

# The rites and music education in Zhu Zi's Xiao Xue

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**Abstract.** Chinese civilization has always been called "rites and music civilization"(li-yue-wen-ming ). It is also the due meaning of sacred education to educate the people and change customs with rites and music. Chinese sage education aims to cultivate benevolent gentlemen with five constant virtues, which are based on benevolence, and this benevolence is embodied in the civilization of rites and music in Chinese society. It is precisely because of "the substance and function relationship"(ti-yong-guan-xi ) between benevolence and "the system of rites and music"(li-yue-zhi-du ) that Zhu Zi's Xiao Xue education pays particular attention to cultivating gentlemen with ideal personality through rites and music education.

**Keywords:** rites education; music education; Xiao Xue.

## 1. Introduction

Rites and music education has a long and rich tradition in China. It can be said that since the Duke of Zhou(Zhou-Gong) "made ritual and music"(zhi-li-zuo-yue ), ritual and music has been used to train talents and educate the people, occupying a core position in Chinese traditional education, As Professor Feng Bing(2019) said:

In China, the rites and music in the Western Zhou Dynasty have emerged as a relatively mature cultural form, which has been highly valued by rulers and thinkers. Its basic theory is listed as the main content of the "Six Classics" or "Six Arts" used to educate and cultivate ruling talents. In the following thousands of years, ritual and music culture has always been an important content and essential feature of Chinese ideology and culture. (pp.28-29)

If we want to cultivate an ideal gentleman, the role of rites and music education can not be replaced. In ancient China, rites and music were important teaching contents. Learning rites to regulate external behavior and learning music to cultivate internal temperament can make a sincere and wise gentleman.

Zhu Zi's Xiao Xue education inherits the fine tradition of sage education, and attaches great importance to cultivating children with rites and music, and using it to educate children to develop a sincere temperament and a neutral attitude from childhood. In Zhu Zi's Xiao Xue(2017), there are 13 chapters on "Li Jiao Pian", of which three chapters focus on rites and music education.

"Li Jiao Pian" is the general outline of the book "Xiao Xue" . From the length of rites and music education, it is not difficult to see Zhu Zi's attention to rites and music education. So how does rites and music education work on people? What is its internal mechanism?

## 2. Rites Education

The Book of Rites (2017) said: "The former kings made the rules on the basis of morality with an outer form. Loyalty and good faith are the moral basis of the rules. And reason and sense are their outer form. The rules cannot be built without their basis, nor put into practice without their outer form." (p.119) After examining many human religions, Abraham H. Maslow(1993) said:

I see in the history of many organized religions a tendency to develop two extreme wings: the "mystical" and individual on the one hand, and the legalistic and organizational on the other. The profoundly and authentically religious person integrates these trends easily and automatically. The forms, rituals, ceremonials, and verbal formulae in which he was reared remain for him experientially rooted, symbolically meaningful, archetypal, unitive.(p.331)

From The Book of Rites and A. H. Maslow's words, it is not difficult to see that rites have both internal and external requirements. Externally speaking, rites pays attention to external etiquette, which is manifested in decrees and regulations, law organization and so on, that is, "Wen"; From the internal point of view, etiquette pays attention to the way of loyalty, which is manifested in gentleness, honesty, piety and profundity, that is, "Ben"; Pay attention to both the internal fundamental truth and the external cultural system. In this way, both internal and external cultivation is the fundamental way for rites education to work.

So, where should rites education start? We might as well refer to this passage in The Book of Rites (2017):

When the use of ceremony is to correct one's appearance, he will be grave and reverence. If he is grave and reverence, he will be powerful. Anyone who is not calm or joyful for a moment will find meanness has entered his mind. Anyone whose appearance is not grave or respectful for a moment will find laziness and carelessness have entered his mind.(p.201)

In other words, the cultivation of rites and music should start from the solemn and respectful appearance. If the appearance is not solemn and respectful, it is easy to have a lazy and arrogant heart. Through the norms of external rites, it can help to produce solemn and respectful in the heart.:

The ancients began to learn from Xiao Xue so they didn't have much effort to learn when they grew up, such as rites, music, archery, driving, writing and mathematics. When you grow up, you don't have to study for a long time, so you only care about exhausting the truth(qiong-liand expanding your cognition(zhi-zhi). Today's scholars have not learned well since childhood. It is difficult to remedy it again.If you want to remedy, you must first be solemn, respectful and honest, so that you can establish the foundation, and then seek truth in everything. Wait until you understand these things, your mind will be honest and your heart will be right, then you will understand the truth of the things around you, and then you will learn rites, music, archery, driving, writing and mathematics. Although you can't use skills like driving today, you still need to learn rites, music, archery, writing and mathematics, which are useful skills. If you don't seek truth through the things around you, what does it have to do with yourself even if you have investigated some ritual and literary systems?(p.125)

From Zhu Zi's words, we can see that rites education should first teach children to be dignified and honest, starting with correcting their appearance and body, dignified facial expressions, and gentle language. Zhu Zi believes that this is the foundation for learning to be a person. On this basis, we should continue to teach children to seek and feel truth about things around them. Zhu Zi believes that sage teaching is mainly about "Bo-Wen"and "Yue-Li". The so-called "Bo-Wen"refers

to the "pursuit of knowledge", that is, to ask the truth behind everything in the world. The so-called "Yue-Li" refers to "respecting virtue", that is, to abide by the natural principle of the people's heart and keep it all the time. Seeking and realizing the truth about the things around us is "Bo-Wen"), and adhering to respect and honesty is "Yue-Li". It can be seen that the thought of rites education in Zhu Zi's "Xiao Xue" is the development of the way of "Bo-Wen-Yue-Li" in sage education.

