

## Chapter Two

# A Case Study of Chinese Core Values of Peace and Harmony

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China, one of the most ancient civilisations in the world, has a written history of nearly 5,000 years. During its long years of existence, the industrious and wise Chinese nation has created not only a unified written language but also a great, refined and profound national culture, thus laying a deep-rooted conceptual foundation for the Chinese nation to stand erect amidst the forest of nations worldwide. Chinese culture has acquired unique characteristics accumulated and passed down through thousands of years by the descendants of the Chinese nation. Its cultural tradition has become the bond linking the hearts and souls of Chinese wherever they are, and its cultural characteristics are embodied in the ideas, ways of thinking, values and aesthetic tastes of each and every Chinese.

An emphasis on peace and harmony is an essential feature of traditional Chinese culture, with the historical roots of a love for peace cherished by its people, who enjoy China's reputation as a land of courtesy and propriety. The search for moderation and the beauty of harmony has, since ancient times, always been at the core of Chinese traditional philosophical thinking. These are also important components of educational theory and practice in China. The thinkers, philosophers and educators of various dynasties of China, in their works, studied in depth and expounded the dimensions of peace and harmony, their significance and the pathways to their fulfilment, which has formed a comprehensive system of thought of moderation and harmony (*zhong-he*) with Chinese characteristics, exerting influence on the morals, ethics and values of Chinese generation after generation.

Tolerance, understanding, peace and harmony are the common ideals and aspirations of humankind and it is the shared responsibility of humankind to disseminate and safeguard peace. As stipulated in the Constitution of UNESCO, since war begins in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defence of peace must be constructed. In today's world, war, violence, conflicts, discrimination, inequality and intolerance are still endangering and undermining peace and democracy, and it is thus of paramount importance to launch a culture of peace throughout the world, giving impetus to its development. Each nation bears the responsibility to make a stock-taking of its traditions of culture of peace and, more importantly, to further disseminate and foster, by way of education, the ideals and values of the culture of peace.

## Values of peace and harmony in traditional Chinese culture

The exposition of peace and harmony in traditional Chinese culture is wide-ranging and covers the harmonious balance within any one individual, the harmonious convergence between humans and nature, harmonious inter-relationships between individuals, as well as peaceful co-existence between states.

### **Harmonious equilibrium within individuals**

Traditional Chinese culture attaches special importance to the harmony and equilibrium of the individual body and soul, and the moral cultivation of any individual. It advocates the regulation of one's sentiments and the cultivation of one's ideal personality with rites (*li*) and music (*yue*), and subsequently puts forward a series of concepts such as tranquillity, restraint of desires, moderation, introspection and self-discipline while alone.

***Tranquillity and restraint of desires.*** Ancient Chinese thinkers regarded tranquillity as the highest state of mind in the human norms of morality, stating that 'man is born tranquil as a human nature'(see *Book of Rites* and *Book of Music*). By tranquillity is meant the maintenance of a peaceful and serene state of mind, and of one's perception of the objective world undisturbed by flights of fancy of any kind, so that one's thinking is always sober and one's heart always at peace and equilibrium. To acquire tranquillity one must, first of all restrain one's desires. According to

Confucianism, human desires and morality are mutually exclusive. That is why Confucius puts forward the propositions of ‘... acting to one’s heart’s content but confining oneself within the bounds’ (*Analects of Confucius, On Governance*) and also of the ‘... benevolence of restraining oneself and returning to the rites’ (*Analects of Confucius, Yanyuan*). Mencius held, in more explicit terms, that ‘the best way of self-cultivation is restraint of desires’, maintaining that humans should restrain their own desires and strictly regulate their behaviour, thus setting the mind at peace. The restraint of desires advocated by the thinkers in ancient China, however, is not asceticism. Its essence is to moderate and guide varied desires on the precondition of satisfying the normal sentiments and physiological requirements of the human being.

***Golden mean and moderation.*** Moderation is a vital feature of traditional Chinese culture and its existence dates back to remote antiquity. Confucius took the principle of golden mean as one of his most fundamental concepts, regarding it as a human virtue as well as a means of moral cultivation. In his *Analects*, Confucius talked of ‘the golden mean as a moral virtue’, contending that ‘... going too far is as bad as going not far enough’. In the opinion of Cheng Yi and Cheng Hao of the Northern Song Dynasty, ‘... the principle of golden mean is the right doctrine and the absolute truth of the world, by which one should refrain from bias and partiality’ (*The Posthumous Works of Cheng Brothers, Volume 7*).

The principle of moderation (*zhong-he*) is the coordinated combination of mean (*zhong*) and harmony (*he*), with mean as the prerequisite and basis for harmony. In the first part of *The Book of Rites, Golden Mean*, it is pointed out that ‘*Zhong* means that the human feelings of happiness, anger, grief and joy shall not be aired while *he* means when aired they shall be contained within appropriate limits; when *zhong-he* (moderation) is achieved the heaven and earth will be in their right place and the ten thousand things of creation will thrive’. *Zhong*, embracing the two extremes and representing fairness and impartiality, stands for appropriateness of going neither too far nor not far enough; and *he* stands for the state of coordinated integration of things. As a result, humans can have a peaceful and tranquil state of mind only when their happiness, anger, grief and joy achieve appropriateness (*zhong*) both before and when these feelings are revealed. Likewise, society as a whole and all the things of creation on earth can be in harmony only when the moral highness of

moderation (*zhong-he*) is attained. It is this human outlook characterized by mean and harmony that has nurtured the national personality of the Chinese nation: poised grace, scholarliness, gentle temperateness and noble largeness of mind. And this moral highness has also enabled the Chinese nation, under any circumstances, to pursue justice, fear no hardships and have no regard for life and death, fortune or misfortune.

