

Rethinking the Educational Mission of Wushu Development in Modern Times--From the "Four Pillars" in Education

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Abstract: Currently there has been incessant call for educational reform. Via literature review and logical analysis, the paper states that humanity education has helped people find their subjectivity that has been lost for long and constitute the inevitable return of the educational mission in the 21st century; the "four pillars" in education, that is, "learn to know", "learn to do", "learn to coexist" and "learn to live", provides the guidance for the implementation of the educational mission of Wushu development in modern times; transmitting Chinese traditional culture and promoting national spirit still remains the sacred mission and historic responsibility that cannot be shaken in Wushu education; it is of particular importance to extract the core elements from Chinese traditional culture and national spirit to fulfill Wushu educational mission. This paper is intended to provide reference for the construction of the Wushu educational system and the exploration of the Wushu teaching model.

Keywords: education, Wushu, mission, national spirit

In the 21st century, the era of knowledge economy, there are differing opinions as to what is the big issue, but there is consensus among the state leaders and experts from all walks of life that education and learning should be given priority. *Guidelines for Long-term and Medium-term National Educational Reform and Development (2010-2020)* has been made public to the whole society. It can be predicted that massive educational reform movement will sweep through education eminently. Of course, martial arts education is no exception. It has been long that the researchers are proud of the mission of martial arts education, that is, preserving traditional Chinese culture, and carrying forward the national spirit of martial arts education. Looking back on the present-day development of martial arts in schools, the educational mission of martial arts has not been fulfilled. In fact, it is in a very worrying situation. In this regard, based on previous studies, this study, examine the educational mission of martial arts contemporary development from a new perspective intended to contribute to the educational reform of martial arts in schools.

1 Humanity Education---The Educational Mission of the 21st Century

Since the 70s of the 20th century, education has been the great concern of relevant experts in the international community and important international organizations. There is an agreement that research on education research is the effective solution to main conflicts in social development in the 21st century. Edited by UNESCO and published in 1972 *Learning to Live - Today and Tomorrow of Education* has put forward a new trend of post-war international education - how to survive. Shortly after the report was made public, it immediately sparked a huge repercussion in the world. Many of the recommendations and comments of the report were adopted by governments and education departments and most of the views were universally accepted. The report served as the guiding educational document with a far-reaching effect on the second half of the 20th century, marking a new historical stage of educational development in the world. The report makes a compelling point of view that there are four pillars in education in the 21st century: learning to know, learning to do, learn to coexist, learn to live.^[4] These four aspects are the main content as well as an important objective of education. *Learning to Live* points out the mission of education of "to help people in different ethnic groups to find common humanity". What is humanity? In this regard, Chen Yun Kai suggests that humanity can be understood as the

common rationality formed by different nationalities and people in different nations in practice and interaction. Humanity is not only an idea, a dominant element in Chinese philosophy but the principle and drive of the formation of Chinese national spirit.^{[6] P3} In the process of economic globalization and cultural globalization and with the problems of cultural anomie, righteousness inaccuracy, moral decline, loss of belief and human degradation, in order to maintain the spirit of the Chinese nation, it is necessary to explore and make full use of Chinese cultural resources which reflect essence of humanity in ancient, and nurture them towards humanity education, that is, genuineness, good-naturedness and beauty. Humanity education helps people find the human subjectivity lost years ago, and makes education person oriented, which will be a major change and breakthrough in ideas areas and great leap in talent cultivation.

2 Educational Mission of Contemporary Martial Arts Development

An overview of the exiting literature indicates that the education mission of martial arts development has been the great concern of researchers. As early as 2005, Mr. Qiu Pixiang in the article “Carrying Forward Martial Arts Education in Our National Spirit”^{[7] P3} urges to understand the value orientation of contemporary martial arts development from the vintage point of cultural strategy and to regard the martial arts as a national spirit of cultural resources and as an educational resource and tool of ideological and moral construction in order for martial arts education to actualize its full potential. Therefore, it is the historical responsibility of martial arts education to explore in depth the national spirit of martial arts and play an active role in carrying forward and cultivating the national spirit. Dr. Ma Wenguo (2009) in the article “Contemporary Educational Mission of Chinese Martial Arts from a Cultural Perspective”^{[8] P60} also emphasizes that as an important carrier of culture, the Chinese martial arts should shoulder the historical mission of preserving national culture and carrying forward national spirit in this serious situation of safeguarding national cultural security, which is not only the demand of the present situation, but also the best way to extend the vitality of the Chinese martial arts. Martial arts educational mission is not only the concern of scholars and researchers of but also that of government departments that have enacted red-tape documents, such as *Implementation Guidelines for Developing and Cultivating the National Spirit in Primary and Middle Schools* issued by the Central Propaganda Department, and the Ministry of Education, which stipulates that the education of the national spirit should be integrated into the teaching of every discipline and that there should be more class hours for Chinese martial arts in physical education and so on. The significance of this guideline lies not only in the entry of martial arts into physical education in primary and middle schools, but in the elevated status of martial arts understood from the perspective of carrying forward the Chinese martial spirit and cultivating patriotism.

