

Growth in Generations--Rediscovering Traditional Chinese Education, while Decoding Chinese Civilization

Xuening Gu, Wei Shen*, Sichun You

Nanjing University of Finance and Economics, Nanjing, China

**Corresponding author*

Keywords: Chinese Education, Chinese Civilization, Industrialization, Urbanization,

Abstract: Why traditional Chinese education was effective, while the modern education is questionable, and thereafter decodes the long term prosperity of Chinese civilization, followed by the approaches to its reviving. The world is children's, not parents. If you, especially being parent better, the world changes better.

1. Introduction

Everyone is born with his parents. Everyone will be a father or a mother. Do we really have the ability to raise our children, at least as much as we do to give them the ability to fly?! In fact, we often do as what we think to be good at— to navigate our children. However, do you realize that for generations, how many parents were eventually disappointed or even regretted their life when they die unsatisfied? Just as the first Emperor of Qin is to the Qin II, and more beyond the emperor father and son! Why is that? How to avoid the tragedy repeating will keep testing us as parents?

The essence of education is to shape independent and innerly harmonious offspring. How can a child in pursuit of free love without being able to face with his or her own love independently be independent of the world and nicely walk a long way of life? How can parents expect anything from him or her? And how can society hope for anything? It is the failure of education, the double failure of home education and school education, but come first the failure of family education. The final reason is that parents don't know how to be whom their children most want them to be, which is to say that we as parents are not good at defining ourselves as the first qualified teachers, who are not substitutable! Any other substitution is very possibly unsuccessful, making either the children or the parents disappointed. And most of the time, sides are disappointed__parents will be faced with their undesirable children, and children also continuously and deeply regret their parents for not bringing them up well..... I often hear students say with a sign or envy when some other one is showing a talent or skill: "How if my parents also let me learn XXX when I was a child!" And I always told them, "Just do what you like to do best, and you will be also deeply admired... ". But the question is that you probably don't know what you like and don't have the ability to do it best. That's what you need to haggle with your parents or, more accurately, with your teachers and with yourself!"

One's time at university is the final stage of the whole educational system, all over the world. But I am more and more desired to run a kindergarten that really belongs to children as per my heart. I

realize that the early childhood education is beginning of the whole education system and also that of a person's complete life. Why do I go back to this beginning? There are two reasons

First, in the past four decades, I have seen clearly the misplacement and mistakes in the whole process of nurturing offspring at the end of education. If people are willing to think seriously, they will agree with my idea. I feel that what we think, what we do in the family, the country, and what are taught and learnt at schools and universities has little to do with our own nation or our ancestors, Is this a misplacement? Is this a failure?

Why did such serious displacement and failure happen?

2. The Failure of Chinese Education is Rooted in Fundamental Changes in the Context in which Children Grow up

As people grow up in the environment, the kind of environment shapes the kind of person. And then the kinds of people shape the kind of society. A person who has grown up in a harmonious natural environment and historical atmosphere will rarely become an inharmonious factor or destructive force in society. However, the hometown that gave birth to the Chinese people, for which our ancestors guarded and eulogized all their lives just disappeared recently in less than two generations. Although cities and towns like Soochow can luckily be fully or partially preserved, they are now not the real life places of local people, but at best the distributing center of tourists to meet the irrationally rooted travelling needs.

I came from Soochow. Soochow is known as the "Oriental Venice". But what has disappeared is the "midnight bell heard at the passenger ship", "the bamboo fence of a family at the side of water, with a branch of plum recognized from far", the "singing from a fishing boat in the evening", "the thousands of acres of farm in the moon light", "the light air", which used to be care and amiability for people. By contrast, there is still no car in Venice, and people travel in gondolas like Marco Polo or Shylock (The Merchant of Venice, Shakespeare) did. Apart from many cities with disgusting outlooks in the world, Venice stands out like a triton of the minnows. On March 24, 1980, Soochow and Venice became sister cities, thus Soochow has the reputation of "Venice in the east", but I have never heard that venetians are proud of "Soochow in the west". Obviously, Soochow had not really realized or even seriously thought about the real charm, the real preciousness and the reference value of this blonde sister! The most striking contrast is that since then, Soochow has only been erasing its vividness and freshness, calm and profoundness, indifference and ease, and even freedom; As Lu Wenfu said: "The advantages of Soochow culture...,from ancient times to the present day,.....without interruption...It is the loss of Soochow's real vitality that worries me, not just the GDP at the top.