### 3. Music Education

Zhu Zi deeply recognized the important role of music education in primary school. A student asked Zhu Zi whether the music education content involved in "Xiao Xue" can also be used for teaching today. Zhu Zi told him to let the students know about it. Then he further explained that the ancients attached great importance to children's music education since childhood, and taught it in a face-to-face and hand-to-hand way, so they had a good temperament when they grew up. But today is different. Music education is basically missing, so we must establish great ambition and lay a good foundation, so as to achieve something. Zhu Zi once discussed "Xiao Xue" with his students. He said that music education was necessary in ancient education, but it was not the case in later generations. Zhu Zi also said that ancient scholars, "Qin-Se" were daily musical instruments, but today it is different. It can be seen that Zhu Zi not only attached great importance to music education, but also deeply regretted the loss of music education.

If rites education is to cultivate a solemn and respectful heart, music education is to cultivate the feeling of neutralization. As *The Book of Rites* (2017) said: "So music reflects that nature enlightens the people and makes the people keep their mild principle. This cannot dispense in man's feelings." (p.202) Music is born in the heart of the people, but the heart of the people is moved by all things in the world. Therefore, music can naturally move the heart of the people, reconcile human feelings, and then enrich human nature, just as Abraham H. Maslow(1993) said:

The rhythmic experience, even the very simple rhythmic experience—the good dancing of I rumba, or the kinds of things that the kids can do with drums: I don't know whether you want to call that music, dancing, rhythm. athletics. or something else. The love for the body, awareness of the body, and a reverence of the body—these are clearly good paths to peak experiences. These in turn are good paths (not guaranteed, but statistically likely to be good paths) to the "cognition of being," to the perceiving of the Platonic essences. the intrinsic values, the ultimate values of being, which in turn is a therapeutic-like help toward both the curing-of-sicknesses kind of therapy and also the growth toward self-actualization, the growth toward full humanness.(p.170)

Zhu Zi said that as a teacher, if students don't feel the interest of righteousness and reason in the process of teaching, they must not be willing to learn. Therefore, students should be taught with songs and dances. For example, they can teach with poems such as Guan Ju in the book of songs, because the profound meaning contained in Guan Ju can help people better correct family ethics. That's why, Therefore, Duke Zhou(Zhou-Gong) made rites and music, and used Guan Ju to educate the villagers and cultivate the people of the country, so that the people can hear such poems every day.

With regard to music education in primary school, Zhu Zi Yu Lei recorded a wonderful dialogue between Zhu Zi(1986) and students about "prospering in poetry, standing in ceremony and becoming in music" in the *Analects of Confucius*, which can be said to explain the order, method and function of music education clearly and thoroughly. The text is as follows:

Huan Yafu, a student of Zhu Zi, asked Zhu Zi for the meaning of this chapter. Zhu Zi replied: "The ancients began to learn poetry, rites and music at the same time when they started learning. After learning to a certain extent, the three are divided into levels. Music can move people's blood and energy around the body, and the slightest evil thoughts hidden in their hearts can be cleared away. At this time, the heart is very pure and full of heavenly principles. This is the so-called 'use music to complete self-cultivation'. It's like people taking health protection medicine. Over time, their ears become more and more sharp and their eyes become brighter and brighter. This is the reason why "prospering in poetry" has priority. " (p.931)

It can be seen that Zhu Zi believes that music education for children has started since childhood. By teaching children to learn music, recite poetry and practice dance from an early age, they can shake their blood, unblock their bodies and stimulate their beautiful feelings. At the same time, there is also teaching etiquette to guide their emotions and regulate their behavior, so that they become more and more peaceful and gentle without losing the heart of courage and determination. In this way, the bad in your heart can be completely scraped away, so that there is no bad in your heart, and you can reach the realm of perfection and unity with heavenly principles.

#### 4. Summary

Zhu Zi's "Xiao Xue" contains a very rich thought of ritual and music education, which discusses the educational role of ritual and music self-cultivation, As Professor Zhou Changle (2018) said:

In terms of self-cultivation and correcting the mind, in addition to poetry teaching (the so-called 'gentle and sincere'), whether it is external norms of behavior (the so-called 'courteous and respectful') or internal preservation (the so-called 'generous and kind'), it can only be realized through the way of rites and music. In this way, coupled with the homology of poetry and music, emphasizing the role of rites and music is the main way to practice the spiritual Dharma of the holy way."(pp.55-56)

To sum up, in the education system of Zhu Zi's "Xiao Xue" , the principle of "heavenly principle" is the origin of all things in the universe, and the rites of "rites and music" is the embodiment of this principle in human society. When this principle and rites extend to the level of children's education, children must follow the principle and rites, which is the reason why Zhu Zi attaches importance to the rules of sweeping and coping in primary school education; On the other hand, Zhu Zi knew that too strict rules would suffocate children's lives, so he attached great importance to protecting children's most authentic "original heart" through the care and advice of elders and teachers and music education, so as to cultivate people's inherent "nature of the heaven and the earth"; Through internal self-cultivation and external discipline, Zhu Zi hopes to cultivate children into "the beginning of sages" through primary education.

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