

“The Way of Family Unification” - a Test of the Philosophical Thoughts on Family Governance in the Jinsi Lu

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Abstract: *As a classic textbook of Cheng-Zhu philosophy, the book has a wide range of historical and regional influences. Historically, scholars have mostly focused on “cultivating one’s own body”, but less on “unifying one’s family”. The way of family unification constructed in The Jinsi Lu, with the general objectives of “firstly strictness of one’s own body” and “correct ethics and righteousness”, and with the sub-divisions of “obedience to parents, friendship to brothers, and honour to husband and wife”, still has a vivid vitality in today’s world. It is still alive and well today. At a time when family problems are becoming more and more prominent, the interpretation and promotion of the “way of unifying the family” in the outstanding traditional culture can help promote the harmonious and healthy development of society.*

Keywords: The way of family unification, The Jinsi Lu, Positive ethics.

1. Introductory

In traditional Chinese culture, the concept of “family” has always occupied an important position, and “the way of keeping the family in order” is an indispensable part of the system of “cultivating oneself, keeping the family in order, ruling the country and levelling the world” constructed by Confucianism. The “Way of unifying the Family” is an indispensable part of the system of “cultivating oneself and the family, ruling the country and levelling the world” built by Confucianism. Zhu Zi regarded “the way of keeping the family in order” in Volume 6 of the Record of Recent Thoughts as “the key to governing oneself and others”, and in the course of discussion with Lu Zuqian, he placed this volume after the “province of inspection”, which can be seen as a significance of its importance. The importance of this volume can be seen from the fact that he put this volume after the idea of “family unification” contained in this volume has a lot to learn from it, and is still of positive significance to contemporary family education. In this paper, we will focus on the text of Volume 6 of The Jinsi Lu, and try to analyse the “way of family unification” contained in the text.

2. The Way of Ruling the Family

2.1 The First Task of Family Unification - “First Strictness of His Own Body”

“One is to cultivate the body as the basis” “This is not to repair the body can not be unifying the family” to cultivate the body as the first thing, unifying the family is the first requirement is to correct their own virtues, “The Jinsi Lu “ that is to advocate “first strict its own body The “Record of Recent Thoughts” advocates that “one should first be strict with one’s self”. “Family members” on the nine lines, said the family should be ruled with majesty, and the husband of the cloud again, when the first strict body also. If majesty does not precede oneself, then people will complain and not obey.” The family should be ruled with majesty, in order to become the example of the family, so that family members dare not do anything wrong, and then emulate the virtues of the head of the family for good.

However, the prerequisite for being strict in ruling the family is to be strict in ruling oneself first. If one is not strict with oneself but strict with one’s own family, the family members will not only be unconvinced but will also be resentful.

What is majesty? Zhu Zi said: “Wei is not outside, against and body only. Later generations do not know the meaning of this, or the body is not correct and Shang majesty, then the father and son razor, the more disobedient carry on, and can be auspicious?” The majesty is not the harshness of speech, not external things, but from themselves. Their own moral integrity, and then you can “say something, do something”. Words and deeds are in line with the truth, words and deeds are consistent, so that others can be truly convinced, this is the real majesty, rather than to make others fear their own power. That is why Zhu Zi said that majesty is not something to be sought externally, but to be sought in the opposite direction.

In addition to being upright, how to be strict in ruling the family? Ye Cai believes that: “the precious house of the authority, not only the strict rule of the rope, the cover must be the correct self as the basis, so that in my body to hold a strict and no less indulgent, then the family naturally have a strict and dare not transgress, there is a sense of view and the rate of return to the correct.” This is true of all the ways to defend one’s subordinates. It is especially pertinent to say that “the way to unify the family is based on the cultivation of one’s own body.” Ruling a family not only requires serious laws, but also the need to correct oneself as the basis, so as to set a good example, so that family members will be inspired and rise up for good. Therefore, the family is based on the cultivation of one’s own body, and the rule of the family must first be strict in its own body.

2.2 The General Purpose of Ruling the Family - “Right Ethics, Righteousness and Benevolence”

Is there a uniform standard of behaviour in family life? What kind of standard can be the general tenet of the way of ruling a family? According to Cheng Yi, “The way of the family is to be correct in ethics, and to be sure of beneficence and

righteousness.” This passage was originally taken from Cheng Yi’s commentary on the “Family Gua” in Zhou Yi Cheng Shi Zhuan, which was later included in the “Record of Recent Thoughts”. Zhang Shaojie commented that “these two sentences are the main purpose of a piece of writing”, and he believed that this was the core of the family way of thinking in The Jinsi Lu.