Which historical tradition is not worth cherishing? Which living system is not worth protecting? Soochow was billed as a paradise on earth. It lies in the successive generations of intellectuals and countless craftsmen in hundreds of years to make the most efficient use of its own unique natural conditions and human resources to build a beautiful living places as well as incomparable spiritual territory. A high level unity is achieved of the ideal and the reality, which is embodied in the gardens throughout the Gusu city. Soochow's reputation as a paradise does not lie in whether it is a water city or not, but in that when the impoverished Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843) chanted dreamily about "poetically, man dwells on this earth", Soochow people had long been calmly enjoying the most beautiful life style in the world in the gardens they had built. I believe in the sincerity of Marco Polo (1254-1324) when he said "Soochow is the most beautiful and luxurious city in the world" and "It's grand scale is unparalleled ... just like going into the heaven ", 200 years after Su Shunqin (1008-1049) built the Surging Waves Pavilion (Canglang Pavilion). Otherwise, it is hard for us to imagine how there is a completely simulated Soochow street in a park of royal

garden in Beijing, with a front yard and a rear river. "There is Paradise above and Soochow and Hangzhou below." Fan Chengda of the Song Dynasty initiated this statement after he settled in Soochow.

As the descendants of Kunshan, Soochow and China, what can we do? In my opinion, the only thing we can do is to hope that our future generations don't do the wrong things we've done. Nor should they continue down on the wrong path we've taken. This is the reason, the only reason, for reviving the civilization of our fathers, the life of our fathers! In the final analysis, seeking for the roots and learning about the progenitors only make sense in this respect! Naturally, it only by understands the truth that we can possibly plan and define the course of life for ourselves and our future generations. Naturally, if we can't plan well ourselves and our own lives, how can we justify and be able to make the plan for our children's future?!

China's development needs to follow China's path, and the cultivation of future generations cannot be separated from China's ancient and highly successful education -- family education. The biggest lack of Chinese education today is family education!

The failure of education, like the economic crisis, is now global, only in different degrees. I'm not the only one who's aware of the problem with education. People around the world who think carefully are aware that there's a common problem with all of humanity -- the cultivation of future generations.

In particular, I want to make the point that families and the atmosphere of families can have a huge impact on a child's future. I firmly believe that the best wish of every parent is to develop a better future for the children and the whole family through our joint efforts as parents and children. At least, children should have a better than ours! However, the cruel reality is that the initial hope often turns into the final disappointment.

The teacher's greatest responsibility is to educate students well. The parents' greatest responsibility is to cultivate children well. Only by seeking the truth and rightness, will the country and the family have a future! If we do not educate our children well, if our future generations do not understand, do not agree with and even abandon the ceaseless Chinese civilization, China will not be able to revive, and will certainly no longer exist!

At present, the only thing we can do is to create the most suitable environment for children's growth.

3. We live in a Chaotic Time and a Polluted World

The most serious disorder is spiritual. On one hand, people's morals and ethics, as well as words and deeds, are generally deranged, such as the phenomena are prevalent in most rural areas, but which were never seen 40 years ago: religious activities and gambling. The strange point is that they exist at the same time. On the other hand, among the Asians, we always thought Japan had the highest suicide rate, but unfortunately it's China now! Primary school students in China are killing themselves! I'm afraid the kindergarten children would come next!

According to the World Health Organization, more than one million people die by suicide each year, and China accounts for about a third of that number, of which over 100,000 are teenagers, another one third. What is more painful and difficult to accept is the fact that China has the highest suicide rate among children in the world, with almost half of them ending their own lives because of heavy schoolwork. Some estimates put the suicide rate in China at 2.3 times of the world average.