***Introspection and self-discipline while alone.*** Traditional Chinese culture lays emphasis on moral self-consciousness, regarding introspection and self-discipline as the beginning of the eventual fulfilment of humanity's cultivation to attain physical and mental harmony. Introspection refers to the innermost examination of an individual. The criteria for introspection advocated long since by Confucianism are the concepts of benevolence (*ren*), righteousness (*yi*), courtesy (*li*) and wisdom (*zhi*). The doctrine of 'attaining benevolence by restraining oneself and returning to the rites' advocated in the *Analects of Confucius* stipulates that the moral standard of benevolence is attainable if one restrains oneself and acts and behaves in conformity with the requirements of the rites.

Confucianism lists the following eight steps to achieve moral cultivation: investigation of things, pursuit of knowledge, good faith, pure heart, self-cultivation, administration of the family, governance of the state and conquest of the world, among which good faith, pure heart and self-cultivation have direct bearing on the cultivation of one's inner harmony. The concrete method of cultivation is one's education of the 'six arts', namely rites (*li*), music (*yue*), archery (*she*), charioteering (*yu*), reading and writing (*shu*) and arithmetic (*shu*). In the practice of actual teaching, the rites and music are usually taught together, aiming at regulating people's morals and behaviour by the rites and moulding their temperament and qualities by music.

Self-discipline is the criterion for self-cultivation when one is alone, acting without the knowledge of others. 'A gentleman should be cautious about his behaviour when he is alone' and 'refrain from deceiving himself'. People should be honest with themselves and as good as their word. Nevertheless, introspection and self-discipline are aimed not only at mere self-cultivation, but also, and more importantly, at the further development of morality and justice, thus benefiting others and common people at large. As Confucius points out in his *Analects*, '... it is the man that carries forward

norms, and not vice versa'; '... man cultivates himself to benefit others'; and '... man cultivates himself to benefit the common people'. The reason why Confucianism places self-cultivation and administration of the family, governance of the state and conquest of the world on an equal footing is that the moral cultivation of individuals is vital and indispensable to the peace and prosperity of a family, of a state and, to a greater extent, of the world. As the old saying goes, 'An ordinary person is duty-bound to the rise and fall of the world', which summarizes in just a few words the purpose of individual moral cultivation in traditional Chinese culture.

#### **Harmonious equilibrium between humans and nature**

The difference in backgrounds and values between Chinese and western cultures with regard to relationships between humans and nature, is reflected in categorically different systems of thinking. While western culture emphasizes the need to prevail over and conquer nature, Chinese culture emphasizes the harmonious integration of people and nature; hence the theory of 'heaven and man in one'. Today, when the ecological environment is deteriorating and the crisis of human survival is looming, the theory of 'heaven and man in one' deserves more careful study.

The concept of 'heaven and man in one' in traditional Chinese culture is wide-ranging, and the emphasis on harmonious co-existence between humans and nature an important component. According to textual research, it was Zhuangzi who first expounded this relationship. In his opinion, '... heaven and earth co-exist with me while the ten thousand created things are in one with me.' He advocates that people should adapt themselves to nature, suggesting that 'harmony with man is human pleasure and harmony with heaven is heavenly pleasure' (*Zhuangzi, On Heaven*).

The doctrines of *Taiji* (the Supreme Ultimate) and *Yin-yang* (heaven and earth) are advocated in the *Book of Changes*, recognizing heaven and earth as the source of all created things. 'Heaven and earth preceded the ten thousand things of creation; the latter preceded men and women, and then husbands and wives.' Zhang Zai of the Song Dynasty further states that '*Qian* (heaven) is regarded as father and *kun* (earth) as mother; the people are my fellowmen and the things of creation I make friends with'. These views define humans as the product as well as an integral part of nature. Since human beings are created by heaven and earth, each and every one of the human race are brothers and sisters, and all the created things on earth are their

friends; people therefore should tolerate and love one another and co-exist in peace with nature. Benevolence should be used not only to rectify oneself, but also bestowed on all the things of creation. Thus a high ideal is expressed that humans care for and protect nature and submits themselves to its laws, thus attaining the state of 'heaven and man in one' and harmonious co-existence between themselves and the natural world.

In the theory of 'heaven and man in one', in parallel with the promotion of harmonious co-existence between people and nature, the protection of natural resources constitutes another important component. As Mencius says, '... farming in the right season brings a bumper harvest of grains; felling in the mountain forest at the right time produces plentiful wood' (*Mencius, King Lianghu*). Xuntzi also states, '... felling should not be made in the mountain forest when grass and trees are blooming so that they will not die young or live a premature life.' They express the same idea, that humans should follow the rules of growth of grain crops and trees, so that sowing at the right time will lead to a bumper harvest and refraining from untimely felling will lead to an exuberant growth of the branches and leaves of inexhaustible trees.

This philosophical doctrine of 'heaven and man in one' in traditional Chinese culture has influenced the attitudes of Chinese towards nature for thousands of years. How to co-exist in harmony with nature is, even today, still a major concern of modern educators and philosophers. Liang Shumin elucidated that in the process of biological evolution, humans have to learn how to adapt themselves to the environment and restrain themselves. Professor Ji Xianlin has also taken pains to further elaborate the doctrine of 'heaven and man in one', which, in his opinion, is where Chinese culture is superior to western culture in terms of the relationship between humans and nature.

