

On the value of Chinese cultural stories in preschool cultural education

Li Bing-quan^{#1}, Du Hai-xin^{*2}

[#] Educational Science School, Zhaoqing University, Zhaoqing, China

Xinzhou Sixth Ch'an Patriarch Huineng Culture Research Institute, Xinxing, China

^{*} Educational Science School, Henan University, Kaifeng, China

Abstracts

Chinese cultural stories have very important values of preschool cultural education, which values are mainly to cultivate Chinese cultural psychological character of preschool children, promote the health development of preschool children's psychology, and acculturate preschool children to Chinese culture. As Chinese cultural stories have such important cultural and educational value, it is necessary to carry out actively in the stage of preschool education the education of Chinese cultural stories, and take the Chinese cultural stories as an important content and way to enculturate preschool children to give full play to their educational value. It is very helpful to inherit and carry forward Chinese culture, and to enculturate preschool children.

Keywords — *Chinese cultural stories; Chinese cultural psychology; Preschool children; Culturalization*

I. Introduction

The preschool period is the key and basic period to cultivate Chinese excellent cultural psychological quality, and an important stage to culturalize people so as to realize the cultural inherit and develop Chinese culture. Therefore, it is very important and necessary to carry out Chinese culture education in preschool education stage to promote the culturalization of preschool children. As an important component of Chinese culture, the story of Chinese culture is of great cultural educational value, which plays a very important role and significance in the inheritance and development of Chinese culture and Chinese culturalization of people, which is effective

educational way and content to cultivate preschool children to have Chinese cultural psychological quality. The reason why the story of Chinese cultural has important cultural and educational value for preschool children is that: (1) it contains and expresses the psychological and behavioral quality of Chinese culture; (2) it fits in with the psychological development characteristics of preschool children.

“Story” refers to telling an event with implication or a past event by way of narration, which is “real or fictional things used as the object of narration that are coherent, attractive, and can infect people”[1]. It is “a series of life events with causal links to be used to express the personal character in story and show related to the theme or topic in narrative literary works”[1], which “focuses on the description of the time process, emphasizing the vividness and coherence of the plot”[1]. Robert McKee and Thomas Gerace define “story” as “a series of dynamic progressive events driven by conflict, which cause significant changes in the life of the characters” in their book *《Storynomics》* [2]. Owing to the narrative, situational, emotional and interesting of story, it is suitable for the psychological characteristics of preschool children. Therefore, preschool children are interested in story and regard it as an important way to organize and understand experience and knowledge.

Chinese cultural story is the story created by generations of Chinese people in the process of the formation and development of Chinese culture, which reflects Chinese cultural spirit and the psychological quality and behavioral characteristics of the Chinese nation embodied in Chinese cultural spirit. It has the general characteristics of all story, which is consistent with the psychological developmental level of

preschool children so that it can and should be used as the material and way or way of preschool education. It also has the unique characteristics that the general story does not have that embodies or reflects Chinese cultural spirit and the psychological quality and behavioral characteristics of the Chinese nation embodied in Chinese cultural spirit, which is taken as the core of story. This shows that Chinese cultural story is an important way and content to cultivate people's psychological quality of Chinese culture and an important part of Chinese cultural education. It is the material and way to realize Chinese culturalization of children, especially preschool children. Chinese culturalization is to transform from a natural person to a Chinese person with Chinese cultural and psychological characteristics, which is the way to inherit, promote and develop Chinese culture.

The inheritance and development of Chinese culture is realized through the Chinese culturalization of generations of Chinese people. The essence of Chinese culturalization is to cultivate people with Chinese cultural psychological quality. The process of cultivating people is actually the process of education, that is to say, culture is education that is to cultivate people's cultural psychological quality. Therefore, cultivating people to have Chinese cultural psychological quality of is essentially Chinese culture education.

Chinese cultural education is an important basis for the implementation of the fundamental task of building morality and cultivating people. In 2014, the contents of Chinese culture education is divided into three aspects following by "*The guidelines of perfecting Chinese excellent traditional culture education*"[3] issued by Chinese Ministry of education. The education of feelings of family and country focuses on that everyone should be responsible for the rise and fall of the world. The education of social care focuses on Benevolence and mutual aid and self-reliance. The education of personality cultivation focuses on keeping people's heart straight and ambition and respecting morals and having a broad and strong mind. These contents are

contained and expressed in Chinese cultural stories. According to the current situation and problems of the propagation and education of Chinese excellent traditional culture, "the guidelines" points out that it is necessary to "promote the education of Chinese excellent traditional culture in an orderly way by stages" and "strengthen the organic connection of various learning periods"[3]. Since preschool is the first critical period of life development, it is very important and necessary to carry out Chinese culture education in early childhood to cultivate preschool children to have Chinese cultural psychological quality. If Chinese cultural education is done well in this stage, a solid foundation for future education would be established. Because the story of Chinese culture contains and tells the Chinese cultural psychological and behavioral quality such as Chinese cultural spirit, and fits the psychological development level of preschool children, it has great value in preschool culture education.

