

Digital Ideas Impact on the Concept of Conventional Piety as Filial.

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Received : October 05, 2023

Accepted: October 06, 2023

Published : November 06, 2023

Abstract

According to the traditional Chinese understanding of filial piety, adult children must treat their parents with kindness, which includes meeting their material needs. Over time, the idea of traditional Chinese filial piety progressively changes to the idea that adult children should be obedient to their parents in addition to treating them with kindness. During the Guangxu Period of the Qing Dynasty, the introduction of Christianity in China, the Taiping Rebellion, and the Westernisation movement had a significant impact on the meaning of traditional Chinese filial piety, leading the culture back to its original path.

Subject Areas

Sociology, Philosophy, Art, History, and Anthropology

Keywords : *China, the Late of Qing Dynasty, Culture of Filial Piety, Influence*

INTRODUCTION

Filial piety is a long-standing tradition in culture. China is one of the four ancient civilizations in the world, having existed for thousands of years and encompassing a variety of geographical areas due to regional variations in the filial piety culture. The meaning of filial piety in ancient China fluctuated depending on the time period; nonetheless, due to the large territory and ra-

cial integration, the culture of filial piety was present in many forms.

The Connotation and Evolution of the Conception of Traditional Chinese Filial Piety

Because humans are social animals that are gregarious, intelligent, and dependent on one another, certain social rules and order emerge in their society, which is where filial piety first appears [1]. The first documentation of filial piety dates from the end of primitive culture. Specifically, "filial piety" emerged during the shift from matriarchy to patriarchy in late primitive society. This is the reason for the appearance of "worship of filial piety" (performing the rituals of filial piety to his predecessors), "Xiao Xiang" (sacrifice) and "Xiao Si" (sacrifice), as it became necessary to create certain rituals for grown-up children to express their gratitude and reverence to their parents' sacrifice in the process of upbringing. [2]. The oracle bone inscriptions contain the character "xiao." Everyone is aware that the majority of oracle bone inscriptions are written in hieroglyphics, and "xiao" is no different. The character "xiao" appears in both upper and lower structure in oracle bone inscriptions. The lower portion resembles a youngster with their hands spread, perhaps supporting and assisting the older guy, while the upper portion resembles an elderly man with a hunchback. In "Erya. Shixun," the meaning of "xiao" is "be good to parents." The bond between the elderly and their adult offspring is the basic definition of filial piety [2] [3]. According to Xu Shen in Shuo Wen Jie Zi, "xiao" signifies that adult children ought to show kindness to their elderly parents, as it is a concept that revolves around parents and children [2]. This ideal of "treating parents kindly" places more emphasis on providing for their material necessities than it does on "filial piety," which has a very different meaning in Confucian culture. Due to its vastness and the wide range of regional cultures and religious beliefs within it, China exhibits regional variations in the cultural meaning of filial piety. Leaders from many dynasties are constantly considering how to keep the enormous nation peaceful and stable. The family served as the fundamental social unit in feudal societies, which had a great deal of autonomy. Even lynching was accepted in large families. Furthermore, "filial piety" might inspire harmony within large families, which

served as the cornerstone for the stability of the entire community. As a result, leaders throughout history have encouraged "filial piety." During a period when feudal ethics were disintegrating, or when "rites and moralities collapsed," Confucius established filial piety as a crucial benchmark for controlling one's own morality and conduct. "The spring and autumn annals can illustrate my ambition, and the book of filial piety regulates my behaviour," he declared [4]. One of the "rites" that Confucius promoted is "filial piety," which is the practice of showing kindness to seniors.

Many theories sprouted and developed during the warring states period, as well as the spring and autumn period. Various views, which were not included here, gave varied interpretations of filial piety. "Filial piety" as a means of social stability maintenance by the ruling class Confucianism was made the official religion of the ruling class during the Han dynasty by Emperor Han Wudi, who "abandoned the doctrines, only respect Confucianism," enacted theocracy, and combined "loyalty" and "filial piety," elevating the latter. During the Tang dynasty, filial piety in the south was made popular and encouraged. Numerous big families moved to the south along with the filial piety tradition as a result of the ongoing persecution of the minorities in the north. Over time, as large families with minority connections in the South were assimilated, those minorities came to embrace the idea of "filial piety." As Buddhism was introduced to China, the culture of filial piety was not undermined; rather, it was incorporated with the Buddhist concept of returning kindness, solidifying its unique place in popular culture. Zhu Xi defined filial piety during the Nansong Dynasty and proposed a number of particular guidelines for it. The appearance and popularity of Twenty-Four Filial Piety during the Yuan Dynasty show that the development of filial piety culture continued even if the governing class was made up of Mongolians. Zhu Yuanzhang, the Ming Dynasty monarch, established six rules based on the idea of "filial piety." First, "filial piety," which had been encouraged throughout the Ming Dynasty, was mentioned. Individuals who demonstrated "filial piety" were bestowed with substantial pecuniary benefits, significantly elevating their social standing as "filial men." Ethnic minorities received sovereignty during the Qing period. Manchus made up the bulk of the Qing dynasty's ruling class. To keep society stable, the Qing dynasty's authorities carried on using the Ming dynasty's political structure. As this was going on, they altered the culture of filial piety. On the one hand, unlike the Yuan dynasty, the Qing government did not divide its people into multiple classes in order to consoli-

date its power. Rather, it adopted the Ming political structure. Conversely, the Manchu emperors continued to expand their domain, subjugating the uninteresting minority population. The traditional Confucian culture had less of an impact on those minorities than the filial piety culture did. In order to lessen the influence of filial piety culture, the Qing government implemented differentiation controlling tactics in this region (including the northeast, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Xinjiang, Tibet, and other territories).

