

Tracing the Ideological Source of Traditional Official Ethics of Chinese Civil Servants' Professional Ethics

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Abstract: *Chinese traditional official ethics culture is an important part of traditional culture. The main ideas and concepts in traditional official ethics, such as "governance by virtue", "loyalty to the emperor and patriotism", "governance for the people", "incorruptible and diligent governance", and "self-cultivation" are also important references for the construction of modern Chinese civil servants' professional ethics. This paper aims to objectively analyze the main content of traditional official ethics and its historical limitations in a bid to explore the enlightenment of traditional official ethics construction to the development of modern civil servant professional ethics.*

Keywords: *Ethics; Traditional Official Ethics; Professional Ethics*

1. Introduction

Regarding "ethics" in the selection of cadres, General Secretary Xi Jinping has made important discussions on many occasions. He emphasized: "The selection and appointment of cadres must not only look at talents, but also with morality. We must adhere to the standard of having both ability and political integrity and morality first." It can be seen that "morality" is not only the foundation of one's life, but also the foundation of the country, and it is the soul of the construction of our civil servants.

2. The Main Content of Traditional Official Ethics

2.1 Ethics in Politics

The political system and administrative system of traditional Chinese society is based on "rule by man" as its basic feature, and promotes the tradition of "rule by virtue", emphasizing the "government by virtue, such as Beichen, where the stars live in the world" (The Analects) "University" clearly emphasized in the beginning; "The way of a university is to be clear and moral, to be close to the people, and to stop at the best." Sima Guang put forward in "History as a Mirror": "A talented person is worthy of virtue; a person of virtue is also a handsome man... If all talents and virtues are exhausted, it is called a sage, and if all talents and virtues are lost, it is called a fool; a gentleman is a villain who is able to conquer virtue. Anyone who takes a man's art is not a saint or a gentleman. Instead of gaining a villain, it is better to be a fool..." As a result, the rulers of ancient China all regarded "rule by virtue" as the key to maintaining feudal rule. When selecting and appointing officials, the ethics standard was even more important.

2.2 Loyal to the Emperor and Patriotic

Loyalty to the emperor and patriotism is the fundamental political requirement for officials in ancient my country. "Under the whole world, is it possible that the land is king; is it possible that the shore of the land is not the king" ("Book of Songs· Xiaoya· Beishan"), so officials can only follow the ethics norms of loyalty to the emperor and patriotism. Loyalty to the monarch means loyalty and trustworthiness to the feudal monarch. Patriotism means serving the country, focusing on the interests of the country and the nation, and taking the world as one's own responsibility. "Xunzi" said: "To overwhelm the emperor with virtue, he will become loyal; to tune the emperor with virtue and assist him, and then be loyal; if he is admonishment and angry, he will be loyal; It's a thief, even a country thief." Therefore, "loyalty" as an important connotation of the cultivation of official morality, in addition to loyalty to the emperor, also contains the spirit of serving the country with one's body and being loyal to one's duties. Therefore,

loyalty and patriotism are closely linked, becoming the motto and official goal of the career of the wise men of all dynasties.

2.3 Govern for the People

Governing for the people is a political concept advocated by our feudal rulers in order to maintain rule and stabilize the country, and it is also the ethics criterion that officials must follow when they become officials. Mencius put forward in "To Your Heart": "The people are the most valuable, the society is second, and the emperor is the light." The idea of governing for the people has gradually become the political rule and social management that the ruling classes of the past dynasties internalized in their hearts and externalized in their actions. Important guidelines. Looking at the rise and fall of the dynasties in the past, almost all of them are closely related to whether the rulers practiced the people-friendly government. The "people-oriented" approach to politics mainly contains three aspects: First, there must be a heart to love the people. Tang Taizong once said: "For the way of the king, the people must first be preserved. If the people are harmed to serve them, they will still be cut off to eat their stomachs, and they will die when they are full." The policy is the real benefit of the people. "The Analects of Confucius" has it: "Zi said: 'You are so shameless!' Ran You said: 'If you are so shameless, how can you add it?' He said: 'Prosperity', 'Only when the people are rich and strong, the people will be willing. Learn and abide by ethics standards such as courtesy, justice and integrity. Third, there must be a way to teach and educate the people. It can be seen that "people-oriented" contains a series of thoughts such as loving the people, enriching the people, and teaching the people. As far as the ruler is concerned, the implementation of benevolent governance can be loved by the people; as far as the official is concerned, it is a good official to govern for the people.

