

# Analysis of the Chinese Gratitude Education in the Contemporary College Students

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**Abstract**—Gratitude education is the first lesson of the life education and safety education launched by the ministry of education. Nowadays, more and more stress has been laid on gratitude education by colleges and the whole society at large. The paper analyses the content, status quo and necessity of gratitude education and discusses measures of strengthening gratitude education in the contemporary college students.

**Index Terms**—Gratitude education, content, status quo, necessity, measures.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The sense of gratitude is an important kind of virtues in Chinese civilization which spanning over 5,000 years. As an ancient civilization with long-term traditional virtues, China always values moral cultivation and good manners, and has famous quotations of "*there kneeling sheep milk of grace, crow nurturing the meaning*", which tell us to show our gratitude in various ways [1]. However, some contemporary college students are self-centered, disregard valuable kinship, friendship and affection between teachers and students, and therefore, show ingratitude to a certain extent. For this reason, in order to build up a harmonious society, in which everyone lives in peace and in harmony with each other nowadays, and strengthening gratitude education of college students in an effort to enable them to have a grateful heart, has important practical significance and is of great urgency [2], [3].

## II. CONTENT OF GRATITUDE AND GRATITUDE EDUCATION

"Gratitude" refers to being happy to present received favor and return others. Although "gratitude" is a foreign word, there are elements of gratitude education in Chinese traditional culture already. For gratitude, *Word and Expression* said that "gratitude is the favor that makes people moving from the bottom of heart." *Modern Chinese Standard Dictionary* explains that the favor is benefits given by others and gratitude is thankful for the favor received from others [4].

To be exact, the gratitude education is the humanistic education which is purposely and orderly implemented by the educator to the educatee for understanding, realizing,

appreciating, and returning the gratitude up to show the kindness in the use of certain educational means and methods. It is the emotional education which feels attracted by feeling, the moral education which recompenses kindness with kindness and the human nature education which arouses the human to human nature [5].

## III. PRESENTATION AND REASON ANALYSIS OF LACK OF GRATITUDE CONSCIOUSNESS IN COLLEGE STUDENTS

At present, college students are grateful as a whole. Most of students can value learning opportunities, express their appreciations for support and help they received from parents, schools, the society and others and return back with their practical actions [6]. Moreover, some students are pleased to help others and take active part in young volunteer activities and blood donation without payment to show their favors. However, some students are lack of gratitude consciousness, feel at ease and justified enjoying care from parents and teachers in schools and take it as a matter of course [7], [8].

### A. Weakening Gratitude for Love and Care from Parents

*Book of filial piety* points out that the filial piety is the basis of morality, that's why we need education. It is obvious that filial piety is the moral basis of a person and loving parents and respecting the old are the starting point of moral cultivation [9]. However, in real life, most of students fail to understand, honor and even return their parents. Some students are unwilling to take earnest efforts to stand their feet and regard their parents as nannies and ATMs; some students who come from poor families and sustain their studies by the aid of hard-earned money made by their parents, still spend money lavishly and have no feeling of gratitude to their parents; and some students don't get jobs after graduation and become the "Neet Generation", they eat their heads off, are unwilling to work and afraid of entrepreneurship and adventures, and want to rely on their parents like parasites [10].

### B. Weakening Gratitude for Education of Schools and Teachers

Some students don't respect their teachers, go their own ways during classes, don't respect labor fruits of their teachers, take teachers in manners of supporting teachers who marking important points and give high scores and resisting teachers otherwise, and don't greet teachers actively after class; show dislike, boredom to their teachers' education and even contradict and threaten teachers; and ask for answers from students during examinations and money from parents, are self-centered and full of grumbles when

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slightly unhappy and pass the buck to schools and teachers. They pay no gratitude to schools and teachers that cultivating them after graduation, attribute success to their own efforts and even complain their schools and teachers [11], [12].

### *C. Indifference of Human Feelings and Social Care*

Some students are lack of basic qualities, value intelligence while despising moral cultivation, pay attention to utility while looking down on virtues, and indifferent, selfish and worldly-wise when dealing with interpersonal relationship; and put personal interests first when handling relationship among country, collective and individual, are weak in social responsibility and return consciousness. Those students are self-centered, hardly considerate things for the sake of others, don't know transposition consideration, are lack of gratitude for people who helped them and tolerance, understanding, respect and reciprocal affection. For example, in the assessment process of state stipends, there is no lack of moving things among students, yet there are still some students take themselves as the center, slander and even come to blows with students for quota, and moreover, some point fingers to schools and teachers. Some students splash out after getting stipends and buy famous clothes and laptops, which makes teachers and schools bitterly disappointed; and some pay no gratitude for the country and schools after obtaining the stipends and think they should get the funds without saying as they are poor, and poverty has become their capital [13], [14].