#### **Harmonious equilibrium among people**

While the harmonious equilibrium of one's inner world concerns one's internal self, the harmonious equilibrium among people involves one's external self. An essential concern relating to moral ethics in traditional Chinese culture, is how to tackle relationships among people properly and present a complete and perfect picture of oneself. According to Confucianism, the norms governing relations among people are summarized as five *lun*s (human relations), namely, '... kinship between father and

son, loyalty and obligation between the monarch and his subjects, difference between husband and wife, seniority between brothers and honesty between friends'. Confucius propagates, in depth and detail, his moral doctrines of 'filial piety and love' (*xiao-ti*) and 'loyalty and consideration' (*zhong-shu*) on the harmonious co-existence among people in traditional Chinese culture.

***Filial piety and love (xiao-ti) and norms within the family.*** Filial piety and love, as the basis of the ethical thinking of Confucius, embody the concepts of 'rites' (*li*) and 'benevolence' (*ren*) in terms of clan relationships. They have played a positive role for thousands of years in maintaining family relationships and fostering the social customs of respecting the elders and loving the young.

*Xiao* (filial duty) is used as a code of conduct to govern relationships within the family, by which sons and daughters respect, obey, support and care for their parents. This notion was first introduced as early as in the period of Western Zhou Dynasty, that is, 2,700 years ago, when the *Book of Shangshu* recorded the idea of '... treating one's parents with *xiao* during their lifetime as well as after they are deceased'. Confucius formulated the concept of filial duty on the basis of the existing notions of *xiao*. He set forth the idea of 'loving father and dutiful son', advocating that within the family father and son should love each other, with parents caring for their children and being concerned with their upbringing, and the latter in turn loving, respecting and taking good care of their parents and fulfilling the duty to meet their requirements physically and mentally. Menaces further states that sons and daughters should '... attend to their parents with courtesy' during their lifetime and '... bury and pay respect to them after their death'. These views have had a far-reaching influence on the development of concepts of filial duty for the later generations.

*Ti*, the literal sense of which is respect for one's elder brothers, is used as a code of conduct to govern relations between brothers within the family. As Confucius states in his *Analects*, filial piety and love (*xiao-ti*) constitute the essence of benevolence (*ren*). During the late Spring and Autumn periods, the clan-slave system was on the verge of collapsing when the phenomenon of fratricides between father and son or between brothers became rampant. Under these circumstances, the Confucian doctrine of *xiao-ti* had the objective effect of upholding the clans' blood relationships between brothers or between uncles and nephews of the dukes and princes of the

time. Although it was conservative from the viewpoint of social systems, this concept, judged ethically, did and does have a positive bearing on maintaining blood relationships within the family based on love and benevolence.

***Loyalty and consideration (zhong-shu): the principle for making friends.*** *Zhong-shu* is the norm for relationships between oneself and others, and also between friends and neighbours. According to Confucianism, 'Our Master's way is simply this: loyalty and consideration' (*The Analects of Confucius, Liren*). *Zhong* (loyalty) means 'putting oneself in the position of others and helping them to achieve their aims', while *shu* means 'not imposing on others what you yourself do not desire'. Only by acting in this way of tolerance and thoughtfulness can one attain universal love, 'respecting my own elders and the elders of others, and loving my own children and the children of others.'

Confucius further points out, '... in dealing with human relations, man should be strict with himself and refrain from demanding too much from others or blaming others' (*The Analects of Confucius, Duke Weiling*). And man should '... learn from others their merits and examine himself if he himself has the same defects he finds in others' (*The Analects of Confucius, Liren*). While placing emphasis on self-examination, Confucius also puts forward the notions of faith and trust: 'I examine myself thrice every day: have I tried my best in doing service to friends? Have I broken my promise with a friend?' 'One must be true to one's own word with a friend' (*The Analects, Learning*). Confucius is of the belief that '... as long as one pays attention to self-cultivation and the fostering of noble moral character, one is bound to have many friends sharing the same aspirations and interests' (*The Analects of Confucius, Liren*). These ethical and moral concepts of *zhong*, *shu*, and *xin* emerging from the pre-Qin era have been passed down to later generations, from which numerous touching stories, as well as mottoes and epigrams, have been deducted.

#### **Peaceful co-existence between states**

In traditional Chinese culture, the guiding principle governing the relationship between states is equal love without discrimination, mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence. In the *Analects of Confucius, Liren*, Confucius extends his views on love within the family to broader human relations in the society and in the state-to-state relationship. He advocates an all-embracing love for the people and equality and

fraternity between states. In *Shangshu, Yaodian*, a classical book even prior to the Confucian time, the idea of 'concord between the nine nationalities' and 'ten thousand states in harmony' was already raised.

In analysing the origin of the wars and conflicts between the states of the Spring and Autumn period, Motzi sums it up as 'absence of love' (*Motzi, Equal Love*) and sets forth the concept of 'equal love without discrimination', contending that the society will be free from undutifulness and unkindness, or the existence of theft, robbery and looting, if everyone loves others as deeply and sincerely as they love themselves. The world will be peaceful if each and everyone on the earth, no matter the monarch or his subjects, father or son, is dutiful and kind; there will be no feuds between families and no attacks between states, similarly, if each and everyone cares for one another. Mutual benefit is another concept advocated by Motzi, which is considered a good solution to the eradication of social upheaval and usurpation of power. According to Motzi, only by mutual benefit and mutual non-encroachment of the interest of the other side, can upheavals and disasters between states be avoided.

Another major component of Motzi's theory is the concept of non-aggression. He denounces, in explicit terms, the injustice of aggression against other states. He cites an example of trespassing upon someone's orchard to pick peaches and plums, calling this kind of act a 'lesser evil' of 'harming the interest of others', while aggression against other states and acts of plunder, arson and slaughter are, to a much greater extent, major disastrous evils.