Chinese civilization has no religion and no need for religion. Up to now, there is no nation or country in the world that does not depend on religion to maintain its independence. People with religious beliefs account for about 80% of the global population, except China. Why is China so unique? This is the height. Chinese civilization is a highly self-conscious civilization, and such a

height is only reached by Confucius and Mencius. Confucius said, "If you cannot serve people, how can you serve ghosts?" Such a height is naturally well embodied Chinese wisdom! Clearly, the core of Chinese wisdom is the doctrine of Confucius and Mencius. The essence of religion is the unreliability of people and human nature! But Confucianism is built on the reliability of human beings and human nature. That is to say, Confucianism is the earliest in human history to respect and value human beings themselves, and it is "people-oriented". Undoubtedly, the Confucian tradition is the essence of Chinese civilization. "Honesty is the way of nature; sincerity, the way of people." But today's Chinese don't even believe in themselves! This is why religion prevails in China today. Many people, even in the academic circles, have a confused understanding that the mental disorder in China today is caused by the lack of religious belief, which is just the reverse of the principle, and putting the cart before the horse!

The humans have been changing, but getting worse and worse, which is most sufficiently proved by the fact that the environment we live in is becoming more and more dangerous to our own survival. Our state of mind is correspondingly getting worse and worse. And especially, our ability to raise children is getting worse and worse: the whole education system failed.

If we cannot be better, why are we changing? The highest pursuit of Confucianism: "The way of the great learning involves manifesting virtue, loving the people, and abiding by the highest good." We need to improve, not change. We've changed almost everything, but we have changed to be worse. Parents should at first improve themselves, otherwise how to be the first teacher for children's life?! Children's biggest nature, as well as the biggest ability, is to imitate. So you must be a good model! You do well, because your parents did well at first, and your parents' parents did well. This is called growth by generation. We have almost no such possibility today, because the whole social environment is not conducive to the growth of each generation of children; Mencius mother moved three times, I'm afraid today only one move is necessary- to directly immigrate abroad! It not we don't do, it is because we can't! I came back to China more than ten years ago. It was because I realized that the Chinese civilization was declining rapidly. This is also the reason why I insisted on opening a second class after returning to China. The most fundamental reason for the decline of Chinese civilization is the disappearance of the continuous growth of the Chinese people and the broken thread of the inheritance of civilization. If you do not believe, get back to your upward generations, you may be able to say your grandfather's name, but may not know your grandfather's father's name! How can you be like that? If we don't know where we came from, how do we know where we're going? How to raise our offspring? It is precisely the unremitting self-improvement of every family in China that enables our nation to keep growing endlessly. But now generations are gone, family lines are gone, and even families are gone. There are almost as many divorce registrations in big cities as marriage registrations. In 2014, "in less than 3 minutes on average, a couple became passers-by" in Jiangsu province. Moreover, young people's willingness to marry and have children tends to be more and more negative.

"No human relation is greater than that between husband and wife, so the master is affably explain its righteousness, to worship the beginning of human relations with no good of separation." "If it is not studied today, one cannot understand human relations. There are no greater mistaken human relations than in husband and wife." "Non-harmony at home is the root of chaos." In any society, there can be no social harmony without family harmony; without the happiness of all the people, there can be no happiness of the whole society. Whenever and wherever raising offspring becomes a burden or even a pain, there must be something wrong with this society or its people." A gentleman's humanity is based on good conducts of husband and wife; the good conducts of the couple are watched by the nature." Confucianism holds that all ethics and morals are based on the principle of marriage. The origin of human nature is from the couple. "The dealing between husband and wife is combined with Yin and Yang, connected to the gods, with faiths carried

forward by the heaven and earth, and fine qualities of human relations." What's worse, the fertility of Chinese people is showing a more and more obvious declining trend along with the process of industrialization and urbanization. The Chinese family is disintegrating and the Chinese countryside is also disintegrating. I can hardly believe that nation with such a rising can really rise! It is difficult for an unsound family to cultivate a sound child. A child in it suffers psychological injury or lack in childhood, and the life will have something lost or be even destroyed.