The Social Trend and Its Influence in Guangxu Period of Qing Dynasty

During the late Qing Dynasty, a number of social movements and ideas had a significant impact on society. These included the Boxer Rebellion, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom Movement, the Reform movement, and the New Deal. This essay focuses on the societal ideas prevalent before to AD 1899 during the Guangxu period (which ran from August 14, 1871, to November 14, 1908). Prior to 1899, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom Movement, Westernisation Movement, Reform, and Boxer Movement were the main social movements during the late Qing Dynasty. These reforms and activities had a direct connection to the then-current Christianization of China. Gunboats were deployed by western nations to compel the Qing government to open its doors during the Opium War. In addition to temporarily occupying China, their goal was to take control of its resources. In order to accomplish the goal of colonising China, the spread of Christianity had become their weapon of choice for assimilation.

China has been home to Confucian culture for hundreds of years, and Chinese people still have strong beliefs in it. In order to quickly grow throughout China, Christianity thus aggressively looks for a point of convergence with traditional Confucian culture. Christianity uses "filial piety" as a springboard and leverages their shared characteristics to grow throughout China.

In an effort to fuse Christianity with traditional Chinese Confucianism, missionary Lin Lezhi wrote a series of papers titled "the doctrine of the doctrine of elimination and conversion" between December 4, 1869, and January 8, 1870. Missionary Tao Zhiqian later promoted the idea that Confucianism should be the foundation for reading the Bible. The German missionary HuaZhian furthered the fusion of Christianity and Confucianism in his book "From the West to the East." This approach, which was used by missionaries, proved effective, but it was challenging to persuade Chinese people that God created humans because

the theory that humans descended from monkeys had gained traction. Nonetheless, during the late Qing Dynasty, Christianity was largely connected to significant social ideas and events.

Under the ideological tenet that “all people in the world belong to one family and all people in the world are brothers and sisters,” as proclaimed by Hong Xiuquan, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom movement had an unparalleled effect on the conventional understanding of filial piety. An agricultural society built on large families and the family unit gave rise to China’s traditional filial piety culture. But this institution was overthrown by Hong Xiuquan, who divided men and women and did away with the family unit. For example, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom divided the residents of Nanjing according to the “male pavilion” and “female house,” using this system of classification. breaching the moral ties that bind father and son, brothers and sisters, husband and wife, etc. No matter the nature of their relationship, men and women are not allowed to communicate with one another. Although heterosexual interactions of any kind are strictly forbidden, couples may communicate in private or risk being put to death. Furthermore, the Taiping Army outlawed the worship of any ancestor temples, abolished burial customs, and forbade the usage of coffins, all of which had an impact on the culture of filial piety.

Christian theology veiled the idea of Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, yet radical and rebellious appearances alone could not erase its terrible aspects. The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom was forced to use a variety of harsh tactics that drastically deviated from people’s everyday lives when the philosophy was still far from reaching the same level. As a result, they ran into fierce opposition from the Jiangnan populace [5]. This radical viewpoint profoundly damaged the old Chinese filial piety culture, severely upending its preconceived notions and silently leading to a change in the late Qing Dynasty’s meaning of the term.

The Qing government’s leaders initiated the “westernisation movement,” sometimes referred to as the late Qing Dynasty’s self-help and self-improvement movement, between the 1960s and 1990s with the goal of bolstering national power. To uphold feudal control, the ruling class incorporated western military hardware, machine manufacturing, science, and technology between the 1860s and the 1890s. The drive towards westernisation had two slogans: “self-strengthening” in its early stages and “seeking wealth” in its later stages. [6]. While they promoted the study of Western science and technology, they paid little heed to Western culture, particularly the concept of filial piety; in contrast, they believed that traditional Chinese filial piety was head-

ed back towards its original roots. Zhang Zhidong’s “exhorting students” was filled with advice on how to love one’s brothers and be filial pious to one’s parents. “Zengguofan once said that he had read all the books in the world, all of which were about filial piety” [5]. One may argue that China’s westernisation effort helped to preserve the country’s ancient filial piety culture, which had been shattered during the late Qing Dynasty but had since recovered.

Conclusion

China is a nation with many different nationalities, a huge territory, and a lengthy history. Various historical periods, geographical locations, and ethnic groups have influenced the meaning and interpretation of traditional Chinese filial piety culture. In order to investigate the impact of social trends on the traditional Chinese culture of filial piety, this dissertation examines the social trends that existed during the late Qing Dynasty under Emperor Guangxu. Based on this research, the author concludes that the late Qing Dynasty social trend and the growth of Christianity in China had a significant impact on China’s traditional filial piety culture. In general, the traditional Chinese culture of filial piety was affected, questioned, and then brought back to its source. The quick transition from an agrarian society to a modern one has had a significant impact on the traditional Chinese culture of filial piety by drastically altering the family structure. In order to reconstitute filial piety culture in China today, this study explores the ways in which it was affected, questioned, and restored to its original source prior to 1899, the end of the Qing Dynasty. The author expects that this work will encourage more research in this area because there is still more relevant research that has to be enhanced and deepened.

Funding

Underwritten by the Li Bai Culture Research Centre, the project is named “Research on Li Bai folk tales in Qinglian Town” (LB19-B06) of 2019 and is centred on philosophy and social science in Sichuan Province.

Conflicts of Interest

Regarding the publishing of this paper, the writers state that they have no conflicts of interest.

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