In modern times, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom (1851-1864), in its constitution, propagates the ideal of 'one family on earth to share peace', deeming 'there is one family in the world where all are brothers and compatriots of the same blood'. Dr. Sun Yat-sen, leader of the Revolution of 1911, further sets out the creed of 'loyalty and filial duty, benevolence, faith and peace', advocating 'fraternal love and great harmony of the universe'. He carries forward a series of classical thinkings on benevolence and selflessness and holds that an ideal world should be full of love and kindness. Having experienced the tragic history of the imperialist powers partitioning China and the decadent and impotent rulers of the Qing Dynasty forfeiting state sovereignty in humiliation, he calls, in his last words, '... to strive for the wakening of the people and unity with all nations in the world that treat us as equals', which fully

expresses his devotion to peace and equality and his firm opposition to aggression and bullying.

The Chinese nation, nurtured by its 5000 year long culture, loves and pursues peace, equality and harmony perseveringly. The traditional moral and ethical thinking, with 'harmony the most precious' as the core, is its most valuable spiritual treasure. And the propagation of peace and harmony and the development of the nation's traditional virtues have ever since been an important historical mission for Chinese education.

## The handing down and dissemination of values of peace and harmony by way of education

The prevalence of morality is the core of traditional Chinese culture. It has been a basic conviction that virtues require to be taught, which explains the continued importance being attached to moral cultivation in Chinese education since ancient times. Starting from the earliest chronicled record of teaching activities, the history of Chinese education has for ages been the history of moral education. In modern schools, moral education, with the carrying forward of traditional Chinese virtues as its main content, occupies an important place. Education is conducive to the improvement of relationships among people and between societies and states. Schools are the ideal place for the teaching and dissemination of peace. The strengthening of moral education will contribute not only to the future development of the country and nation, but also to the peace and development of the whole world. This new philosophical conception is spreading over the whole of China, enabling the importance of moral education to be better recognized under the new social context.

### **The handing down and dissemination of the values of peace and harmony in education during different historical eras**

According to ancient books, schools in embryonic form existed as early as 2700 B.C., with officials in charge of schooling called *situ*, which is tantamount to Minister of Education. The five aspects of teaching at that time were: the righteousness of father, the maternal love of mother, the fraternal affection of elder brother, the fraternal

respect of younger brother and the filial devotion of son. In the period from the 11<sup>th</sup> century B.C. to the year 777 B.C., the slave system was at the height of its splendour in China, when schooling bloomed and its content extended to cover the six arts (*yi*) of rites (*li*), music (*yue*), archery (*she*), charioteering (*yu*), reading and writing (*shu*) and arithmetic (*shu*). Of the six arts, the rites and music constituted the important components of moral education, with the teaching of rites disseminating the moral concepts and customs and behaviour based on the doctrine of filial piety and love, and the teaching of music (including music, poetry and dance) aiming at fostering human temperament, so that the folkways of respect for the elders, modesty, harmony and unassertiveness could be developed gradually.

During the period from 770 B.C. to 221 B.C. (the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods), major changes took place in Chinese history. Changes in the political and economic fields had direct bearing on culture and education and the period of cultural and educational prosperity in ancient Chinese history came into reality. Education became popular and thinking active and lively. Different schools of thought developed, such as Confucianism, Mohism, Taoism and Legalism, which have exerted tremendous influences on Chinese education. Eminent thinkers and educators with immortal fame emerged in what is later called 'contention of a hundred schools of thought'.

Confucius, founder of Confucianism, is one of the major representatives of this time as well as being a meritorious educator. Legend has it that he had more than 3,000 disciples, among whom 72 were his favourites. Moral education is at the core of his educational thinking, with emphasis on mean, filial piety and love, loyalty and consideration, and benevolence. He had the ancient books and records classified and subsequently compiled into the *Six Classics* of *The Book of Songs (shi)*, *The Book of History (shu)*, *The Book of Rites (li)*, *The Book of Music (yue)*, *The Book of Changes (yi)* and *The Spring and Autumn Annals (Chun-qiu)*, which were used as content for imparting ethics for the students' cultivation. The *Analects of Confucius* was a collection his disciples edited of his major educational views and thus became a work handing down to posterity, from which the educational thinking of Confucius and even Confucianism was made known to later generations.

During the period of the Western and Eastern Han Dynasties (206 B.C.-220 A.D.), for the sake of consolidating the feudal imperial power, the cultural and educational policy was one of '... proscribing all non-Confucian schools of thought and espousing Confucianism as the orthodox state ideology', thus ending the phenomenon of 'contention of one hundred schools of thought'. The worship of Confucianism and reverence of Confucius became mainstream during this period, Confucian educational thought, with Confucius at its core, occupied the predominant position. The *Analects of Confucius* and *the Book on Filial Duty (xiaojing)* were used as principal text-books for moral teaching by which filial duty was propagated, and amity, voidness of resentment and peace of the world promoted.

The period of 220-589 was one from unity to separation, when official education was adversely effected and declined while private schooling and family teaching flourished. *The Poem of One Thousand Characters* was written as a comprehensive textbook for children. It was used for literacy combined with common knowledge and moral instruction. Picking one thousand commonly-used Chinese characters from ancient books, it is a long poem composed by sentences each in four characters. It covers astronomy, geography, nature, self-cultivation, philosophy of life, agriculture, rites of sacrifice, food and daily life, including much on filial duty, amity, cultivation and nurturing of one's nature. With the cultural and educational exchanges between China and the neighbouring countries underway, *The Poem of One Thousand Characters* and the *Analects of Confucius* were circulated to Japan and Korea at this time.

