

The Feasibility of Chinese Primary School Children's Philosophical education

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Abstract: This article takes children of Chinese primary school as the specific object and tries to investigate the practical feasibility of philosophical education. This article first explains the feasibility background of Chinese children's philosophical education, then analyzes the elementary school children's education environment, the mental foundation of receiving philosophical education, as well as the thinking characteristics of children's learning philosophy. Besides, it presents the feasibility of Chinese teachers and parents to participate in children's philosophical education.

In recent years, China's efforts to popularize philosophical education have achieved a lot of results: a group of scholars, such as Liu Xiaofeng, Gan Yang, and Zhu Suli, have made great efforts to promote the popularization of philosophical education in China. Some of them tried to sort out the philosophical value of traditional Chinese educational thoughts by examining the evolution of educational philosophy in history. And others summarized the research progress of philosophy general education reform in colleges and universities. There are also some people trying to strengthen the importance of philosophical education through a series of lectures, courses and writings, philosophical education which has made positive impact.

However, most of the current research and discussion on the popularization of philosophical education in China were limited within the realm of higher education, or merely made a simple theoretical sketch, the research on the current status of popularization of philosophical education in childhood is basically still in a blank stage; even in the relevant research, the main perspective is pedagogy, which mainly focuses on the reform of educational methods and content, and rarely to find discussions about philosophy. There is even less research on the philosophical education of children.

Due to the relative lack of existing research, it is meaningful to systematically explore the possibility of philosophical education for elementary school students. Therefore, this article will begin from analyzing the background of the development of philosophical education in China and abroad. Based on the relevant theories of children's development psychology, this paper is going to analyze the characteristics of children's thinking and the demand mechanism for children's objective existence of philosophical education, and it will explore how teachers and parents can participate in children's philosophical education philosophical education.

1. The Feasibility Background of Children's Philosophical education

1.1 Philosophical education at the primary school level in China as a whole is improving, and the development trend is obvious

At present, Chinese philosophy-oriented quality education has not been widely carried out in primary schools. The current status of philosophical education in elementary school in China has two dimensions: one is the quality education curriculum within the school; the other is the social resources outside the school.

On the school hand, it has made many meaningful practical attempts. From December 14th to 15th, 2018, the first National Children's Philosophy and School Reform Forum which is also called

Children's Philosophy Project School Alliance Founding Conference, was held at the Maoyisheng Experimental School in Hangzhou, Zhejiang. The first batch of children's philosophy alliance schools included Chaoyang District, Beijing Fanhai Kindergarten, Lijing Kindergarten, Chaoyang District, Beijing, Yantou Kindergarten, Chaoyang District, Beijing, Fifth Primary School, Miyun District, Beijing, Dongsheng Second Primary School, Jianxi District, Luoyang, Henan Province, Qujiang Second Primary School, Xi'an, Chengdu High-tech Zone, Sichuan Province Experimental Primary School, Tangshan Jintongshoujun Primary School. In December 2018, an activity themed absorbing wisdom and nourishing morality, which was aimed at making learning happen and the new book of philosophy for children release, was sponsored by the curriculum room of Beijing chaoyang district education research center and red flag publishing house held in Beijing fangcao international school. The purpose of this event is to promote students' philosophical education, help students to initially understand various relationships between people and the world and learn to use philosophical thinking to solve problems in learning and life. According to the "Guangming Daily" report, a primary school in Yangzhou, Jiangsu Province, has opened a philosophy course since autumn 2015, and regards it as a compulsory course for the third to sixth grade, with the same status as Chinese and mathematics.

As to the outside, based on the educational needs of parents who want to develop their children's comprehensive humanistic quality and thinking skills to improve their children's future competitiveness, some parents will send their children to participate in activities such as philosophy workshops, academies, clubs, and so on. These demands for extracurricular education in turn further promote the third party's direct exploration of philosophical resources. Outside the school, it mainly supports the education of children's philosophy by publishing special philosophical readings, publishing philosophical popularization videos, and even making TV and movie related topics. Among the development and practice of children's philosophical education, P4C children's philosophy activities are relatively authoritative. P4C-China is a training center certified by DialogueWorks in the UK and has been providing professional P4C training for China and Asia. P4C has two meanings: one is Philosophy for Children, and the other is the cultivation and integration of four ways of thinking in the exploration of children's philosophy. In 2014, Shanghai Haifu Golden Sun Kindergarten and many affiliated kindergartens began to practice P4C courses, and carried out "Enlightenment Philosophy and Empowerment Training"-P4C Training and Yangpu District Liuyi Education Group Green Medal Course, Star Program Training ——P4C in Xiehe: Practice and Effectiveness, "Listen to Childish Language, Infant Childhood-Children's Philosophy and Education Seminar" and other activities.