Zhang Xikong explains what is meant by “correcting ethics and fulfilling the right of beneficence”: “Fathers and fathers, sons and daughters, brothers and brothers, husbands and husbands, women and women, and the family way is correct’, correcting ethics. “The king pretends to have a family, but he loves each other,” which is also a sign of righteousness.” The so-called correct ethics means that each should have his place and his share. Parents do what parents should do, and children do what children should do; only when the name is right can the words go right, and only when the words go right can things be accomplished. If the ethics are not correct, there will be disorder in the name, or even a lack of distinction between honour and inferiority, and the family way will crumble. The so-called Dui Enyi means that we should love each other. In Confucianism, people are close and distant, and there is a difference in love. Therefore, the dearest person should be one’s own family, and if there is no love for one’s family members, there will be even less for others, which is exactly the meaning of the saying in The Great Learning that “those whose families are unteachable but who are able to teach others are not”. The meaning of the saying in the University is “Those whose families are unteachable and able to teach others, have none”.

Ethics and righteousness complement each other and should not be neglected. Zhang Shaozhi, “the interpretation of the Book of Records,” said: “There is nothing more difficult than the Qi family, and the reason why the family is Qi, points and feelings ear. Divided is not strict, then the inferiority and superiority of the elders and children, can not each be in its place, and the family way disorderly; love is not pro, then the love and respect for silk, can not be interlinked, and the family way is not good. Therefore, we must be ethical, so that the father and son, brother and sister, husband and wife, have order and dare not dry the name of the division. Then the size of the fear of each other, up and down the mutual maintenance, and the family way to the right, the family fortune to rise. And must be sure of righteousness, so that the father kind son filial piety, brother and brother respect, husband and wife soft, have gizzard can not be solved of the most sincere feelings. Then, the heavenly co-operation will not be brushed aside, the human co-operation will not be violated, and the way of the family will be harmonised, and the voice of the family will also be revived. Is there anything more than this in the way of the family?” If the name is not strict, the family way will be disordered; if the family is not close, the affection will be deviated. In order to be ethically correct, family members must be in harmony with one another in terms of kindness and righteousness, and such kindness and righteousness must be on the basis of ethical correctness.

Although we advocate that ethics and righteousness should not be neglected, people will always feel that too much reasoning among family members may appear to be more heartless and indifferent, while too much kindness may be

unreasonable. As Zhu Zi’s disciple asked, “Now, if I want to be ethical, I will be hurt by beneficence, and if I want to be righteous, I will not be ethical, so what should I do?” Zhu Zi replied, “It is only possible to be sure of the righteousness of beneficence at the place of positive ethics, and to be sure of the righteousness of beneficence without being unethical.” In Zhu Zi’s view, there should be a sequence between proper ethics and Dui Enyi; proper ethics comes first, Dui Enyi comes second, and Dui Enyi without losing ethics is desirable. What is the reason for the conflict between proper ethics and dutiful beneficence and righteousness? What is the root cause of this conflict? According to Cheng Yi, “When a man is in a family, between a father and a son, it is most likely that he will win over the rites with his feelings and take away the righteousness with his kindness.” According to Zhu Zi, “Parents love their children. Love is infinite, and must want it how, it is evil. This is between heavenly reason and human desire, and it is proper to judge.” This is the same meaning as the “University” of the “people of their dear and open up”, is the selfishness of the blinders, the cultivation of the body has not yet reached the reason. Therefore, to the extreme, correct ethics and righteousness are parallel and complementary to each other, and will not “want to correct ethics will hurt righteousness, and want to be righteous will not be ethical”. However, ordinary people are not saints and cannot achieve the ultimate goal, so how can we avoid this problem as far as possible? Cheng Yi pointed out that “Only those who are just established can not lose their righteousness through selfish love, so the main point of the Family Gua is that it is good to be just.” Although we can’t be like the saints who fit in everything, it is good to be a person of rigidity and uprightness, to overcome selfishness with rigidity, and not to impede the righteousness with one’s own selfish love.

In general, the way to rule a family is to be strict with oneself first, to correct one’s moral character, to hold oneself upright in order to be an example for the family; to treat one’s family members, one should be “correct in ethics and righteousness”, and adhere to the principles in order to have harmony in the family.

