

# The Historical Experience and Modern Reflection of Ideological and Political Education in Ancient China

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**Abstract:** *In recent years, academic research on ancient Chinese ideological and political education has achieved fruitful results. On the basis of correcting some traditional misunderstandings, the content, form, characteristics and contemporary value of ancient Chinese ideological and political education have become increasingly prominent. But at the same time, there are also obvious shortcomings and deficiencies, which are prominently manifested in the lack of necessary rational reflection on the essential attributes and historical limitations of traditional ideological and political education. From the perspective of Marxist human theory, we can reflect more deeply on the historical reference significance of ancient ideological and political education, thereby promoting the scientific inheritance and modern transformation of certain historical experiences in traditional ideological and political education.*

**Keywords:** *ancient ideological and political education, historical experience, modern transformation*

## 1. Introduction

General Secretary Jinping X has always attached great importance to China's excellent traditional culture and regarded it as an important ideological and cultural root of governing the country. As an important part of China's five thousand years of traditional civilization, ancient Chinese ideological and political education has made brilliant achievements and accumulated rich historical experience. These historical experiences undoubtedly contain extremely rich resources for governing the country, which can provide some useful enlightenment for the current ideological and political education, which is worthy of our in-depth exploration and reflection.

## 2. A survey of the research on ideological and political education in ancient China

Ideological and political education is a common phenomenon since human beings entered the civilized era. It generally refers to the use of certain ideological concepts, political views, and ethics by the ruling class or interest groups to exert purposeful, planned, and organized influences on their members of society. It forms social practice activities of ideology and morality that meet the requirements of the society [1]. But once, the ideological and political education in ancient China has been ignored by researchers, and many people even think that there is no so-called "ideological and political education" in ancient China. Ideological and political education is a social practice activity that only took place after the founding of the Communist Party of China. However, with the development of the discipline of ideological and political education, people's understanding has continued to deepen, and the academic circles have increasingly reached a consensus: Although there was no "ideological and political education" in ancient China, there is no doubt that there is actual ideological and political education. Moreover, the ancient Chinese ideological and political education has a long history, rich content, complete system, and its profound shaping of traditional Chinese civilization. It is indeed worth exploring.

In recent years, with the rise and great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, more and more scholars have begun to pay attention to the ideological and political education in ancient China and its contemporary value, and carry out corresponding research. The research results are mainly manifested in the following two aspects:

The first is comprehensive research, which is mainly manifested in some general historical works, and specifically embodied in the social practice and theoretical exploration of ancient ideological and

political education. Regarding the historical practice of ancient ideological and political education, the "History of Ancient Chinese Ideological and Political Education" edited by Dongsheng W, Man X, Yifan Y, and the "History of Ancient Chinese Ideological and Political Education"[2] edited by Xinshan W, Yuting W, and Wuchang J "On the History of Ideological and Political Education in Ancient China " [3] is one of the representative results. The above two works have made a very comprehensive and systematic combing and research on the historical background, main content, characteristics of the times, and historical influences of the history of the development of ancient Chinese ideological and political education. They can be described as detailed and accurate materials, fair views, and a combination of historical theory. It has laid a good disciplinary foundation for us to further study the related issues of ancient ideological and political education.

In terms of the theoretical development of ancient ideological and political education, the "Theoretical History of Traditional Chinese Ideological and Political Education" of Kangtai Z and Yinghua L [4] is the most outstanding book. The book fully integrates the economic, political, and cultural background of ancient Chinese society. Try to use research thinking and methods in politics, philosophy, pedagogy, ethics, psychology and other disciplines to give a profound interpretation of the theoretical development history of traditional Chinese ideological and political education, and profoundly point out that ideological and political education represents to the essential characteristics of the integration of soft power in ancient society.