The period from 960-1279 was that of the Northern and Southern Song Dynasties when China was re-unified after some time of separation. The relative stability of the political situation gave impetus to the further development of culture and education. Vigorously advocated, Confucianism integrated with the basic doctrines of Buddhism and Taoism and, as a result, Neo-Confucianism, or Rationalism (*lixue*), took shape. It emphasised contentment with poverty, caring only for principles, peace of mind, restriction of desires, loyalty, consideration and filial respect. Zhu Xi, the main representative figure of Neo-Confucianism during the Song Dynasties, taking over the consistent doctrine of Confucian thinking on education, gave priority to moral teaching, which, in his view, should start from the primary school. He compiled *Primary School*, a collection of stories and mottoes meant for children, and used as a textbook for this stage. He also set forth rules for the White Deer Cave College, an

institution of higher learning incorporating a number of norms of morality. During this period the *Three-Character Book* also was published as an overall primer for children's reading. Composed of short and rhyming sentences, each in three characters, it was easy for children to understand and memorize by heart. In addition to rudiments of Confucian morals, it covered general knowledge, historical anecdotes, classical ABC and persuasion for learning. An extremely popular book in Chinese history, *The Three-Character Book* has been revised and reprinted for generations, translated into English, French and Japanese, and incorporated into UNESCO's series of ethical reading for children.

During the period from 1368 to 1911 (the Ming and Qing Dynasties), private institutions of learning underwent further extensions and preschool (*mengyang*) instruction, which was equivalent to primary schooling, was given growing importance. Textbooks with Confucian morality as the core of teaching became richer and more diversified than ever. In addition to *The Poem of One Thousand Characters* and *The Three Character Book*, varied kinds of both oral and written textbooks or manuals on moral education were published. They were practical, true to life, more readable and easier to understand. In 1903 the Government of the Qing Dynasty issued *Constitution of the Schooling System*, the very first constitution of this nature in the history of Chinese education, which marked the beginning of modern education in China. According to this system, regular schooling comprised three stages, with the first from kindergarten establishments (*mengyang yuan*) to upper primary schools and the second being middle schools. During these two stages, moral cultivation, reading and the learning of classics were major curricula and the *Books of Songs, History, Rites, Changes, Golden Mean and Filial Piety* and the *Analects of Confucius* became major textbooks.

During the period of the Republic of China (1912-1949), the Provisional Government of Nanking led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen issued new guidelines for education, advocating the harmonious development of morality, intelligence, physique and beauty, with "emphasis on moral education complemented by aesthetic education", aiming at cultivating students with the moral notions of freedom, equality and fraternity and moulding their sound sentiments by music and fine arts. In November 1912, the Provisional Government issued *Principles of Teaching and Curricula for Primary Schools*, stipulating, among other things, that love for the collective and patriotism as

well as other moral notions and codes of conduct be fostered in primary schools. In 1913, *Textbooks on Moral Cultivation* were published in various forms, with music and singing supplementing moral courses.

On 4 May 1919, the famous May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement broke out. It opened up a new era in Chinese history of culture and education by advocating science, democracy, new morals and culture, and opposing the old morals and culture represented by Confucianism which had been dominant for thousands of years. Confucius was recognized as a sage of an era, but no longer the 'Model Teacher of a Myriad Ages'. The ethical and moral concepts he propagated have historical limits and fresh concepts of morality are required by the changes of eras. In 1922, the Ministry of Education of the Republic of China promulgated a new schooling system by which the course of moral cultivation was replaced by civic education, which put more emphasis on the cultivation of a sound personality. This system bore the imprint of American educational pragmatism, placing children at the centre with emphasis on meeting the various requirements of children and fostering their personality.

The founding of the People's Republic of China was witnessed on 1 October 1949 and was a great revolutionary change in Chinese history. A national, popular and scientific policy of culture and education was then advocated, which carried on the excellent historical and cultural heritage. Love for the motherland, the people, labour, science and public properties were listed as social ethics to be observed by every citizen. In 1952 the Ministry of Education issued the *Provisional Regulations Governing Primary Schools* and the *Provisional Regulations Governing Secondary Schools*, which stated that education aims at the overall development of intelligence, morality, good physique and aesthetic qualities. With regard to moral education, students of primary and secondary schools were required to abide by the social ethics binding over all citizens, and to foster the fine qualities of honesty, bravery, unity, mutual help and observance of discipline. In 1955 the Ministry of Education issued *Code of Behaviour for Pupils in Primary Schools* and *Code of Behaviour for Students in Secondary Schools*, in which the following ethical notions were put forward as codes of daily behaviour for pupils and students: respect teachers, observe discipline, care for others, be modest and courteous, take good care of public properties, keep clean and take an active part in physical exercises. It was hoped that these codes would turn out children and young people of good conduct, study habits and health.

China is a unified and multi-national country. The foundation of its stability, prosperity and development is the maintenance of peace, harmony, unity and mutual assistance between people, communities and nationalities. It is therefore the duty and obligation of every Chinese citizen to uphold and promote these human relations.

## The values of peace and harmony embodied in contemporary policies on education and curricula

### **The present-day policy on education**

In the context of reform and opening up, which was well underway in the 1990s, China's education has been confronted with unprecedented social responsibilities and requirements. The Chinese Government points out in explicit terms that education shall be given a strategic place of priority development, so as to heighten the level of morality, science and culture of the whole nation. Education on ethical morality and values therefore constitutes an essential part of the current policy on education. In February 1993, the Government promulgated *Guidelines for the Reform and Development of Education in China*, which stipulates that the fundamental purpose of educational reform is to improve national qualities and train builders and successors who are morally, intellectually and physically well-developed. Work on moral education in schools needs to be further strengthened and new lines of thinking and new ways and means are being explored.