II. The value of Chinese cultural stories in preschool education

A. Cultivating preschool children to positive Chinese cultural psychological character

Story's language is simple and concise, the content is popular and vivid. If the teacher of preschool children can interpret skillfully and vividly, most children would like to see and hear it. Therefore, story should be a common form of kindergarten education and teaching activities. As one of the most prominent carriers of Chinese traditional culture, Chinese excellent cultural stories, including myths, legends, fables, folktales and so on, reflect the basic knowledge and life experience in the field of humanities accumulated and created by generations of Chinese people, which are able to provide rich curriculum resources for kindergarten education and teaching.

Different from the common excellent picture book stories at home and abroad based on the current life, Chinese cultural stories not only originate from the real life of Chinese people of all generations, but also are full of fantasy and magic by the processing of imagination. Therefore, it is able to be said that

these stories provide many fresh and legendary character events for preschool children. It is helpful for preschool children to broaden their horizons to receive the education of Chinese excellent cultural stories. Under the correct guidance of their teachers or parents, preschool children can learn from the practices and experiences of their predecessors, master and use the excellent wisdom achievements included in stories, cultivate their inner spirit, and pursue the unity of truth, goodness and beauty, so as to develop into people with broad cultural foundation and higher spiritual pursuit.

B. Promoting the healthy development of preschool children's psychology

Early childhood is the key period of people's psychological development. Key period, also known as sensitive period or optimal period or critical period, refers to the period when it is easiest to form some aspects of physical or psychological functions and characteristics. Therefore, this period is the best time to cultivate these physical or psychological functions or characteristics. If proper methods or measures of cultivating or training these physical and psychological functions or qualities are able to be taken, the best effects would be obtained, which is to greatly promote the formation and development of these physiological and psychological functions or qualities, and lay a solid foundation for their development.

The critical period of psychological development is the most sensitive, easy and basic period of human psychological development. In this period, some psychological qualities and behavioral characteristics of people are easy to obtain and form. If this period is missed, these psychological qualities and behavioral characteristics would lose the best occasion or great opportunity to form and develop, so it is difficult for them to form and develop.

Early childhood is a critical period for people's socialization, intelligence, personality and other psychological development. Some studies have shown that 2~3 years old is the key period of oral speech development, and the key period of counting development; 2.5~3 years old is the key period to

establish norms, form awareness of rules and understand rules; 3 years old is the key period of character development; Before the age of 4 is the key period of image visual development; 4~5 years old is the critical period for the develop of children's written language; 5 years old is the critical period for mastering mathematical concepts and the second critical period of children's oral language development; 5~6 years old is the critical period for the formation and development of language vocabulary ability. Story education is the best way to cultivate these psychological qualities or characteristics, which critical period of formation and development of them are in early childhood. For example, story education is very important for the formation and development of speech, including oral and written speech, self-awareness[4], personality, initiative and autonomy, good habits and exploration spirit.

The language of telling story is generally interesting and suspense. The most important reason that good story can attract preschool children is that their language expression is very attractive to preschool children. Therefore, story can promote preschool children's language development, which is particularly important in the critical period of language development. As mentioned above, the Chinese cultural stories express the spirit of Chinese culture and the excellent psychological quality of Chinese culture. By these stories, children's positive psychological qualities such as hard-working spirit, self-improvement and honesty can be cultivated, etc. Chinese cultural stories, especially fairy tales, are full of imagination so as to be able to promote the development of children's imagination and creativity, etc. Story is the way to organize knowledge and experience, which it is the best way for preschool children to organize knowledge and experience, as the result that it can promote children's cognitive development. Story usually contains the social norms of dealing with people so that it is able to promote the formation and development of children's sense of rules.