## IV. REASON ANALYSIS OF LACK OF GRATITUDE CONSCIOUSNESS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

### *A. Weak Gratitude Education in Families and Schools and Misunderstandings*

Most of modern students are only child, parents hold high hopes for their children, indulge and spoil their children excessively and ignore gratitude education. Parents fail to mold and cultivate their children according to emotional requirements for qualified social members, take on all things for their children in life while never ask their children to percept their love and hardships as well as repayment. As time passes, those parents selfishly contribute to their children in all aspects, which encourages anaclisis of them, as a result, they form the trend of asking for without gratitude and think that parents should contribute and breed them. School education values the enrollment rate and employment rate of students while ignoring gratitude education [15]. Under the exam-oriented education mode in our country, the enrollment rate and employment rate of students become standards for measuring schools and students, and this value orientation make schools inevitably ignore gratitude education of students [16].

### *B. Deviation in Social Gratitude Education*

The increase of bad effects in the society and the fact that some people who make contribution to the society cannot obtain due respect and repayment have brought many negative effects to students who begin to enter the society. The modern students are affected unconsciously in this social environment and don't understand why they should

have grateful hearts and how to gratitude to others and the society. As a result, it inevitably results to the lack of gratitude consciousness of college students [17].

### *C. Deviation in Self Gratitude Consciousness*

Rights consciousness and democratic and legal system consciousness of college students are strong, but independence and responsibility concept are weak, and dependency and pleasure-seeking preoccupation are serious. Some students who have deviation psychologically hold the view that they are deserved to all things provided by families, schools and the society, are not grateful but full of grumbles and blame, complain blindly that schools and the society do not provide sufficient superior survival and development conditions for them and often complain poor meal quality in canteens, accommodation conditions, software and hardware, job opportunities and so on. They merely put forward questions and dissatisfactions according to their own needs instead of comparing horizontally and longitudinal, at the same time, they also ignore some critical problems, that is, under the condition that schools and the society offer numerous conditions to them, whether they should do something for schools and the society, whether they have seriously scanned their shortcomings and defects, whether they have know their rights and obligations clearly, and whether they have clarified their social roles [18].

## V. NECESSITY OF GRATITUDE EDUCATION OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

Gratitude is the traditional virtue of the Chinese nation since ancient times. To strengthen gratitude education of college students has great significance in teaching them of gratitude.

### *A. It Is Necessary to Learn Gratitude for College Students to Inherit Excellent Cultural Traditions of China.*

To be grateful is the traditional virtue of the Chinese nation, gratitude is the fine tradition of the Chinese nation, Chinese culture has breed numerous gratitude stories spread through the ages, such as records of Meng Zong crying in face of bamboos, Wang Xiang lying onto ice, Yu Qian eating excrement, dutiful sons cutting thigh to cure diseases of parents, as well as real stories of Guo Ju burying child and Zhang Xun killing his wife, wherein the gratitude consciousness is to be admired indeed. College students are the special group of society, pillar of the country and the main force in building the country in the future. Excellent gratitude cultural tradition of China needs to be inherited and carried forward by them, which requires the college students to learn gratitude culture and know gratitude to return the gratitude [19].

### *B. It Is Necessary to Learn Gratitude to Change Current Situation of Gratitude Consciousness and Perfect Personality of College Students*

In the group of college students, there are always some students do not know gratitude and ignore good learning opportunity. They are empty in spirit, lack of motivation, compare consumption instead of scores and value extravagance instead of quality; they feel free to spend lavishly hard-earned money of their parents, enjoy

thoughtful and considerable care from parents and teachers and have long face and even escape and suicide when a little unhappy; and they take giving of parents and teachers and other's help for granted. If a person does not know gratitude and return kindness received from the external with practical actions, he is not the one with sound personality and healthy mind as well as the one welcome by others and the society. So the college students should strengthen self cultivation of gratitude consciousness in an effort to promote sound development of their personalities.