In August 1994 the Central Government issued *Opinions on Strengthening and Improving Moral Education in Schools*, demanding that values education with collectivism as its core be undertaken among children and adolescence to enable them to tackle the relationships between individual, collective and the state correctly, and to foster the spirit of dedication to the state and the people.

In December 1998 the Central Government promulgated *Plan of Action to Revitalize Education towards the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* as a program of educational reform guiding the work of today and for the beginning of the next century. In addition to education on patriotism, collectivism and other traditional moralities, the Plan emphasizes the psychological, deeming noble morals and sentiment as well as healthy psychological

development as essential qualities for young people in order for them to live properly in future society.

### **Present-day curricula**

Curricula are the best and most effective instruments for disseminating the ideals of peace. It has been consistent practice to have moral teaching permeate throughout the curricula in primary and secondary schools. In November 1992 the Ministry of Education issued the *Plan for Curricula of Nine-Year Compulsory Full-Time Primary and Secondary Schools*, which became effective in September 1993. The Plan sets out the notions, qualities and norms of behaviour to be imparted to and fostered among students of primary and junior secondary schools.

The Plan provides for the teaching of nine subjects in primary schools (morality, Chinese, mathematics, society, nature, physical culture, music, fine arts and manual labour) and thirteen subjects for junior secondary schools (morality, Chinese, mathematics, foreign language, history, geography, physics, chemistry, biology, physical culture, music, fine arts and manual labour), while moral education should permeate through all subjects according to their specifics, as shown in Tables 1 to 5 below. The arrangement of the timetable, in the case of '6 plus 3' schools (six years for primary schooling and three years for junior secondary schooling) are:

- 1 and 2 periods (40-45 minutes) per week for morality, respectively 4% and 6.5% of the weekly total
- 8 and 6 periods per week for Chinese, respectively 33% and 19%
- 3 and 2 periods per week for physical culture, respectively 12% and 6.5%
- 2 and 1 periods per week for music, respectively 8% and 3%
- 2 periods per week for society (primary), 8%
- 2 periods each for history and geography (junior secondary), 6.5%.

As for extra-curricula activities, the Plan proposes a morning (or afternoon) meeting, activities organized by the class, the Youth League or the Young Pioneers, physical exercises, scientific and cultural activities, social practices and activities for traditional education, of which the morning (or afternoon) meeting (10 minutes per day) is used for the national flag raising ceremony and current affairs, and 5 and 4 periods per week used for other extra-curricula activities, respectively 2% and 1% of the weekly

total for primary and junior secondary schools. Activities for traditional education are organized mainly around national holidays, anniversaries and commemoration days, stimulating students' love for their motherland, people and native places, and their sense of responsibility for strengthening national solidarity and upholding the peaceful unification of the State.

**Table 1 Values of peace and harmony embodied in syllabi of morality of primary and secondary schools**

<i>Teaching Content &amp; Level</i>	<i>Requirements of the Learners</i>
Filial duty to parents and respect for elders. <u>Primary:</u> 5 periods for Grades 1-2; 3-4 periods for Grades 3-5.	Children taught to be concerned for and considerate towards their parents, understand that listening attentively in class is an expression of respect for their teachers, and that they should willingly care for and help the elders nearby.
Solidarity and friendliness. <u>Primary:</u> 6 periods for Grades 1-2; 3-5 periods for Grades 3-5.	Children taught to understand that they should foster amity, sympathy, modesty, mutual help and amicable relations between schoolmates, brothers and sisters, and with neighbours.
Decorum and courtesy. <u>Primary:</u> 7 periods for Grades 1-2; 3-4 periods for Grades 3-5.	Children taught to understand that in China, as a land of ceremony and propriety, courtesy is a traditional virtue, to acquire its basic norms and the way one gets along with others, to respect the customs and habits of other nations, and be sedate and courteous to foreign guests.
Tolerance and kind-heartedness. <u>Upper Primary:</u> 4 periods for Grade 6.	Children taught: (i) to understand that it is a traditional virtue to be strict with oneself and lenient towards others; (ii) the importance of tolerance and understanding between people; (iii) to be considerate and able to think for and understand others; (iv) to show sympathy for the misfortunes of others; and (v) to forgive others for their errors.
Devotion to peace. <u>Upper Primary:</u> 5 periods for Grade 6.	Children taught to understand the importance of peace between people and nationalities for maintaining stability of the State and the world; people to treat others with honesty and serenity and promote peace by all efforts.
Honesty and goodwill. <u>Junior Secondary:</u> 4 periods for Grade 1.	Children taught to understand the importance of honesty & goodwill among people in order to ensure a good life, & to learn to treat schoolmates with honesty and sincerity.

Upholding national unity. <u>Junior Secondary:</u> 3 periods for Grade 2.	Children taught to be aware of provisions in the constitution concerning the duties and obligations of every citizen to help maintain the State's unity and solidarity between nationalities, and strive to uphold relationships of equality, solidarity and mutual assistance in words and actions.
Serving the State and the society. <u>Junior Secondary:</u> 4 periods for Grade 3.	Children taught to understand that it is the duty and obligation of every citizen to help build China into a rich, powerful, democratic, modern and civilized country, and that every citizen should exercise his or her social functions, handle the relations of interests between the individual and the State correctly, and foster the lofty ideal of selfless dedication to society.
Upholding the values of collectivism. <u>Senior Secondary:</u> 2 periods for Grade 2.	Children taught to understand that collectivism is the right value promoted by the society during the New Period, & that relationships between oneself & others & between individuals & the collective should be handled properly.
Policy towards nationalities <u>Senior Secondary:</u> 4 periods for Grade 3.	Children taught to understand that for China, a unified, multi-national country, equality, national solidarity, mutual respect and common prosperity are fundamental principles governing the relationship between different nationalities; and that regional national autonomy is both a basic policy and a major political system, and peace and solidarity between nationalities will create favourable conditions for the stability and prosperity of the State.
Policy on religion <u>Senior Secondary:</u> 4 periods for Grade 3	Children taught to be aware of religious beliefs in China and their historical origin, and understand that religious freedom is China's basic policy, and is promoted to foster a scientific world outlook and treat religion properly.
Subjects of the world <u>Senior Secondary:</u> 3 periods for Grade 3.	Children taught to understand that peace and development are the main subjects of the contemporary world, with peace being a prerequisite for development and that the safeguarding of peace is conducive to the development of the world, while the basis of world peace is equality and mutual respect between states.

