

Mainstream Traditional Chinese Culture

— Reflections from a Globalisation Perspective

Qiaoxi Yang^{1,a,*}

¹Lu Dong University, Department of Chinese Literature and Language, Hongqi Street 186,
Shandong Province, 443000, China

a. 670515998@qq.com

*corresponding author

Abstract: With the rapid development of the world economy, cross-cultural communication is increasing rapidly. However, due to the different cultural backgrounds, historical backgrounds and values of different countries, cross-cultural communication also presents some differences. “Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism” is the core of traditional Chinese culture, and even more so, it forms the basis of traditional Chinese culture, shaping and influencing the concepts of thinking and spirit of Chinese culture in a broader sense, as well as subconsciously influencing the thinking and actions of the Chinese people. The three words “Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism” refer to Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism respectively. Confucianism is the Way of Confucius and Mencius, which regulates the social and human order, and is the way to tell people how to achieve natural and harmonious interactions in real life. Taoism is Laozhuang, the pursuit of selflessness. Buddhism is Zen Buddhism, represented by wisdom, which tells people how to be self-interested and altruistic. This article aims to explore the influence of traditional Chinese cultural concepts on the concept of “self-reflection” and “life, death and fortune” in Chinese communication from the aspect of “Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism”.

Keywords: intercultural communication, Chinese-style communication, traditional Chinese culture, Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism

1. Introduction

The way people communicate and behave is mainly influenced by their cultural perceptions, and traditional Chinese culture is mainly composed of the fusion of three cultures - Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. These three cultural perspectives are both independent and intertwined, and as social history changes, it not only influences people’s modes of communicative thinking but also reveals their values. Two fundamental cultural concepts in Chinese communication are humble self-reflection and the concept of life and death. The following is a two-part account of how Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism in traditional culture have influenced and demonstrated the concepts of “self-reflection” and “life and death”.

2. “Self-reflection” from Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism

In Chinese culture, there has always been a strong emphasis on ‘introspection’, whether of oneself or life and nature, as a way of thinking. Moreover, the state of humility that Chinese culture presents, in general, is inextricably linked to the ‘introspection’ of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. First of all, this paper will explain the meaning of the word “introspection”, which is explained in the ancient Chinese dictionary as “察”, “審” [1]. In the ancient Chinese dictionary, the word “introspection” was interpreted as “察”, “審”, “視” [1], and so on, and later it was derived to mean “self-reflection, introspection”. In the *Shuowen Jiezi*, written by Xu Shen, it is also recorded that “省者, 察也” [1]. The word “cha” also means “to cover.” In traditional Chinese culture, however, although Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism have different interpretations of ‘introspection’, the most fundamental and profound ‘introspection’ is still directed at personal ‘introspection’. For example, in *The Analects of Confucius - Xue Er* (*The Analects of Confucius*), it is mentioned that “I examine myself three times a day” and in *The University of the Middle Kingdom*, it is mentioned that “A gentleman who introspects without guilt has no evil in his will” and “He who is like a cutter and a grinder is also a self-cultivator.” [2]. It is clear from these classical Confucian writings that Confucianism is more concerned with self-reflection than with personal and social moral cultivation and with reflecting on oneself in terms of ethics and morality. The Confucian word ‘introspection’, therefore means to reflect, to examine, to think. From a Taoist perspective, Taoist thought always seems to be closely related to philosophy, and Taoism is more concerned with the natural aspects of life. In Laozi’s *Tao Te Ching*, there are words such as “He who knows others is wise and knows himself”, meaning that it is brilliant to know that one does not know something [3]. This means that Taoist thought hopes that the individual will be “self-knowing” and that only by understanding one’s nature can one understand the world. From a Buddhist point of view, then, the meaning of “saving” may be more of a repentance. It mentioned that the Sanskrit word for ‘province’ in Buddhism was related to penance. The word ‘penance’ means to be patient and to ask for forgiveness. So the Buddhist word for ‘introspection’ teaches one to be aware of the need to regulate the mind and body [4]. Confucianism and Taoism differ from Buddhism in that they do not have a specific object for reflection. Instead, any event or object can be used for self-reflection. In contrast, Buddhism focuses on reflecting on oneself as the direct object.

Having broadly described the meaning of ‘provincialism’ and turn to the results that it seeks. Firstly, Confucianism, in its exhortation to ‘save’, seeks to raise the moral level of the individual so as to realise the value of life and society [5]. This is why Confucianism is also known as a philosophy of initiation into the world, and its ‘saving’ is an effort to shape oneself to better suit social life. In contrast, the Taoist philosophy of “saving” is at the heart of Taoism, where the most obvious idea is to promote the harmonious development of human beings. The most obvious aspect of this philosophy is that it promotes the harmonious development of human beings. Taoist thought is also known as the philosophy of seclusion, which seeks to make everything one with me. Buddhism is not something I know much about, but in general, it is a bit of a combination of both, advocating the “saving” of one’s moral cultivation and the search for “self-knowledge” [6].