Preschool stage is the key period of personality

formation[5]. At this stage, children gradually form a whole set of behavior habits, their dynamic stereotype is also gradually formed and stabilized, the basic embryonic form of personality psychological characteristics and personality tendency has been being formed. Although the personality quality or characteristics formed in this stage may be changed in the future development, it plays a very important role in the development of children in the future. If preschool children at this stage form bad behavior habits, negative attitudes towards others towards society, and negative ways of dealing with people, etc., it would be difficult to change in the future, and have a more lasting negative impact on the development of school age[6]. On the contrary, if a good behavior habit, a proper attitude or mentality towards people and things, and a positive way of dealing with things and people, etc., are formed in this period, a solid foundation for the formation of his good personality would be laid. In the cultivation of preschool children's personality, Chinese cultural story can play a very important role in that it include rich in positive psychological quality and behavioral traits, so that it is inevitable for preschool children to be affected unconsciously by the characters in the story during the process of their listening to stories, telling stories or playing story games. As the protagonist in Chinese cultural story usually has good personality characteristics and positive behavioral quality, preschool children would learn many positive things from stories. For example, they would acquire moral quality and spirit and behavior, understand what is true, good and beautiful and what is false, evil and ugly, form appropriate concepts, and master the value standard of distinguishing true from false, good from evil, beauty from ugliness, know what to do and what not to do[6].

It is because Chinese cultural stories have positive effects on children's personality development that various forms and diversified education modes of Chinese culture stories should be organized and carried out, which are effective ways to cultivate preschool children to have Chinese cultural psychological

characteristics, which are necessary for people to adapt contemporary society. they include ability of interpersonal communication, spirit of teamwork and cooperation, quality of benevolence, justice and humility, EQ(emotional quotient) of controlling and reasonably using their emotions and desires, AQ(adversity quotient) of not afraid of difficulties and obstacles, and good habit of diligence in observation and happy to thinking, etc.[5].

C. Inheriting, carrying forward and developing Chinese excellent culture

Culturalization is an important goal of contemporary education, which is attached great importance to by humanism, constructivism and culturalism. Culturalization refers to the process in which a natural person gradually becomes a cultural person under the influence of the culture in which he lives. In other words, culturalization is to cultivate people with certain cultural quality of psychology and behavior, that is, the process that people gradually change from a natural person to a cultural person or from a physical person to a real social person in the process of his life existence[7]. Its essence is the process of humanizing people's inherent nature, that is, "the process of individual understanding, identifying and gradually internalizing the culture where they are living. The ultimate goal is that people can adapt to the culture in which they live and contribute to the development of culture. Acculturation is a process in which individuals gradually understand, identify with and internalize culture by social interaction with other social members in their process of development, and gradually have commonalities or similarities with other social members or cultural communities in terms of mind, thinking mode and behavior. It is the inevitable attribution of everyone in the cultural community. Only in this way can individuals integrate into the social culture, be accepted by the society or culture in which they live, and can they survive and develop better." [8] In the process of human

culturalization, culture provides a tools' box for individual to make individuals to re-construct or individualize social culture, which essence is to internalize social culture into individual's own ideas, psychological and behavioral characteristics, as well as the cultural way or mode of coping with the environment and its stimulation. Chinese cultural stories are exactly the most appropriate tools' box and way for people to adapt Chinese culture.

From the perspectives of evolutionary psychology, cultural psychology and individual psychological development, everyone at birth has acquired certain cultural genes and some basic qualities of human beings, but he is only a natural or biological person, and does not have the spiritual quality and psychological characteristics of a real social person, so he is not a real human being. If he wants to change from a natural or biological man to a real social or cultural man, he must go through a process of culturalization or socialization. In this process, "individuals gradually master and use the cultural factors such as language, customs and habits, thinking and cognitive mode, religion and other cultural factors, and form and develop people's psychology and behavior by contact or communication with others, education and training of others and the imperceptible influence of society." [7] It is to say that individual growth and development is unable to be separated from the culture in which he lives. Under the influence of culture, individuals gradually form patterned behavior and cultural characteristics of psychology and behavior that distinguish them from the individuals in other cultures. It is able to be said that culture provides a meaningful aspect of the psychological organization of the people living in it [9]. The behavior of an individual, such as standing and sitting posture, tone and manner of speaking, etc., are all restricted by the culture in which they live [7]. Moreover, culture is carried, expressed, inherited and developed by the people who are forged with the cultural characteristics. It is through the individuals of one by one, generation by generation, that culture is passed

down from generation to generation, and is developed through its individualization. According to evolutionary psychology, individuals are the tools and ways for the continuous inheritance and development of culture. Whoever he is, he was born with an internal mechanism, namely cultural gene, derived from evolution. With one's growth, under the motivation of certain stimuli, he develop and manifest certain cultural behaviors in turn according to this internal mechanism, namely cultural genes. It is to say that he takes culturally prescribed behavioral respond to the environment or stimulus, especially the social environment or social stimulation. As the result, the culture and its psychological and behavioral character get to continuous transmission and development. According to the theory of cultural psychology, the fundamental reason for the continuous inheritance and development of culture is that it shapes the new individuals from generation to generation. In other words, culture shapes into people with the cultural psychology and behavior by culturalization [7]. Preschool stage is the basic stage of people's culturalization. Chinese cultural stories play a very important role in the culturalization of Chinese preschool children.

