.

2.2 Perfect Education Theoretical System

2.2.1 Education Core: Rites Honoring

Zhang Zai believes that learners must put “rites” in the first place while learning cultural knowledge of the world, which is also the most important foundation to improve their own literacy and cultural quality. A person who has no idea of politeness and rites, no matter how advanced knowledge he possesses, is a failure in terms of learning and education.

2.2.2 Education Approach: Erudition

Zhang zai attaches great importance to erudition, that is to say, if learners want to acquire genuine knowledge, they must read more books, input and accumulate more knowledge carefully. Only in this way can they draw inferences from one another and integrate them to achieve erudition eventually.

2.2.3 Education Carrier: Book of Saints

Zhang Zai’s “book of the saints” refers to the Analects of Confucius, Mencius, Poetry, Book, the Doctrine of the Mean, University, the Book of Rites and other Confucian classics. These classics are the essence of all the previous philosophers in all fields, and worth all learners to read repeatedly and carefully, until they really learn the essence and core of their thoughts. Reading classics is a process of communicating with famous people and colliding with various excellent ideas.

2.2.4 The Main Body of Education: “the Way of Being Teachers”, “the Way of Learning”

Zhang Zai’s Zheng Meng and Confucius Classics can be said to be the essence of education theory. In his works, he has put forward a lot of insights on “the way of being a teacher” and “the way of learning”, aiming at education subject and object (teachers and students). The main idea of Zhang Zai’s view on education is “Zheng Meng” (which means getting rid of ignorance), and he believes that the process of education is to promote the transformation of the lower fool into the

upper wisdom. He also always adheres to the thought “those who have bad temperament can be moved and changed by learning”. Zhang Zai reminds that, in the whole process of teaching, teachers must avoid subjectivity, arbitrariness, obstinacy, and conjecture and should pay attention to comprehensive teaching. Zhang Zai also puts forward the advice of “four losses” for learners, in order to warn them that if they want to really do well in learning, they must be diligent in thinking about more, and they should never aim too high and reach half of what they want. Learning is hard work, and it is advisable for learners to give up halfway when they are confronted with difficulties and hardships, which is a major taboo in the learning process.

2.2.5 Education Features: “Emphasis on Practice” and “Learning for Application of Knowledge”

In his book Zheng Meng, Zhang Zai cites a large amount of natural science knowledge to explain his thoughts. He attaches great importance to supporting students to learn natural science knowledge, which is exactly what he advocates in education: “emphasis on practice”. Only by paying attention to practice can we finally realize the importance of “putting what we have learned into practice”. In addition, Zhang Zai’s thought is also embodied in the requirement that learners should practice the rites as well as various knowledge they have learned, so as to help them put the principles and knowledge they have learned into practice in daily life.

2.3 Multi-level Teaching Teleology

2.3.1 Basic Purpose of Education: Human Nature

Education can teach learners to become a qualified social person with virtue, character, ability to distinguish right from wrong, ambition, good heart and good living and working habits.

2.3.2 The Development Purpose of Education: to be a Sage

Zhang Zai believes that “virtuous people” should have the character of “being good to the world”. They always abide by social etiquette and principle, never forget the introspection, often improves their self-cognition, and self-reflection, have a selfless benevolence heart to love others, and are never frightened by evil persons and deeds and so on.

2.3.3 Ultimate Goal of Education: Learn to be a Saint

To attain the state of “saints” and to achieve the perfect realm of “I”, is the highest level of education teleology, also the ultimate goal, namely, the “saint” is not far-fetched, and not fully ideal, in fact, having the good qualities of self-restraint and abiding by laws, honoring the rites, being consistent in words and behaviors, having both ability and integrity, and serving the people. Saints can bring out the beauty of human nature to the extreme, regard the suffering of the world as their own, and selflessly contribute to the well-being of the world. They can truly achieve the “unity of nature and man”, considerably promote social development, and be people of the most practical value.

3. The Enlightenment of Zhang Zai’s Educational Concept on Teachers in Private College

3.1 Attaching importance to improving their own moral cultivation, setting an example and playing a role of demonstration and edification

As a teacher, we must first practice aspiration education and the self-education process of “collecting righteousness and nourishing temperament”, and then gradually achieve the state of “self-restraint and honoring rites”. Through the way of “combining practice and nourishing”, we can practice constantly. “From Knowledge Accumulation to the Perfection of Moral Cultivation” and “from the Perfection of Moral Cultivation to Knowledge Accumulation” are the requirements both on students and on teachers. Teachers should also pay attention to the ascension of their own moral qualities, abide by the principle of lifelong learning progress at the same time, enrich professional knowledge, truly exert an edification effect on students, and educate students to

become talents of ambition, morality and culture.

3.2 Being a courteous, knowledgeable, diligent, and qualified teacher

Teachers' words and behaviors will exert a profound, broad and enduring effect on students, so teachers must become polite people of self-restraint, with quality accomplishment, have the resistance against some bad social atmosphere, possess good manners and etiquette, and pay close attention to their way of speaking. In addition, teachers should have a clear understanding of their professional knowledge in their own research fields and internalize all the knowledge in cognition. At the same time, they should also read a large number of classical works of humanities, enrich their spiritual world, fill their inner cognition, and be qualified teachers and cultivate qualified talents.

3.3 The most important thing in teaching: to be diligent in inspiring students and stimulating their interest in learning

Interest is the best teacher, and therefore to maintain the interest and enthusiasm for learning is a very important task for teacher to undertake. Teachers should pay more attention to encouraging students, making them bring out their subjective initiative into full play in learning and cultivating their independent learning ability, which is also completely unified with "heuristic teaching" concept advocated by educators.

Having a deep understanding of "the way of being a teacher" and a firm belief in "those who have bad temperament can be moved and changed by learning", and implement whole-person education Zhang Zai thinks: as a teacher, we must realize that the students we are facing are very different. Therefore, it is very important to teach students in accordance with their aptitude, needs, interests, hobbies and characteristics. Teachers should take steps step by step, respect the Development law of learners, encourage the emergence of new ideas, not rush for quick results. In the teaching; the most important characteristic is to start from the actual situation according to the progressive teaching goal. The advanced teaching lets the student of different levels all can obtain the progress. Teachers should treat students both softly and strictly. Teachers and students' caring for and getting along well with each other is softness; Strict requirements and diligent exhortation is strictness. In this way, it is finally possible for students too have a close relationship with their teachers, and then devote themselves to what teachers teach. Between teachers and students, there should be no sense of distance and alienation. Teachers should be strict with themselves, set a good example for students, really worthy of the honor "teachers are always role models of virtues and integrity". Teachers must have the concept of professional conscience, whose basic duty is to teach students conscientiously, impart Professional knowledge and solve doubts and stick to their moral conscience.

4. Conclusion

At present, in order to achieve sustainable and healthy development, private colleges and universities must establish a team composed of excellent teachers with good teaching ethics, solve their practical problems, and pay attention to the cultivation of teachers and the stability of the team. Of course the teachers in private colleges should also pay attention to self-improvement, a regular study of Zhang Zai's thoughts, enhance the level of self-moral cultivation, notice the precept, respect and love teaching, in order to promote the further development of private education, and realize the revitalization of China by science and education and the reinvigorating of China through human resources development.

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