2.4 Honest and Diligent

Incorruptibility is an important yardstick to measure the political ability of ancient officials and the level of official ethics. "Zhou Li·Tian Guan" pointed out: "The six methods of listening to the government, the governance of the masses of officials: first, honesty, second, integrity, third, integrity, fourth, integrity, fifth, integrity, and sixth is integrity." "Guanzi" lists Lian as one of the "four dimensions of the country": "The four dimensions of state-owned...One is ritual, the second is righteousness, three days are incorruption, and the fourth is shame"; "The four dimensions of ethics, righteousness and shame, the four dimensions of the country, the four dimensions are not open, the country is ruined." ("Guanzi·Herder") Xue Xuan divided the incorruptible into three categories in "Congzheng Lu": "Those who do not take it arbitrarily are the first to be clear; those who do not take it arrogantly are second; those who are afraid of the law and do not dare to take it again." This is to warn officials to establish a clean and honest style, and implement a clean government with "dare not to take" as the bottom line of integrity.

Diligence in the ancient thought of official ethics means that officials must be diligent and conscientious when they are officials, and they must be organized and conscientious in handling political affairs. From ancient times to the present, political performance has always been an important parameter to measure the ability to govern, and diligent governance will inevitably become an important content of official ethics. "Shang Shu · Zhou Guan" said: "The meritorious service is only ambition, the industry is broad but the diligence." As for how officials can be diligent and pragmatic, the famous official Zeng Guofan of the Qing Dynasty once pointed out in detail in the "Four Rules to Advise Committee Members": There are five in the Tao: one is physical diligence...the second is eye diligence...the third is hand diligence...the fourth is oral diligence...the fifth is mind diligence...All five are here, and there is no limitless duty." It can be said that a detailed explanation of diligence and pragmatism has been made in order to guide later generations of officials on how to diligence.

2.5 Self-cultivation

"The Analects of Confucius · Ziyu" says: "His body is upright, do not order; if his body is not upright, although orders cannot be done." "Mencius·Li Lou Shang" said: "The emperor is benevolent, you are not benevolent; the emperor is righteous, you are not righteous. Junzheng, don't be unreasonable. Once the ruler is the ruler, the country will be settled." Self-cultivation is the basic ethics norm for officials, which requires officials to deny themselves and return to courtesy and practice by themselves. Only when officials are self-cultivation and self-discipline and become the ethics example of the people can we achieve political clarity and promote the development of social ethics. Ancient thinkers also put forward

various effective methods and methods for how to cultivate oneself and self-righteousness. “Gou Rixin, day by day, and day by day.” (“Book of Rites, University”) “My life is three times: conspiracy to be unfaithful? Do you not believe in making friends? Do you not know how to pass?” (“The Analects of Confucius” “Xue Er”) “Seeing the virtuous to think about the Qi Yan, seeing the bad and self-examination” (“The Analects of Confucius · Liren”) “The husband should not be careless in self-cultivation.” All are to guide officials how to self-cultivation and self-righteousness, use official style to influence people’s style, use official morality to lead people’s morality, and finally achieve long-term social stability.

3. The Historical Limitations of Traditional Official Ethics

Chinese traditional official ethics, as an important part of traditional culture, contains rich content. However, for thousands of years, successive rulers have always pursued the feudal monarchy and hierarchical privilege system. The interests of the ruling class are higher than the interests of the people, and the interests of the monarch are supreme. Therefore, traditional official ethics inevitably have historical limitations and become a sharp blade for the ruling class to exploit and oppress the people.

3.1 Emphasize the Rule of Man over Rule of Law

Although the legalists emphasized the rule of law for officials and the country, they pointed out that “there is a system of law, so the officials are ruled by the founder, and they dare not be evil” (“Guanzi·Mingfa Jie”). But in ancient Chinese society, the law was only for the common people. The imperial power is granted to the ruler by the heavens and is sacred and inviolable, so the imperial power is above the law. Confucianism has been the mainstream of ruling thought for thousands of years. Although it does not deny the rule of law, the rule of virtue is always in the first place in Confucianism. Coupled with the lack of a just and orderly social system as a backing, the rule of man was eventually brought to the fore. Officials only follow the emperor’s orders, and the emperor has absolute power that is supreme and unconstrained by supervision.

3.2 Foolish and loyal thoughts are deeply rooted

Under China’s thousands of years of feudal autocracy, the ruler is above the people of the country, and the edict of the monarch is above all else. For officials of all sizes, right and wrong, good and evil, beauty and ugliness all depend on the emperor's wishes. “The king lets the minister die, the minister has to die” summarizes the soul of traditional official ethics’ silly loyalty and blind obedience, which is also the fundamental requirement for maintaining the relationship between the feudal monarch and the minister. The traditional official ethics has become a servile subordination and attachment to the power and the person.”