Diplomatic policy. <u>Senior Secondary:</u> 3 periods for Grade 3.	Children taught to understand the independent and peaceful diplomatic policy upheld by China and that mutual respect, non-interference, non-aggression, unity, cooperation and peaceful coexistence contribute greatly to the peace and development of the world.
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**Table 2**  
**Values of peace and harmony embodied in the junior secondary history syllabus**

<i>Principles of Teaching to be Observed</i>	<i>Related Teaching Content</i>	<i>Requirements for Ideological Education</i>
<p>1. Equality between all nationalities and national unity as well as their joint contribution to the evolution of Chinese history. Objective and fair description in teaching of histories of all nationalities, their interrelations and friendly exchanges, and the historical facts of their joining in defence against foreign aggression and building their motherland.</p> <p>2. Respect for the history of all countries and commendation of internationalism and world peace. Objective and fair description of the historical evolution of major countries and nations. Emphasis on friendly exchanges and political, economic and cultural relations between states and nations as the vital foundation of the progress of human societies. Importance of world peace &amp; the responsibilities borne by each state for the safeguarding of world peace.</p>	<p>1. The policy of recuperation and multiplying of population adopted at the beginning of the Western Han Dynasty.</p> <p>2. Zhang Qian being sent as envoy to the Western Regions (the area including what is now Xinjiang and parts of Central Asia) and the Silk Roads.</p> <p>3. The massive mixing up of nationalities during the period of Southern and Northern Dynasties.</p> <p>4. The massive mixing up of nationalities during the Sui and Tang Dynasties and the flourishing periods of Taizong Emperor (627-647, known as <i>Zhen-guan's</i> rule) and part of Xuan Zong Emperor (713-741, known as <i>Kai-yuan's</i> rule).</p> <p><u>Note:</u> China's history as teaching content for Grades 1 and 2 and world history for Grade 3 with 2 periods per week.</p>	<p>In connection with the teaching of related content, the students are required, proceeding from patriotism and internationalism, to foster the notion of equality of states and nations and their mutual respect and amiable cooperation.</p>

**Table 3**  
**Values of peace & harmony embodied in the junior secondary geography syllabus**

<i>Principles of Teaching to be Observed</i>	<i>Related Teaching Content</i>	<i>Requirements for Ideological Education</i>
<p>1.To elucidate the dialectical relationship between human activities and environmental resources by concrete facts of geography; to imbue awareness of the need to protect eco-systems and natural resources; and to emphasize the importance of harmonious co-existence between humans and nature.</p> <p>2. To elucidate the importance of mutual respect and peaceful co-existence between states, in view of the fact that humankind lives on the same globe.</p>	<p><u>Geography of the world:</u></p> <p>1.Natural resources of the world, including land, forestry, water and minerals.</p>	<p>Children taught to understand the importance and urgency of the rational use and protection of natural resources by humans.</p>
	<p>2. Population of the world, including race, language, religion and their distribution.</p>	<p>Children taught to understand that ethnic groups are only distinguished by their outward features, and to foster the notion of racial equality, thereby countering racial discrimination.</p>
	<p>3. Geographical location of the Central Asian States and their racial composition.</p>	<p>Children taught to understand the significance of friendly relations between China and the Central Asian States.</p>
	<p>4. The fact that all humans lives on the same globe.</p>	<p>Children taught to understand the importance of harmonious co-existence between humans and nature thereby fostering co-operation between states and safeguarding world peace.</p>
	<p><u>Geography of China:</u></p> <p>1.China’s population and nationalities.</p>	<p>Children taught to understand that China is a unified multi-national State and that each nationality has played an important role in contributing to its unity and development, thereby fostering the notions of solidarity, mutual respect, assistance and common development.</p>

3. To disseminate the belief that only by strengthening friendship and co-operation can a desirable homeland shared by all humankind take shape.	2. China's resources	Children taught (i) to be aware that resources in China are rich in total but scanty in terms of average per capita distribution, and (ii) to be conscious of the importance of protecting resources and the environment.
	3. China in the world	Children taught to be aware of the right place for China's economy in the world and its responsibility for the development of the world in general, and cultivate a sense of duty for the development of the State and the world.

**Table 4 A sample lesson on the values of peace & harmony embodied in related subjects (Lesson 5, Book 3 of Morality in Primary Schools)**

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Teaching Aim</i>
Being modest and polite: 'that's a good child'	Two goats with their horns locked, face-to-face on a bridge made of a single log; as neither will make way for the other they both splash into the river together.	By this infant rhyme, children of Grade 2 in primary schools are taught to understand, initially, that modesty and friendliness are good behaviour in the interest of others and of themselves.