1.2 Abundant resources can be learnt from outside China, and the model system is mature

In many places outside mainland China, the history of philosophical education at the elementary school stage is relatively long, and the teaching model system is relatively mature, which has significant reference for the development of philosophical education in Chinese elementary schools. In general, philosophical education in Western primary school has a profound historical foundation, a wide range of popularization, a free teaching model, an explicit teaching purpose, and the daily-life permeation. It attaches importance to the cultivation function of philosophy and the inheritance of eternal value. It learns the "philosophy of the world", which helps to train more comprehensively developed people and also has a positive effect on the shaping of social order and social value. By country, specifically, the United States has a deep tradition of pragmatic philosophy, often attaching importance to combining specific philosophical issues with practical issues: such as Affirmative Action, environmental issues, and justice distribution; countries such as Britain, France, and Germany have rich and long history of philosophy, many philosophers with different characteristics have appeared in the history of philosophy. Therefore, a large part of its philosophical quality education emphasizes the understanding and grasp of philosophical traditions, such as reading classic texts of philosophy, thinking and discussing important philosophical issues, and mastering Philosophical argumentation methods, etc. In addition, although the philosophical quality education in Japan and Taiwan has faced the problems between foreign introduction and

local transformation, it still successfully integrated philosophical quality education with traditional culture in a large part: The moral course of the six-year quality-oriented education in Japan cultivates the virtues of unity, mutual assistance, politeness and trustworthiness from the details of daily life. As to Taiwan, For a long time, the tradition of classics and ancient classics have been regarded as the important teaching contents of quality education, and philosophy has become an important part of humanistic education.

1.3 The demand for philosophical education in primary schools has grown, whose development potential is splendid

As mentioned above, philosophical education in elementary schools in China is just rare, but as to philosophical education conducted outside the school, which carried out by social resources, has already taken off. If we count the private school which reading traditional Chinese philosophical classics such as The Analects of Confucius and Mencius, there will be more remarkable philosophical education organizations in this broadened sense. To a certain extent, this explains the lag of philosophical education in the school, and also reflects the demand of philosophical education for a certain degree on the elementary school campus.

Secondly, Chinese education has a tendency to learn from and refer to the educational concepts of developed countries, and parents are also often prone to respect the educational concepts of developed countries. The philosophical education in primary schools in many developed countries is relatively mature. If some of their textbooks and teaching models can be introduced more completely and promoted, it will easily stimulate the needs of parents and schools.

Third, although there are few primary school philosophical education courses on and off campus, there are many courses related to thinking and logic, such as “Cube of Thinking”, “Brain Expansion”, “Logical Training Camp”, and “Critical Thinking”, which reflects the schools and parents’ preference for the reflective education curriculum, which deals with “learning how to learn”, and “thinking how to think”. More and more parents realize that in addition to specific knowledge and skills, it is also highly important for young children to reflect on this specific knowledge, on our ability to think, on the overview of the whole knowledge tree, on logic and critical thinking. Philosophical education is highly matched with these needs. If we can make parents and schools realize the overlap and even more profound link between the philosophical education in primary school and the popular “thinking education” or “pondering education” in the market, the philosophical education in primary school would form a considerable demand in the education market.

2. Analysis of children's mental characteristics

If we look further, we will find that children have great “philosophical potential”, and on this basis, they can carry out operable practice. From the perspective of children's psychological foundation and intellectual thinking, philosophical education has advantages and characteristics.