3. The Way to Deal with the Family

3.1 “Obey Your Parents”

“Filial piety” is the most important content of family relations, any person may not be parents, but certainly for the children, do a good job of a competent child is the key to the family.

Mr Ikawa said: “The duty of a disciple is to study literature when he has extra strength. If you do not study for your duty, you are not studying for yourself.

The so-called duty of a disciple is discussed in the Analects, “A disciple enters with filial piety, leaves with brotherly love, is honourable and trustworthy, and loves all in general and is kind to all.” As children, the main duty is to perform filial piety and fraternal duty, not to learn empty articles. As to why filial piety, fraternal duty, honour and trust, love for all and pro-kindness should be the basis? The ancients believed that when one was a disciple, being able to do what a disciple should do was the foundation for pursuing the way of the sages, and that if one did not even lay a good foundation when

one was a child, it would be even more difficult when one grew up. As Ye Cai said, "If one does not cultivate the duties of a disciple, but draws on the study of rhetoric and memory, it is enough to grow his habit of being pompous and over-ambitious, and then he is not learning for himself in a practical way. In later times, those who teach their disciples are not yet committed to their profession, but are expected to do so with the text of the imperial examinations, which is to be taught as a child, but their ambition has already been taught to be bad, and it is not to be wondered at that the sacred knowledge is far away! If one does not practice the duties of a disciple but only indulges in rhetoric, one will be farther and farther away from the Sacred Learning. Of course, can not only "force to do" and not "learn the text", Zhu Zi said: "If you do not learn the text, there is no way to know when the matter of right or wrong. Such as filial piety for the brother also have improper place. Filial piety in the service of relatives, but the service of the father's respect and the service of the mother's love will be different." If one does not study literature, one will not know why and how to be filial and fraternal. This is in line with the teaching philosophy of "moral education first, five education" advocated by modern education.

How to be filial? The second, third and fourth articles in Volume 6 of The Jinsi Lu discuss this.

Mencius said, "If you serve your relatives as Zeng Zi does, you can do so." I did not think that Zeng Zi's filial piety was superfluous. What Zeng Zi can do is what he should do.

"The compulsion of a dry mother is not chaste." The son's mother should be counselled in a soft and gentle way, so that he can be righteous. If you do not obey and cause the defeat of your mother, it is the sin of the son. Is it not the way to be submissive? If you stretch yourself in the way of yang and yang, sudden corrective flick will hurt the grace, the harm is great, but also can people? I care about yielding myself to the lower will, XunShun mutual acceptance, so that the body of the right thing to rule only. The minister of the masculine, the king of the feminine, the meaning is also similar.

The ninth three of "Compulsion", with the yang in just but not in, just too much, so "small regret". However, in the body of "Xun", it is not no Shun. Shun, serving the family of this also, and live in the right, so "no big blame". However, if there is a small regret, it is not a good way to serve one's relatives.

There is no specific standard for filial piety, but rather to do one's best, to do one's share, and to do what one can do and what one should do. What is the relationship between filial piety and obedience when the words filial piety and obedience are mentioned together in modern Chinese? The Jinsi Lu asserts that obedience is the basis for serving one's parents, and that with regard to one's parents, obedience should be the main focus. According to Ye Cai, "When a man's son serves his parents, he should all serve his parents with obedience as the main thing, so that things can be done in a reasonable manner." Father and son, mother and son are concerned about the kindness between them, and if they are too rigid, they will hurt their mutual feelings. When parents are wrong, they should also politely raise the issue and guide them to make corrections. Of course, the obedience mentioned here does not

mean that you just go along with it. There are many bad parents in real life, and obedience will only encourage them to be evil, so the key to judging and choosing lies in one's own ability to cultivate one's moral character.

3.2 "Friendship with Brothers"

In addition to parents, brothers and sisters are an important part of the family relationship, how to deal with each other's relationship, so that brother and friend, brother and brother, mentioned in "The Jinsi Lu":

The poem "Sikan" says: "Brother and brother carry on, the style is good, no phase Judas carry on." The words of brothers should be good to each other, do not learn from each other. Judas, like also. Most of the human feelings are suffering from the give no payback is dropped, so the grace can not end. Don't learn from each other, just give yourself.