The second is thematic research, which is mainly realized as an investigation of some specific issues in ancient Chinese ideological and political education. Among them, "The Basic Features and Realistic Enlightenment of Ancient Chinese Ideological and Political Education" of Yinglong L believes that ancient Chinese ideological and political education has distinctive characteristics and application value in the principles, content, methods, and approaches of education. They are essential to the formation of the Chinese nation. National psychology and value orientation have played a very important historical role in maintaining the vigorous development and continuity of Chinese civilization; but he also believes that ancient Chinese ideological and political education has "mainly indoctrination" and "no distinction between public and private", obvious historical limitations such as "contempt for personality" and so on [5]. The "Research on the Mode of Ideological and Political Education in Ancient China" of Huiying W believes that ancient ideological and political education is part of the cultural heritage of the Chinese nation, and has an important impact on the national spirit, ideal personality, and cultural mentality of the Chinese nation [6]. The article "The Contents and Methods of Ancient Chinese Ideological and Moral Education and Its Modern References" of Linkai F pointed out that ancient Chinese ideological and political education mainly includes: education of classics, education of feudal programs, etiquette education, moral model education, self-cultivation education, etc., with rich connotations. Although it has various historical limitations, it has extremely important reference value for the content and methods of our contemporary Chinese ideological and political education activities, as well as the construction of ideological and theoretical systems [7]. The book "Comparison of Ancient and Modern Ideological and Political Education" by Xiaomin Z, by comparing the ideological systems and theoretical methods of ancient and modern ideological and political education, believes that the forward-looking and contemporary characteristics of ancient ideological and political education are important to the current ideological and political education. Educational work is very enlightening [8]. From "Loyal to the King" to "For the People" of Xian B: A Historical Mirror of Ancient Chinese Ideological and Political Education", on the basis of summarizing the characteristics of ancient ideological and political education, its essential attributes, historical limitations and modern issues such as transformation have been preliminarily discussed, but they are generally brief and lack systematic demonstration and explanation [9].

### **3. The historical limitations of ideological and political education in ancient China**

With the deepening of people's understanding and the development and improvement of the discipline of ideological and political education, the history of ancient Chinese ideological and political education as a new branch of the discipline of ideological and political education has gradually developed. However, compared with other branches of ideological and political education, the research on the history of ideological and political education in ancient China is relatively weak. Moreover, through the combing of the above academic history, it is not difficult to see that although scholars have made some achievements in the history of ancient Chinese ideological and political education, there are obvious shortcomings and deficiencies, which affect the in-depth development of related research, specifically it is manifested in two aspects:

First, there is a lack of individual attention to the majority of educated persons in ancient ideological and political education. Ideological and political education mainly includes ideological education, political education and moral education, but in the final analysis it is the education of "people". According to the Marxist theory of humanity, human beings are the sum of various social relations, and human happiness and value depend on the individual's freedom and overall development. The latest edition of "Ordinary Senior High School Ideological and Political Curriculum Standards" (2017 edition) clearly stipulates: my country's ideological and political education is based on the fundamental task of "cultivating morality and cultivating people" and the fundamental purpose of cultivating core socialist values to enhance the society of students ability to understand and participate in politics. However, the ideological and political education of ancient Chinese dynasties aimed at "loyalty to the emperor", based on the family, and at the expense of the independent personality and free will of hundreds of millions of people, completely depriving social members of the right to pursue personal happiness and all-round development. In this regard, the historical merits of the "education" model of ancient ideological and political education are worthy of in-depth discussion and evaluation, but scholars in the past rarely care about it.

Second, there is a lack of theoretical discussion and reflection on the essential attributes of ancient ideological and political education. Compared with the unremitting efforts to explore the successful experience of ancient ideological and political education, scholars are obviously insufficient in their historical limitations and negative influences, especially for the essential attributes of ancient ideological and political education (that is, who cultivates people and who cultivates what kind of people). This fundamental issue lacks sufficient theoretical review and reflection. It goes without saying that due to the major differences between ancient and modern China in the nature of the state, the structure of power, and the relationship of power, the essential attributes of the ideological and political education of the two are fundamentally different. Some scholars ignore this difference and blindly transplant or copy the so-called "successful experience" of ancient ideological and political education, which has seriously damaged the disciplinary value and reference function of the history of ancient ideological and political education.

Of course, what needs to be pointed out is that in the study of ancient ideological and political education, we must establish a basic understanding that in contemporary China, the party's leadership, national interests, and people's interests are fundamentally consistent and highly unified. The historical experience of ideological and political education in ancient autocratic dynasties must be transformed into modernity. This is because the fundamental purpose of ideological and political education is to maintain the consolidation, stability, and inheritance of the ruling class's regime. However, the nature of the ancient and modern regimes is different. In a modern society where national and personal interests are highly unified, ideological and political education should be more important. Focus on the life-long happiness and all-round development of people, and cultivate good political literacy and social personality of citizens. Contemporary China is a socialist country where the people are the masters of the country. Its ideological and political education must adhere to the fundamental position of "people-centered" and be committed to the happiness and development of the people, the stability and harmony of the society, and the prosperity and prosperity of the country. Only in this way can the socialist regime with Chinese characteristics remain invincible forever because of the support of the people. For this point, Comrade Zedong M had a very perfect interpretation in the famous "Cave Dwelling Pair" with Mr. Yanpei H. This is also our advantage in conducting ideological and political education. In the new era of socialist modernization, we should inherit and carry forward this great and glorious fine tradition.