Martial arts is not only a cultural resource, but also an educational resource, which enables young people in physical activity to feel the depth of national culture, to accept the influence of culture, and to understand the culture behind technology^{[8] P60}. But it is found in practice that there is a considerable distance between reality and the mission carrying forward the national spirit as has been expected, that school martial arts education has encountered unprecedented difficulties, and that some schools simply have cancelled the martial arts. Dr. Liu Zuhui (2007) believes this is due to the deviation in guiding principles for school martial arts education, that is, the education of martial arts as Chinese traditional culture has been largely ignored, and the education of martial arts reflecting the basic spirit of traditional Chinese culture has also been ignored.^{[9] P123} Whether it is the deviation in the guiding principles or it is the neglect of Chinese traditional culture and national spirit, we must understand that without traditional Chinese culture, the educational mission of the contemporary martial arts will not exist and that the charm of martial arts lies in not only the skill of martial arts, but, more importantly, the splendid Chinese culture and Chinese national spirit infiltrated in the martial arts after thousands of years of accumulation. In order to better assume the educational mission of martial arts, it is necessary to find out and extract the content and elements which can represent the national spirit and soul. These elements and content

will be intended to be accepted and pursued by those who practice martial arts, forging a solid basis of culture and a moral foundation, and exploring a variety of educational methods and channels.

3 Path Construction of Martial Arts Educational Mission - the “Four Pillars” Perspective in Education

3.1 Educating students to learn to know

3.1.1 The meaning of “learning to know”

Learning to know - the purpose is to enable students to learn how to learn, that is, the means of acquiring knowledge, but not the knowledge itself. Today’s society is a learning-oriented society, therefore, teaching students to learn to know is not only the demand of the times, but also from the transition from examination-oriented education to “quality education”. Now most of the book knowledge has minimal impact on the future development of students. Many books kept in the attic after the college entrance examination. Especially after the exam this year, photos of tearing books were spread on the Internet. Though it cannot be said that students were sick of books, it is can be sure that they wanted people to know that felt miserable. However, the most effective and useful is the ability to learn acquired in the course of learning book knowledge, which enable them to constantly learn new knowledge and perfect themselves in their life. Therefore, teaching students to learn to know means mastering the learning methods, more than acquiring systematic knowledge.

3.1.2 The way to “learn to know” in martial arts education, - implementation of the teaching principle of “playing down Taolu, highlighting methods, and emphasizing practicality ”

The teaching of Wushu Taolu has long been about five-step boxing, Shaonian boxing, Sanlu Changquan, youth boxing, tai chi and primary cudgel, swordsmanship, sword, etc. Students find it hard to learn Taolu, spending moat of their time memorizing movements in Taolu. What is worse, some of the movements in Taolu are so complex and the teacher is so concerned about the progress of his/her teaching, students are basically imitating the teacher’s movements in a mechanical manner. As a result, it is commonplace that they forget completely as soon as they finish learning. The author has on different occasions proposed the teaching principle of “playing down Taolu, highlighting methods, and emphasizing practicality ”. Playing down Taolu doesn’t mean canceling Taolu, but advocates the diversification of martial arts teaching and teaching methods, breaking away from the traditional teaching framework, broadening and extending teaching content, and improving autonomy of both the teacher and students; highlighting methods means foregrounding the ways of exercise and attack and defense, which is the core of martial arts skill; emphasizing practicality mean proceeding from the characteristics of martial arts teaching and those of students, being able to put what they have learned in class into daily life use and to choose whatever is suitable in their own situation to do body-building exercise.