According to The Jinsi Lu, brothers and sisters should "be good to each other" and not "learn from each other". What does it mean to "be good to each other and not learn from each other"? Ye Cai explains it as "Brotherly love is in me, and I must not think of it as a reward." This kind of brotherly love between brothers and sisters is from me, and it does not depend on whether others treat me well or not, but only to do my own good work, and to do my part. "If a brother does not slacken his friendship because of his brother's disrespect, and if a brother does not slacken his respect because of his brother's disrespect, then the nature of nature can be complete, and the enmity and righteousness of the day will be complete." Just as Shun treated his brother Elephant, he was able to "worry as much as Elephant worried, and to rejoice as much as Elephant rejoiced", so the sages were able to achieve the highest level of human relationship.

3.3 "Honouring the Couple"

The relationship between husband and wife is the most intimate of all family relationships, and it is also the most prone to conflict. The divorce rate in China has been rising year after year, and marital problems are becoming more and more prominent. The reasons for this problem are manifold, and the poor quality of some men, the awakening of women's consciousness, economic independence, and social pressure are among the factors. How to better handle the relationship between husband and wife in the family is mentioned in the Book of Near Thoughts:

In "Returning to the Sisters" (Jiuji 2), the husband and wife have not yet lost the way of constant righteousness by keeping their chastity. The world lusts for intimacy as the norm, and therefore takes chastity as the norm, not knowing that it is the way of permanence and longevity.

When husband and wife have a close relationship, it is inevitable that they will be intimate with each other after a long time. The world thinks that this is the norm, but they do not know that respecting each other as guests should be the norm between husband and wife. If they always treat each other with contempt, it will naturally be contrary to the "proper ethics", and such a relationship will not last long. Zhang Shaozhi said, "Strictness in the governance of one's

body does not precede that of the husband and wife. When couples live together, they should be chaste and quiet, and this is the way to make their relationship last. The biography of the so-called “respect for each other as guests”, Kuang Heng so-called “the feeling of lust, not between the appearance, the feast of private intentions, not in the form of movement and quiet” is also. If you want to be intimate with each other, then you will have to play with regret and deviation, and it is not a permanent way to live. The beginning of the couple’s human relationship, chastity, quietness, and lust for apathy, and the correctness and incorrectness of the ethical judgement is carried out.” Although the relationship between husband and wife is close, but also need to respect each other, be careful with their words, so that the husband and wife long way.

4. Conclusion

The idea of “the way of unifying the family” contained in the “The Jinsi Lu” is still alive and well today, and its ideas are still relevant to the resolution of family conflicts in today’s society. Generally speaking, in terms of the principles of family governance, firstly, one should be “strict with one’s own body” and correct one’s own behaviour in order to deal with things in a reasonable and sensible manner, and to convince people’s hearts and minds, and to be a good example and play a leading role; secondly, one should adhere to the principle of “correct ethics, and faithfulness to benevolence and righteousness”, and the two should complement each other. Secondly, one should adhere to the principle of “correct ethics and righteousness” in governing the family, and the two should complement each other, so that each member of the family can get his or her own place, and the family will then be harmonious and in order. In dealing with family relations, parents should be treated with “obedience”, siblings should be treated with “goodwill”, and husbands or wives should be treated with respect. Back to the essence, everything should be based on one’s own moral cultivation.

Some of the concepts of marriage in The Jinsi Lu are debatable, the most controversial being the thesis that “starvation is a small matter, but losing one’s honour is a great matter”, which has been criticised and defended throughout the ages. Criticism of its point of view that it is “ritual murder”, defend it that this is only a specific context of the words, and Mencius, “sacrificing his life for righteousness” is the same. It is not difficult to see from the sixth volume of “The Jinsi Lu” that “The Jinsi Lu” taught in the “Record of Nearly Thoughts” has a specific target, which is probably the head of the family, and is also probably male, and the drawbacks brought by this kind of thinking are obvious, as it seems that the status of women is intentionally ignored, which is impossible to be applied to today’s society.

Although the traditional morality of a country and a nation is not flawless, there is still something that should be inherited and promoted. The filial piety, respect for the elderly, love for the young, fairness, courtesy, and harmony in the Song Confucian “Way of the Family” are not obsolete, and there is still an essence for us to learn from, and if their concepts of family governance can be scientifically interpreted and created at the present time, they will be able to nourish millions of parents and children, and there will be more wise and good people who can govern their families in the society.

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