3.3 The official standard of thinking is strong

Restricted by class and history, the “people-oriented” thought in Chinese traditional official ethics is fundamentally meant to maintain and consolidate the feudal rule of the ruling class. In fact, the “official standard” is the core of Chinese traditional political culture. “Official standard” political culture is a social concept that uses the size and rank of officials as the standard or frame of reference to measure people’s social politics, economic status, and personal value.” The political culture of “official standard” originated in the Qin Dynasty. With the formation of the bureaucracy after Qin unified the six countries, it was possible for civilians to become officials. “Study and excellence are the goal pursued by social intellectuals at that time.” In addition, China has been ruled by the “family world” since ancient times. The royal power is supreme. In the power system, officials at each level only accept the supervision of their superiors. Subordinates and ordinary people do not have any power to supervise and restrict officials, and power without restraint brings endless benefits. Under this double temptation, everyone wants to be an official and everyone wants to be a high official, making the worship of official positions deeply rooted in everyone’s heart. “Official position” has also become the best way to obtain private benefits. The emperor and officials at all levels form a power political network with clear political hierarchy and clear division of power from top to bottom. People with higher political status and greater power can obtain more private benefits.

4. Realistic enlightenment of traditional official ethics ideological construction

The method of moral education adopted in the construction of traditional official ethics in China still has reference significance and practical value for the current professional ethics training of Chinese government officials.

4.1 Inheriting the “ethics first” selection criteria for officials

Ancient sages especially emphasized the importance of “morality” in the quality of talents. Successive rulers have formulated many criteria for selecting and appointing officials, among which the “official virtue” is always the first one. “On Great Learning” says: “The way of a university lies in virtue, in being close to the people, and ending in the best kind”, “The heart is right and then the body is cultivated, and the body is cultivated and the family is in harmony. The family is in harmony and the country is governed, and the country is governed by the world.” In the final analysis, an official must first self-cultivation and self-cultivation, and then he can govern the country and the state. For the selection and appointment of civil servants in our country today, we should inherit the standards of having both ability and morals and putting morals first. While paying attention to the ethics cultivation of civil servants, we should also pay attention to the cultivation of their administrative capabilities. Persist that ability is the foundation, Virtue is the soul, and cultivate more outstanding talents with both ability and political integrity for the cause of communism.

4.2 Inheriting self-discipline ethics cultivation method

“Being cautious is an important method for ancient officials to cultivate ethics, and it is a content of fundamental significance among the many moral personalities of ancient officials. It requires officials to exercise self-discipline, self-restraint, self-improvement, and maintain good ethics when unsupervised. At the same time, officials must strictly demand themselves with the character of sages and gentlemen, treat their thoughts and actions carefully, and refrain from doing things that violate morality and the law.” “The ancients believed that in order to achieve the state of being cautious and independent, one must usually start with caution, cautious behavior, caution, cautious desire, and self-discipline. Into good behaviors.” One of the important reasons why morality becomes morality and distinguishes it from other upper-level ideologies is that morality can be cultivated through self-discipline. Self-respect, self-reflection and other self-discipline methods are of great significance for improving one's moral cultivation. At present, in the process of the construction and development of professional ethics for civil servants in my country, we should encourage public servants to improve their ethics cultivation through self-discipline and self-examination. At the same time, strengthen the social supervision of civil servants' professional ethics construction, so as to encourage civil servants to effectively improve their professional ethics cultivation.

4.3 Inheriting the ethics practice of the unity of knowledge and action

“The unity of knowledge and action”. “Knowledge” is learning and cognition, “action” is action and practice, and “the unity of knowledge and action” emphasizes the combination of theoretical learning and practical practice. Confucius said: “A gentleman is ashamed of his words and his deeds.” (“The Analects of Confucius: Constitutional Questions”) Confucius advocated: “Go ahead with what you say and then follow.” (“The Analects of Confucius: Weizheng”) Regarding how to examine a person, it is believed: “A gentleman does not use words to judge people, and he does not use others to speak nonsense.” (“The Analects of Confucius: Wei Linggong”) Confucius believes that to evaluate a person is not only to observe it. In other words, we must observe its behavior. Xunzi said: “If you don't accumulate steps, you can't reach a thousand miles, if you don't accumulate a trickle, you can't make a river.” (“Xunzi: Encouraging Learning”) Xunzi advocates that action is the end of knowing, knowing is the means of action, and knowing but not doing is equivalent to hypothesis. Therefore, he called people who agree with their words and deeds and who know and do as one of their “national treasures”, and advocated “sitting and speaking, building up and building up, and acting out.” (“Xunzi· Evil Nature”) In the cultivation of traditional official ethics, the official and local officials take the unity of knowledge and practice as an important way to educate morality. Similarly, in the process of constructing professional ethics for public servants in China today, it is necessary to inherit the practice of the unity of knowledge and action. While cultivating public servants in moral education, institutionalize the norms of ethics, and encourage administrative staff to guide administration with noble professional ethics. At the same time, deepen the understanding and recognition of professional ethics in administrative actions.

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