3.2 Educating students to learn to do

3.2.1 The meaning of “learning to do”

Learning to do – enabling students to work in a certain environment. This ability includes the comprehensive ability to deal with difficulties, resolve conflicts, and take risks, etc. As we all know, it is hard for those who are educated with the sole yardstick of test scores to meet the needs of work in future society. *Guidelines for Long-term and Medium-term National Educational Reform and Development (2010-2020)* points out that sticking to person-orientedness and quality education is the strategic theme of educational reform and development, and the demand of the times when implementing the educational policy of the communist party. The core lies in the solution to important issues of what talents are to be cultivated and how, ... It focuses on raising students’ awareness of social responsibility of serving the country and serving the people, improving their creativity and their ability to solve problems in practice.

3.2.2 The way to “learn to do”- updating educational mentality, and promoting creativity in martial arts

movements

Educational mentality refers to the ideas and beliefs and spiritual pursuit to guide educational behavior. Currently, martial arts teaching methods follow the old educational mentality, that is, the teacher simply teaches according to the requirements of the curriculum, Taolu movements are taught through one-way cramming, and students are passive recipients as a general storehouse without their own styles and creativity. The teacher and teaching materials are the final and the only standard of reference. One can imagine that students trained in this way will not have much creativity and practical ability, which is worth thinking about.

Changing teachers' teaching beliefs means positioning the teacher as the organizer, and the director. It is not much that how well-structured his/her teaching procedure is and how wonderful his/her lecture is, but that through the teacher's organization and regulation, students' thought is actively activated, their ability is adequately cultivated, their intelligence is fully developed so that students are not passive recipients, and pattern drillers, but active participants, and inquirers. Students are trained to learn to ask questions and solve problems and enjoy the pleasure of success. At present, the martial arts movement creation is a barren land uncultivated. It takes time for students to become the mainbody of movement creation. Students' learning is bound to go through a series of gradual processes, from perception to experience, from imitation to practice, and from adaptation to innovation. When students are involved in martial arts movement creation, the teacher demonstrates movements, and through the decomposition, expansion and reorganization of movements, guides students to try out and experience, and at the same time displays and analyzes the pros and cons of the typical cases, making students understand the points of movement appropriateness and evaluate the correctness of their own movement by way of imitation. Only in this way can students' abilities be cultivated, their ability to study and practice independently, their ability to analyze the meaning of offensive and defensive actions and their ability to observe, analyze and correct errors.

3.3 Educating students to learn to coexist

3.3.1 The meaning of "learning to co-exist"

Learning to co-exist –students learning to be empathetic, thereby eliminating the gap, prejudice and hostility between each other, living in harmony with people around, cultivating students' team work spirit to achieve the common goal. *Guidelines for Long-term and Medium-term National Educational Reform and Development (2010-2020)* points out: "uphold the moral education first, letting the moral education permeate all aspects of education and teaching, school education, family education and social education . Establish the system of moral education from primary school, secondary school to universities and colleges. Innovate the forms of moral education, enrich the content of moral education, continuously improve the attractiveness and appeal of moral education, and enhance the pertinence and effectiveness of moral education."

3.3.2 The way to "learn to coexist"- Reconstructing the pillar element of martial arts education in Chinese traditional culture

3.3.2.1 The core spiritual element of martial arts—benevolence

The core of Confucian morality is "benevolence". Since ancient times, it has been regarded as the highest virtue, that is, the noblest quality of the human spirit. Mencius said in "Da Xue: "Benevolence is bound to beat heartlessness as water quenches fire." In *Analects of Confucius*, the properties of benevolence can be roughly summarized as follows: (1) restraining oneself and complying with social norms; (2) thinking of others whenever and wherever possible; (3) adopting a modest approach to establishing relationships; (4) being bold in practice. When dealing with interpersonal relationships, Wushu practitioners are required to be modest and respectful, tolerant and patient, and value harmony.

3.3.2.2 The basis of the martial arts morality – "etiquette"

"Etiquette" was used as the law and moral education in ancient China. "Etiquette" is the general term for proper etiquette and rituals in human social interaction, such as courtesy, protocol, bearing, and ceremonies. Etiquette education not only enables young people to develop good habits of civilization,