### *C. It Is Necessary to Learn Gratitude to Build Harmonious Socialist Society*

Harmonious society refers to not only harmony between human and nature, but also harmony among humans. College students who living in social family receive many favors including cultivation of the country, giving of the nature, raising of parents, edification of teachers, care of relatives and friends, service of others, help of well-meaning people when getting in troubles and so on. Only by learning to gratitude can college students hold less complain, hate and resistance and more tolerance, kindness and happy; have hopes to life, give low to others, respect work and return to the society; and live in harmony with people in life. Embracing grateful heart and taking repayment actions should be codes of conduct for each college student. In modern society, in order to build a harmonious society, to continuously strengthen ideological and normal education and gratitude education of college students is an indispensable and important aspect in building socialist spiritual civilization and harmonious socialist society [20].

## VI. WAYS OF STRENGTHENING GRATITUDE EDUCATION OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

Schools are main battlefields to develop gratitude education, so that we should penetrate gratitude education through daily study and life effectively through various ways of gratitude education.

### *A. Gratitude Education Should Fully Play Roles of Models*

As the guide and the director for healthy growth of students, parents and teachers should be models for carrying out route policies of the Party, respecting the old, caring others and returning gratitude, observing laws and disciplines, as well as examples of students to motivate them to make progress. Teachers with personality charm and profound knowledge can become models in students' minds easily. They contact with students at most and can perform soul dialogues with students, their opinions are easy to accept, and their words and deeds are influential and infectious. Therefore, in the gratitude education, the task of teachers is not only rational but also emotional. In the aspect of moral construction, teachers should set themselves examples to others, pay attention to their behaviors always and everywhere and match their words to deeds, otherwise, they will be disliked by students, the convince degree of education will decrease, and education will be hindered.

### *B. Gratitude Education Should Be Integrated into Practical Activities*

Gratitude education is a long-term arduous task, so we should make students accept education in mind rather than letting them feel going through the motions. Practice is the basis for forming and developing gratitude quality, without practice, education activity will become empty sermon. So gratitude education must emphasize practice and stress experience to make gratitude education become regular practice and avoid formalization. Only through integrating gratitude education into the practice can we find breakthrough between students and real life and provide a new platform for cultivation and sublimation of student's moral feelings.

Social practice is a method for organizing young college students to go deep into life, practice and masses and cultivate gratitude feelings through activities such as social surveys and voluntary labor aiming at characteristics of less experience and lack of social experience. Social practice activities in various forms should be developed to enable students to experience gratitude, cultivate gratitude heart, social responsibility and historical responsibility in activities. Colleges and universities launch practice activity with "serving the society and devoting love" as the theme to cultivate gratitude feelings and dedication spirit. For example, students in medical colleges can launch gratuitous treatment in communities to obtain happy in helping others as well as increasing knowledge; students can support education in poor mountain areas to see eyes eager for reading, feel the lives of children in those areas, understand to treasure all things they received today, help children in mountainous areas and feel happy of helping others at the same time [21].

### *C. Arousing Gratitude Feelings of College Students by Using Theme Education for Moralization and Enlightenment*

In gratitude education, we can arouse gratitude feelings of college students in gratitude learning and thinking atmosphere through selecting gratitude stories and models, such as stories of Lei Feng and the singer Cong Fei as well as the deed that some students are willing to give up munificent payment in cities and return back to develop their hometowns after graduation.

Gratitude education should be brought to the ideological and moral education system for students. Fundamentally, the gratitude education is a part of moral education of college students and closely combined with education of world outlook, view on life, value and mental health to help students to build the gratitude outlook with moderate gratitude consciousness, correct gratitude mode and legal helping mentality as the major content, promote formation of good gratitude mentality through mental health education and improve effects of gratitude education continuously.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Nowadays, more and more stress has been laid on gratitude education by schools and the whole society at large. In a word, gratitude is the morality of people, the responsibility consciousness of independence and self-esteem, and moreover, the pursuit for mental state. As the future of the country and the hope of nation development,

college students in the 21st century must learn to gratitude, and through gratitude education, they can learn gratitude gradually. Embracing gratitude heart and carrying out behaviors of returning gratitude should be code of conduct for each college student. We should set up social manner of returning gratitude through gratitude education and make the world full of love in the hope of realizing humanities between human and self, human and society and human and nature, further sublimate our personality charm and develop our national spirit.

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