As a kind of literary works, Chinese cultural stories have profound and rich connotations, including the love for home, nation and elders; the Chinese cultural spirit of continuous self-improvement and moral integrity [10]; and the psychological characteristics of Chinese culture such as diligence, bravery, kindness, tenacity and tolerance, etc. For example, in the story of *《Hou Yi shooting the sun》*, Hou Yi's bravely shooting suns to save all things and people manifests the spirit of no fearing violence and fighting bravely, the sense of responsibility of governing the country and pacifying the world, the life goal of making contributions, and the courage to take responsibility for the rise and fall of the world. In the story of *《Da Yu governing the flood》*, Da Yu's putting his personal interests at the expense, "passing his own house three times without entering", leading the mass to unite and cooperate, and finally defeated the flood disaster, manifest the

spirit of giving up the family for all, the wisdom of making the best use of the circumstances according to the characteristics of things, the spirit of facing the difficulties bravely, the quality of actively looking for ways to solve the difficulties, the courage of not escaping from retreat and not afraid of difficulties. The story of 《Kong Rong give up pear》manifests the consciousness of abiding by public order and good custom, the good sentiment of respecting elders, and the way of Su(forgiveness) of being modest and polite. By the education of Chinese cultural story, preschool children would acquire the Chinese traditional virtues, such as diligence, bravery, benevolence, dedication and humility contained in the stories under imperceptible influence and indoctrination. Meanwhile they would abandon the bad habits of laziness, timidity, selfishness and insolence, and gradually form good morality and positive personality, which is of great practical significance for carrying forward Chinese national spirit and traditional virtues and promoting social harmony.

III. Conclusion

To sum up, Chinese cultural stories have rich and important preschool education value, which is not only the content and way to promote the Chinese culturalization of preschool children, but also the way to inherit and promote Chinese culture. Therefore, Chinese cultural stories should be took as the content of preschool education, and do a good job in the research and construction of the curriculum of Chinese cultural story education. Meanwhile, effective methods and ways of Chinese cultural story education should be actively researched and developed, so that the Chinese cultural story education is effectively implemented, and the effect of Chinese cultural education is improved step by step.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This work was supported by (1) “Research on preschool education model based on the cultivation of ingenuity”, the characteristic innovation projects (education and scientific research) of colleges and

universities in Guangdong Province (Grant number: 2017GXJK191). (2) “Research on Mental Health Education Based on Huineng Xinxue”, Scientific research projects of Guangdong Provincial Key Disciplines(2019058). (3) “Research on Chinese positive cultural psychology and the cultivation of socialist core values based on Cultural Heritage”, Major research project of Zhaoqing Education Development Institute (ZQJYY2019005).

REFERENCES

- [1] Dictionary editing room, Institute of language, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. *Modern Chinese Dictionary*. Beijing: Commercial Press. 2002.
- [2] McKee, R., Gerace, T. *Storynomies*. Tianjin: Tianjin People's Publishing House. 2018.
- [3] Gov.cn.. *The guidelines of perfecting Chinese excellent traditional culture education*. Retrieved 2014-04-01, from http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2014-04/01/content_2651154.htm. 2014.
- [4] Zanden, J. W. V., Grandell, T. L., Grandell, C. H. *Human development(8th Edition)*. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. 2009.
- [5] Douban.com. *The critical period of psychological development*. Retrieved 2006-12-26, <https://www.douban.com/group/topic/1350023/>. 2006.
- [6] Li, B.-q., Hu, R., Du, H.-x., Zhang, X.-d.. Analysis on Behavior Factors of Successful Entrepreneurship of College Students of Local University in Guangdong Province. *Britain International of Humanities and Social Sciences (BioHS) Journal*, 2(1): 35-44. 2020.
- [7] Li, B.-q. *The declassifying of Chinese psychology and behavior*. Guangzhou: Guangdong Education Press. 2016.
- [8] Li, B.-q. An analysis of the teaching thought of cultural psychology: A kind of cultural teaching thought. *Journal of Educational Development*, (2): 13-16. 2012.
- [9] Waal, F. B. M. Evolutionary Psychology: the Wheat or Chaff. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 11(6):187-191.2020.
- [10] Li, B.-q., Du, H.-x., Zhang, X.-d., Du, Sh.-j. Comparison between Huin-neng and Martin Luther's Religious Psychological Thought. *Britain International of Humanities and Social Sciences (BioHS) Journal*, 1(2): 40-49. 2019.