but also to nurture the values behind the etiquette conveyed to them, which plays an invaluable role in the cultivation of their autonomy and the construction of their self-identity and social identity. It should be understood that school is a part of social life, and is open to society, and thus cannot be separated from social life. Therefore, the students' school life is not the path for their future life in society, but the social life itself, so learning to get along with others should be the proper meaning of school education. Beginning with etiquette and ending up with etiquette is the spirit held in esteem by Taekwondo. Taekwondo views etiquette as the embodiment of the basic spirit of practitioners, with the aim of cultivating etiquette and having a sense of honor, being patient and retraining oneself, being unyielding and Indomitable. Practitioners must salute to each other before and after each practice and competition. Through hundreds of thousand times of these seemingly unnecessary and complicated ceremonies, practitioners will unconsciously develop good manners. China is an ancient civilization, known as the land of etiquette and formalities, and has a long history of etiquette culture. Since the reform and opening up, with the economic globalization, the guiding principle for everything in China is that priority should be given to economic development, at the expense of moral construction, especially the lack of the guidance and nurturing of the formation of audience etiquette and culture, and martial arts etiquette also has been off the stage of history with the passage of time, resulting in the lack of standardized protocol in martial arts education and martial arts competitions^{[11] P58}.

3.3.2.3 Code of Conduct of Martial Arts—"righteousness"

"Righteousness" is the method, approach and standard according to benevolence and a kind of ethics that people's behavior must follow certain norms. In Japan, righteousness is the most stringent education received by warriors.^{[12] P23} Since ancient times, it has been the ideal of Wushu practitioners to safeguard the country and protect the people and to become chivalric. In order to pursue righteousness will not hesitate to risk his/her life, which is the basic requirement of Wushu moral qualities.

3.3.2.4 Principle of life of martial arts—"honesty"

"Trust" refers to being honest, and keeping one's promise, which is the tradition and custom of martial arts. Chinese martial arts morality is centred on Confucian benevolence, with the promise as one of the important criteria to measure a person. It is the tradition of Chinese martial arts that behavior must come after words, that behavior must produce results, that one must be trustworthy and that one should keep one's promise. It is the custom of martial arts that what was said cannot be taken back. This is what is called "a good heart produces good Wushu performanceship, vice versa. Before one learns martial arts, one must cultivate one's morality; before teaching, one must educate one's heart. Before learning martial arts one must learn etiquette; before practice martial arts one must learn morality, which fully demonstrates that martial arts practitioners never judge a person simply from a technical point of view, but from both skill and morality.

3.4 Educating students to learn to live

3.4.1 The meaning of "learning to live"

Learning to live embodies the following three layers of implications: first, First, learning to protect oneself, and maintaining normal living conditions; second, learning to labor, learning to compete, learn to adapt oneself in order to enhance one's ability to survive; third, learning to be aesthetic to improve the quality of life. Learn to protect oneself is the most superficial, the minimum and the basic requirement, the core of which is the issue of security. Guiding children to learn to labor, learn to compete, learn to adapt themselves is the requirements at different levels to enhance their ability to survive. Learning to live is the kind of education directly creating, regulating and guiding human life itself, the fundamental aim of which is to improve the quality of life, and culture and develop human perceptual ability to make people become perfect and make the world a better place.

3.4.2 "Learning to live"- emphasizing the bravery and the indomitable spirit of martial arts

Today, young people, with little experience of major ordeals and of hard times, are generally unable to live independently, let alone fortitude, being indomitable and courageous. Martial arts education itself is a good carrier of education. Students like martial arts, but do not like the martial arts classes. It is a

vicious circle. In fact, it is not a vicious cycle, since what our students desire most makes the school and teachers feel at a loss. It is the responsibility of martial arts education to educate students learn to face setbacks, nurture their self-awareness and self-reliance, to emphasize the quality of the trial of their will, and to enable them demonstrate the qualities of being healthy and polite, vigorous, and enterprising which are the spiritual inspiration of the martial arts. As we all know, martial arts qualities such as fortitude, being indomitable, being courageous, calmness, and courage are most likely to move young people, and they can be acquired through practice and demonstration, and should inspire the young from an early age. They are the most sought-after qualities. Sayings go like the following: first one practices courage, second, strength, and third, skill; first one practices courage, second, eyes, third, strength and fourth, dodge. The “guts” (bravery) is the first place, the direct expression of self-reliance in martial arts.

4 Conclusion

Throughout thousands of years of history of China, the martial arts has been carried forward with strong vitality, which lies in its own technical charm and its role in physical health, and more importantly the embodiment and inheritance of national culture and national spirit. Therefore, the martial arts education and inheritance depends first on developing a cultural awareness, valuing the inherent nature of martial arts, bringing its role of educating people into full play, and cultivating all-round modern people according to the nature and the law of education. Second, it must orient to and establish martial arts educational system in terms of Four Pillars in education, enrich martial arts educational content, assume the education mission of martial arts contemporary development, and promote the rapid development of martial arts.

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