Chinese love and marriage have been the same since ancient times, just like comrades going to life and death together, "hold your hand and grow old together", "God! I want that we know with each other, live long without dying. Unless mountains hills disappear, rivers are dry, the winter has thunderstorms, the summer has snow, and unless the heaven and the earth come together, I dare to break with you." Of course, there are always exceptions, and even the exceptions of Butterfly Lovers are more romantic than Romeo and Juliet. Chinese love and marriage are unified, and the obvious effect is the lasting family life and growth of generations. My focus lies in this. As any of these generations, be prepared for the next generation to bear inevitable responsibility: you have to be an example to your children! Where did your models come from? Our ancestors are not necessarily the ancestors of our family lines; we have a common ancestor, Confucius, who requires us of self-cultivation and family care! So improve yourself first, as Confucius treated his son in the same way.

4. Conclusion

This brings us to the mystery of the inheritance of Chinese civilization. Two points are made previously. The first is that there is no religion and no science. The second is family inheritance from generation to generation. Perhaps the third is most private but still more important.

Ancient China has never had a complete, rigorous, and well-connected education system, especially for the government-sponsored public education. Strictly speaking, China has only the private education created by Confucius, which has lasted for 25 centuries, and the official examinations since Han dynasty. It is the uninterrupted private education that has produced generations of outstanding people to govern this country! The only form of private education is the private school, which is the biggest secret of the inheritance of Chinese civilization. How can China revive its civilization without private schools? The greatest mission of the Chinese people in the new era is renaissance. The biggest Chinese dream is also renaissance. How did our ancestors do it? Private schools are the most reliable way to educate children. There are two forms of private school. One is the model of Confucius, in which students go to Confucius' home. The best way is to invite the teacher to the student's home, accompanying 24 hours. The result will be: like teacher, like pupil. Aristotle taught Alexander in this way, so did the Chinese emperors. What makes the world's greatest university great today? Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, Yale... These excellent universities are equipped with two outstanding professors of different disciplines in each dormitory building from the very beginning, who stay with students 24 hours a day, from admission to graduation. How similar is it to the Confucius' way!

The biggest failure of Chinese education starts from young children and even infancy! The child is father of the man. Is our fate so unchangeable and irreversible? Don't imitate the world.

References

- [1] Du Xunhe, Sent a friend to Wu for travelling. (In Chinese)
- [2] Zhangji, A Night Mooring Near Maple Bridge(In Chinese)
- [3] Zhang Yuangan, Son of River God. (In Chinese)

- [4] Lu Wenfu, The General Preface to Soochow Culture Series. (In Chinese)
- [5] Wangbo. The Preface to Tengwang Pavilion. (In Chinese)
- [6] Sushi, Rouged Lip·Idle aganst a folding rope chair. (In Chinese)
- [7]Wei Yingwu,A Gully to the West in Chuzhou. (In Chinese)
- [8]Wang Weiping, Wang Jianghua, Xiao Tian. Soochow History(Ancient) [M].Soochow:Soochow University Press.1999:106. (In Chinese)
- [9] Fan Chengda,Wu Junzhi(Local Chronicles of Soochow. (In Chinese)
- [10] The Analects. (In Chinese)
- [11] Li Yan. Our patient, China Mental Illness Report [J]. China Economic Weekly. 2011 (28).
- [12] Mencius. (In Chinese)
- [13] The Great Learning. (In Chinese)
- [14] Collection of Interpretations of the Book of Changes Volume 7. (In Chinese)
- [15] The Doctrine of the Mean. (In Chinese)
- [16]Banzhao. Women's Commandments. (In Chinese)
- [17] The Yuefu Songs. (In Chinese)
- [18]Romans, Chapter 12, Section 2