#### **4. Modern reflection on ideological and political education in ancient China**

Based on the above analysis, we believe that the future research on ideological and political education in ancient my country should fully integrate the current national conditions of our country, based on the long-term development of the country, nation and individual, and carry out the following three aspects of inquiry:

First, in line with the principle of serving the past for the present and critical inheritance, continue to strengthen the research on the historical experience of ancient Chinese ideological and political education in terms of content, form, and characteristics. The ideological and political education in ancient China involved all aspects of society and profoundly shaped the traditions of Chinese political culture. The ideological and political education in ancient China has not only the mainstream channel of school education, but also the extensive participation of social education, as well as the subtle

influence of family education, so that the country's ideology and mainstream values have fully penetrated into politics, economy, culture, society, folklore and other fields play a comprehensive and profound role in enlightenment. The ideological and political education in ancient China is the product of class society and has been continuously improved with the development of history. The rulers of the past dynasties have paid more and more attention, and the measures have become more and more perfect, making ideological and political education the most basic means of governance in China. Specifically, it takes confucianism and its etiquette norms (etiquette) as the core content, confucianized laws as a guarantee, and "combination of etiquette and law" and "integrate punishment with education" as the basic education mode. Although the nature of ancient and modern society has undergone fundamental changes, some historical experience in traditional ideological and political education still has its value beyond the times. For example, in ancient Chinese ideological and political education, such practices as "morality first", "integration of knowledge and action" and "lead by example" are worthy of inheritance and promotion in contemporary China.

Second, adhere to the theories and methods of Marxist historical materialism and dialectical materialism, and conduct in-depth research on the historical limitations of ancient Chinese ideological and political education in terms of purpose, means, and functions. Ideological and political education in ancient China is by no means pure propaganda and education, but a system that integrates "individual" with "family", "state" and "society" and fully integrates "education" with "ideology", "politics" and "morality" engineering. But despite this, it still can't prevent the decline and fall of the autocratic monarchy system. In the final analysis, this is determined by the nature of ancient ideological and political education. While the autocratic monarchs worked hard to maintain the power of the monarch, promote enslaving education, and stifle the personality of the people, they also caused the lack of independent personality of the majority of the people, and they were indifferent to national affairs and the future of the nation. After a long period of accumulation and precipitation, all the problems finally broke out during the invasion of modern western powers, causing the Chinese nation to encounter unprecedented political changes and national crises. The authoritarian empires painstakingly managed by successive monarchs finally could not escape the fate of disintegration. The historical limitations of ideological and political education in ancient China and the great harm it brought are worthy of vigilance and reflection for later generations. How to make the historical experience of ancient ideological and political education glow with new life and value in the new era, and realize the organic integration with socialist thoughts of Jinping X with Chinese characteristics in the new era, is a question worthy of further discussion in civilization.

Third, since the history of ideological and political education in ancient China is a highly intersecting discipline, we are required to break the barriers between disciplines and adopt a multi-disciplinary comprehensive research method. The ancient Chinese ideological and political education has the characteristics of rich connotation, diverse forms, complete system, and wide social coverage. The history of ancient Chinese ideological and political education is destined to be a highly intersecting subject. This requires relevant research to be guided by Marxist class theory and human theory, with the principles of ideological and political education as the subject benchmark, and extensively absorb and learn from politics, history, pedagogy, sociology, ethics, and psychology. The research ideas and methods of many disciplines, such as science, in order to conduct comprehensive, multi-angle and comprehensive research on the historical development of ancient Chinese ideological and political education.

## 5. Conclusion

Standing at a new historical starting point for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, I believe that through the joint efforts of academia, the historical experience of ancient Chinese ideological and political education and its enlightenment to modern times will be explained more comprehensively and systematically, thereby enriching our traditional Chinese ideological and political education. The understanding of educational cultural heritage provides some useful historical references and modern reflections for the ideological and political education, political and spiritual civilization construction, and the construction of a harmonious society in China in the new era.

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