2.1 Psychological foundation of children's philosophy- learning

2.1.1 Educational surroundings around children

Children's philosophical education takes the characteristics of children into account, and effectively explores the inherent “philosophical potential” of children's situations and problems. In terms of mind, children are not as deeply involved in the world as adults, and they are full of curiosity. These problems exemplify the “philosophical nature” of children. Therefore, we should first achieve a profound and even philosophical understanding of the questions raised by children. On the other hand, the problem is also a reflection of the situation. The mode of getting along with children, the information received by children, and the development of children's social personality at this stage are the most critical points. Children's philosophical education can be based on children's own “Philosophy potential”, returning to the world of children's life and ask the real “children's” problem and trying to understand and think about the problem in the situation of

children.

Secondly, in terms of knowledge structure, “understanding and inspiring children's philosophical potential” is a basic and available approach to the philosophical education in primary school. On the basis of attaching importance to children's existing knowledge structure, we can better understand the knowledge structure of the educated subject before carrying out philosophical education by reading textbooks of other subjects at the same stage and distributing simple survey papers. Then we take the students' “pre-thinking structure” into account, which is possessed in a certain sense when understanding philosophical issues. Only by this can we return the ultimate basis of philosophical education to the students' “philosophical potential”, following the inherent quality conditions of the educated subject.

2.1.2 Children's psychological development level

In terms of self-cognition, children in the middle of childhood have a strong sense of self. They are able to distinguish their own opinions from those of others and try to understand and adopt their opinions interactively. Selman described children's ability to understand and express the views of others as five stages of development, in which children aged 6-12 can make a “self-reflect opinion selection”, which means they can understand the differences between themselves and others. Children of 9-12 also have the ability to select opinions mutually and begin to exchange ideas.

These studies show that children already have a higher level of understanding of themselves and others' thoughts, beliefs and feelings. In philosophical communication learning and communication activities, elementary school students can clearly distinguish their own views from others, and can reflect on them in a certain degree. Senior children can also understand other people's views and even engage in debates. In this process, they will have a further understanding of their own thoughts and be motivated to think about new ideas.

Although the students in elementary school no longer make progress in language ability as rapidly as those in early childhood, there has been a higher development in vocabulary, grammar and pragmatics. Elementary school students' attitude towards language has also undergone a fundamental change, with a language awareness formed. Elementary school students make more thinking and analysis of language, which enables them to identify the multiple meanings of words understand the subtle meanings of certain meta-linguistic awareness; at the same time, their proficiency in complex grammatical structures has been improved. As a result of advanced memory and ability to adopt the listener's ideas, children narrate better in structure, detail, and expression. Children are good at learning the narrative styles of important adults in life, which have different manifestations in different cultures. It is conceivable that children have sufficient language and reading skills to understand philosophical readings in appropriate difficulty.

2.2 Thinking characteristics of children's learning philosophy

2.2.1 Form logic and reasoning thought habits

Piaget believes that human development is a process of adaptation and the highest form of adaptation is cognition. The gradual development of human performance, understanding, and ability can be described as four cognitive developmental stages: sensori-motor stage, pre-operational stage, concrete operational stage, and formal operational stage. The children aged 6-12 we study are mainly in the concrete operational stage. In this stage, there are mainly two aspects. First, children learned some basic logical rules and established the concept of “conservation”. They can now use operations (thinking processes determined by logical rules) instead of pre-operations (thinking is based on perception and intuition) to carry out thinking. At the same time, they discovered three important logical rules: identity, reversibility and compensation. Second, children gradually construct concepts of reality, which improves their understanding of categories and reasoning ability to merge and decompose them, and in the meantime, their spatial reasoning ability is enhanced. When children draw a cognitive map, they can infer the outline of the complete space by connecting the independent parts.

Children at this stage are in a period of transition and initial establishment of self-knowledge of

the world, which is an important turning point in cognitive development. Thinking is more logical, flexible and organized than before. On the other hand, children may have difficulties with the following three aspects when making reasoning: inferences from perception, logical inferences, and inferences from evidence. Philosophical education usually selects realistic topics, starting from understanding the world and itself, philosophy and reality are very closely connected. These make it easier for children to transfer logical thinking in philosophy learning to thinking in real life, and then guide their understanding of the world from phenomena to essence, which helps children overcome difficulties in logical inference and develop logical habits of rigorous logic, rigorous reasoning, and rational thinking in daily life. Mulcahy (1991) used a Socratic question-and-answer teaching method to guide students to understand their own logical thinking and cognitive reasoning strategies. Perkins, Kee, and Tishman believed that this kind of philosophy thinking classes create an environment that encourages children to make inferences, help them find evidence and identify false inferences as well as significantly improve children's learning and memory.