**Table 5 A sample lesson on the values of peace & harmony embodied in related subjects (Lesson 3, Book 12 of Chinese in Primary Schools)**

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Teaching Aim</i>
<p><i>Recapture of regions north and south of the Yellow River</i></p> <p>Ancient poem by Du Fu</p>	<p>'Tis said the Northern Gate has been recaptured of late, When the news reaches my ears, my gown is wet with tears. Gazing at my wife's face, of grief I find no trace; Rolling up my verse books, my joy like madness looks. Though white-haired, I would still both sing and drink my fill. With verdure spring's aglow, 'tis time we'd homeward go! We will sail all the way through three Gorges in a day, Going down to Xiangyang, we'll come up to Luoyang.</p> <p><u>Note</u>: the Northern Gate refers to the area where Hebei Province and Beijing are.</p>	<p>Students are required to savour the joyful feelings of Du Fu, the great poet of the Tang Dynasty, when he heard of the recapture of the Northern Gate by the troops of Tang, and hence the people's aspirations for and praise of peace since ancient times.</p>

## A case study of peace and harmony in values education

It is a major task for primary and secondary schools to teach about the traditional morality of the Chinese nation. Schools need to actively explore effective means of doing so, means that are adaptable to their own conditions and advantages. At present, in addition to classroom teaching and related extra-curricula activities, several schools compile textbooks of their own, availing themselves of local historical and cultural traditions to conduct moral education focusing on local values. The following case study, conducted in experimental schools at primary and secondary levels of Yiwu City, Zhejiang Province, reflects such an approach.

Since 1991, the city of Yiwu has persisted in values education on peace and harmony for students of primary and secondary schools, integrating with the city's traditional virtue of love and respect for one's parents and elders. An *Outline of Guidance on Moral Education of Good Tradition in Primary and Secondary Schools of Yiwu City* was promulgated and the *Plan of Experiment on Moral Education of*

*Good Tradition in Primary and Secondary Schools of Yiwu City* issued accordingly. Successful experiences acquired during recent years have been summed up by experimental schools and classes, some already extended for implementation in all the schools of the city. Of these, education for peace and harmony centred on filial duty and courtesy conducted by Yiwu's Experimental Primary School is a good example.

#### **Background to the lessons**

- Filial duty and courtesy are basic moral norms in traditional Chinese culture. In ancient times, filial duty (*xiao*) was seen as the basis of loyalty (*zhong*) and a loyal minister at the time was supposedly a dutiful son. In modern times the concept of filial love and duty has been extended, oriented towards not only one's parents and loved ones, but also the motherland and the people. Education on filial duty has thus acquired a much wider social bearing. Courtesy refers to civilized acts and words as well as largeness of mind and open-heartedness. Education on courtesy aims at fostering the ideal state of mind, with which one is honest, open-hearted, strict with oneself, lenient with others, and seeking no fame or fortune.
- Filial duty and courtesy are the virtues more accessible and amenable to pupils in their school and family surroundings.
- Filial duty and courtesy are the traditional virtues cherished by people of Yiwu. The name of the city itself originates from the famous dutiful son named Yan-wu.
- Since sons and daughters of one-child families comprise the overwhelming majority of pupils in Yiwu primary schools, selfishness and over-conceitedness are quite common. The fostering of modesty and mutual consideration, therefore, constitutes a major component in classroom moral education.

#### **The main purposes of the lessons**

- To foster correct notions of respecting and caring for one's parents and the habit of helping parents with household chores, doing what one can in daily life.

- To foster the habit of using polite language at any time and under any circumstances, and to strive to be amicable, modest and courteous with one's schoolmates.

#### **Ways and means of conducting the lessons**

- *The Daily Routine of Filial Duty and Courtesy in the Experimental Primary School of Yiwu City* has been formulated, so that pupils are required to master the simple language of courtesy to be used in addressing their parents, family members, teachers and other elders, as well as their schoolmates, when they leave home, reach school, arrive at class, leave school and return home. For instance, they should say 'Good morning!' to their teachers and schoolmates when they get to school in the morning and exchange 'Good-bye!' with schoolmates when they leave school in the afternoon.
- Educational activities are organized in varied forms. For instance, the teachers tell short stories about filial love and courtesy at morning meetings or class meetings or other youth league/young pioneer-sponsored events. Or during traditional holidays such as Mothers' Day and Elders' Day, pupils are encouraged to present their parents a 'surprise' or do some good deeds for an elderly person nearby.
- Attention is drawn to 'young pacesetters' who are outstanding in filial duty and courtesy among the pupils, so that other pupils can follow the good example of their own classmates in consolidating their good behaviour.
- Schools work in close relations with the pupils' families, with teachers and parents setting themselves as examples in their conduct.

#### **The main results achieved**

- After one year's implementation of the Daily Routine, the pupils' consciousness and behaviour in respecting and caring for their parents has shown significant improvement. They have begun to understand the pains of their parents and to show care and consideration towards them by doing some trivial service; for instance, fetching a cup of tea when their father or mother arrives home, or asking them to taste some delicious food first.

- The pupils gradually cultivated the habit of using polite language appropriate for each different occasion.
- The pupils' consciousness of modesty and thoughtfulness was visibly strengthened. To test the pupils when they were confronted with an opportunity for personal gain, the school conducted a minor experiment in Class 5, Grade 3. During lunchtime one day, the class teacher deliberately prepared and brought a pot of delicious food that was a favourite of the children. However the quantity was sufficient only for ten of the children, rather than all sixteen. He told the pupils that this was so, and asked them each to take his or her own share. The sixteen children reacted calmly in taking their meal, somewhat reduced in quantity, and left some remnants in the pot. This testified to the impact, although preliminary, of education on courtesy: they had grown to think of the interests of others first.