Education needs to “buckle the first button of life”, and the cultivation of thinking habits also needs to start from the first button. To cultivate good logic and reasoning thinking habits, we should start from the beginning of childhood.

2.2.2 Abstraction of children's interest and thinking

Children who have just entered elementary school gradually expand and deepen their interest in social life learning as they age. It first manifests itself in the deepening of learning interest: elementary school students are more interested in the learning process and external activities of learning as well as the content of learning or learning tasks that require independent thinking. They gradually start to like newer ones and need to start Brainstorming and independent thinking of learning content. The second is the abstraction of learning interest: at the elementary school level, children are more interested in specific facts and experiences, and the cause and effect of abstraction. The interest in relations is initially developed, such as the causality of simple natural phenomena and social phenomena, preliminary calculation rules, the meaning of literary and artistic works and the inner experience of the characters in them.

In the research of Lin Chongde and others, there is a possibility that the transitional period of thinking development of primary school children may be advanced. Under general education conditions, children's mathematics generalization ability has a significant change in the fourth grade, and as long as the teaching method is successful, the critical period can be advanced to the third grade. This is a key turning point for elementary school children in mastering concepts, from a specific image summary as the main form to an abstract logic summary as the main form. This shows that there is a certain potential in the development of primary school children's thinking, which needs to be properly tapped. Therefore, in addition to teaching them to read calculation methods, at this time, children are provided with more abstract concepts and imagination materials to guide them to think further, which will have a multiplier and enhanced effect on children's abstract thinking and imaginative creativity.

The learning ability of primary school students is gradually developed under the influence of teaching. Children who are new to school are not good at carrying out real learning activities. They still mix learning with games or actual activities. This requires educators to develop children's psychological intention and consciousness patiently and gradually, children's ability to think independently and work independently, and help children gradually learn form relevant learning abilities. A new educational experiment in the United States is based on Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory and conducts social-constructivist classrooms. In this class, students participate in various challenging activities with teachers and peers, and they jointly construct an understanding of the problem. They found that students in this classroom are more likely to be critical and thinking people than traditional classrooms. They respect individual differences and have a more positive attitude towards the school. Students in social-constructivist classrooms benefit from cooperative learning and teaching that suits each student's recent development zone. In addition, mutual teaching can achieve significant progress in reading comprehension.

3. Analysis of other main factors affecting children's philosophical education

3.1 Teachers as the leader in education

The teacher's role in philosophical education is characterized by the unification of midwives, philosophers, and public responsibilities. When the teachers and children take the journey of “love the wisdom” completely and equally, the teachers are still more conscious of this activity, and at the same time they are also relatively “wise people”, and also shoulder the public responsibility. Teachers play three roles in philosophical education, namely: ① a trainer and leaders of dialogue and thinking ② a summary and sublimator of philosophical dialogue and discussion ③ a planner and organizer of all philosophical activities including philosophical viewing, philosophical dialogue and even argumentation.

As the most controllable role in elementary school education activities, philosophical education, the advantages of teachers in the classroom of elementary school philosophical education are: ① No matter how the teacher makes himself “equality dialogue with students”, he is always more self-conscious than the ignorant children coming to class. That is, the teacher realize that they are in class, and he can realize what purpose their class should have. ② Under normal circumstances, teachers always have more knowledge, more mature listening, induction and language expression skills than children, and can obtain certain philosophical qualities, and have the ability to discern right from wrong and rational thinking. In a certain sense, teachers have “wisdom” compared to children (and children are “wisdom seekers” and “wisdom lovers”. ③ As the main operator in the public domain of “school”, teachers are adults with public responsibility.

First, teachers are the co-trainers and guides of dialogue and thinking. On the one hand, teachers can be exposed to the situation and psychological structure of the questions raised by students; on the other hand, they always keep the consciousness of teaching and know the direction that the dialogue may go out. Teachers can make basic predictions of the understanding of the questions raised by children, the grip on the situation and psychological structure of children, the understanding of the issues to be discussed with children, and even the possible direction of dialogue.

Second, teachers are the summaries and sublimators of philosophical dialogue and discussion. On the one hand, teachers have a strong listening ability and patience, they can perceive the similarities and differences of children's views, and then collect and summarize these views. On the other hand, they can reasonably deepen these views e, and use them to discuss and analyze the cases in the surrounding or current affairs hot spots. But to do this well, teachers also need to further consciously improve their philosophical literacy, know what famous views are in the history of philosophy in the issues under discussion, and understand how to use these views as easy reference.

Third, teachers are planners and organizers of all philosophical activities. As the most obvious function of teachers in the whole classroom, the organization and planning of teachers makes the classroom orderly, effective and interesting. Teachers have rich teaching experience, can start from the issues that students really care about, examine children's “situation”, set the situation like a good director, and give a concrete opportunity to discuss. For example, using stories and even the popular children's literature and film and television works to introduce the situation, and in accordance with the characteristics of different problems, choose books and picture books, video teaching, mind maps to guide children to think in many forms.

Based on this, the training of teachers for children's philosophical education can be roughly divided into two parts. The first is the reading of book texts, which mainly includes psychology related to children's dialogues, the universal version of philosophy history that lays basic philosophical literacy, and Introduction to philosophy, basic logic and critical thinking textbooks. The second is the exchange of experience. As an almost entirely new educational practice, teachers should diversify their experience exchange methods, including but not limited to main reports, round tables, course design competitions, and public course presentations.

3.2 Family as the cooperator in education

In philosophical education at the elementary school level, parental involvement is mainly carried out through cooperation with the school. What is needed for home-school cooperation in elementary school philosophical education is a “differentiated cooperation”. Each family has different conditions, and the “division of cooperation” model adopted based on this difference is also different. Based on this, parents can understand their children's endowments in the division of labor and cooperation and actively communicate with teachers, and provide children with soil to ask questions, think and practice.

Parents, as educators who get along with children for a long time, ultimately understand their nature. “What Heaven has conferred is called The Nature; an accordance with this nature is called The Path of duty; the regulation of this path is called Instruction..” The first sentence of The Doctrine of the Mean reveals such philosophy to us Education concept: Every child has the nature of “philo-sophia” (the love of wisdom), but their approach is different, this difference comes from different endowment, or rather nature, and growth environment. It is true that teachers are also responsible for discovering this endowment in children's “philosophical” questions and performance, but it is obviously the responsibility of parents. Philosophical education provides parents with an opportunity to discover children's preferences for more basic and original problems that they care about, as well as different thinking patterns and value tendencies in thinking about these issues, thereby helping parents discover and guide their children Unique “Tao”. Therefore, parents can understand the child's psychological status, concerns and ways of thinking in the philosophical education of the elementary school, and exert the child's temperament and endowment.

Another important duty of parents is to provide students with a place to ask, think and practice. The student's family-of-origin is the largest part of the child's life world and practical environment-as the child's first space to recognize the “other” (although the parent is a special “other”), the family is the first social education The place is the place where children realize the “intersubjectivity” for the first time-therefore, the elementary school stage is also a problem of “intersubjectivity” The beginning of appearance. Parents carefully protect children's questions and thinking in their interactions, correctly lead and encourage them to consciously reflect on the status of “others” and learn to handle their own relationships from the perspective of the philosophy they have nurtured. Beginning to contact moral and political philosophical issues related to intersubjectivity is conducive to laying the source of water and the foundation for future self-reflection and self-development of children.

4. Conclusion

The philosophical education of elementary school students in China has already started to take off and there are rich resources that can be drawn upon in the development process. Philosophical education has massive potential needs in modern Chinese society. Children in primary school have developed a qualified psychological and intellectual level to receive a philosophical education. Philosophical education is not only conducive to cultivating pupils' logical thinking and reasoning ability, but also caters to the abstraction of primary school students' interest in learning. In the practice of philosophical education in primary schools, teachers mainly take on the triple roles, separately play the roles of sparking and guiding dialogue and thinking, summarizing and sublimating philosophical dialogue and discussion, planning and organizing philosophical activities. Meanwhile, by virtue of benign home-school cooperation, parents can understand their children's endowment, provide them with the soil for questioning, thinking and practice, and deeply participate in the philosophical education of primary school students.

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