Whatever the differences in the interpretations of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, it still points to a kind of self-reflection of human beings at its core. The themes of Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism and Buddhism seem to correspond to society, man and nature, respectively, and encompass almost all the necessary elements [7]. The mode of human interaction results from cultural influences, and the more modest and connotative mode of Chinese or Asian culture is perhaps due to the influence of this “introspection”.

3. A View of Life and Death from Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism

Life and death are inseparable topics in any culture, and the concept of life and death is an important part of Chinese culture. However, due to the influence of Taoist culture on the concept of life and death, it is important to understand the concept of life and death in Chinese culture in conjunction with the Taoist concept of the interdependence of blessings and disasters.

Taking the classical Chinese novel *Dream of the Red Chamber* as an example to explore how Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism have influenced and presented the concept of life and death from a literary perspective. The book *Dream of the Red Chamber* is called an encyclopaedia because it covers all aspects of knowledge, and it also profoundly reflects the cultural trends of society. The author's perception of the three aspects of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism is also reflected in the text of the novel and demonstrates his transcendental thinking about life, and his care and compassion for human life. Take the Taoist ideology in the book as an example, and look at the classic selection 'Xiangling learns poetry'. Xiangling's appearance is linked to the Taoist concept of life and death, as she was born into a wealthy family but was abducted and sold in a human accident and plunged into hardship and misfortune [8]. In the first episode, Xiangling is lost, and the Taoist concept of fate and misfortune, as expressed in the Taoist Song of Good Fortune, continues throughout the book, as does the story of Yan Shiyin, whose daughter is lost and whose family's fortune is scattered, and Jia Yucun, a down-on-his-luck scholar, who is promoted to a high position. The ups and downs of Xiangling's fate and Jia Yucun's career are small clues to the story of *Dream of the Red Chamber*, but they run through the development of the story, giving the reader the feeling that fate is unpredictable and fortunate. This is only a personal fate ethereal. Further reading will find that the author also wrote this reflection into the development of the extended family, Jia House's power seems solid. The palace has a noble consort to look after, outside the relatives and friends to look after. But the Ning and Jia houses were raided overnight, and the seemingly solid power disappeared. Although the selection 'Xiangling learns a poem' does not show so much of the author's thoughts on the Taoist concept of happiness and misfortune which can still perceive through Xiangling that the author still has a positive side to the unpredictable fate. In *Dream of the Red Chamber*, there are many tragic female characters such as Qing Wen and Qin Keqing, and Xiang Ling can be taken as a representative of the courage and strength of women that Cao Xueqin wanted to show and celebrate in this selection. Cao Xueqin's own praise for Xiangling is high, and in her judgement, she writes that 'the roots and stems of lotus flowers smell together' [9], and that Xiangling, who is undefiled by mud and in trouble, does not abandon her, shows the aspirations and pursuits of a young woman and her poetic clarity in this section of 'Xiangling Learns Poetry'. The freedom of the mind and the transcendence of life are what the Taoists are thinking about and seeking [10].

In *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, apart from the Taoist concept of happiness and misfortune, there is also an essential ethical theme of life and death [11]. The first argument about "life and death" is introduced by an argument between Bao Yu and Dai Yu. In the optional textbook, there is an excerpt from 'Daiyu Buries the Flowers', a striking poem in which Daiyu's questioning of life and death is revealed at every turn, using the flower as a metaphor for herself, lamenting her unfortunate fate of being a subordinate to others, "For 360 days a year, the wind and the frost and the sword are harshly forced upon me" [9], followed by "She bemoans the fact that she will one day be too old to continue her life, and that life is so small and helpless that she cannot escape from the word life and death." Jia Baoyu, who had similarly lamented that he was "naked and unattached", eventually chose to leave his family. Both Jia Baoyu's and Lin Daiyu's views on life and death oppose the shackles imposed on people by the world, reflecting their beautiful quest for a free and pure spiritual world.

4. Conclusion

Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism and Buddhism form the core of traditional Chinese culture and form the whole of it [12]. “Self-reflection” and “the concept of life and death in the light of blessings and disasters” are only two essential components of Chinese communication and traditional culture. The Chinese culture and spiritual traditions. Having a deeper understanding of the connotations behind Chinese culture will help the Chinese people identify with their own culture and facilitate communication between Chinese and other cultures, promoting globalization.

References

- [1] Li Xueqin, ed. *Source of Characters* [M]. Tianjin Ancient Books Publishing House.2012:287.
- [2] Wang Hui,Wang Jiandong. *An analysis of the understanding of “province” in Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism* [J]. *Chinese Character Culture*.2023(07):196-198.
- [3] Xie Jinsong,Liu Shuzhen. *The overall structure of Chinese culture*. Wuhan Social Science. 2022(03):137-143.
- [4] Ma Yanfeng. *An Introduction to the “Gentleman” and “Little Man” in the Analects* [J]. *Ginseng flower (next)*.2016(08):71.
- [5] Ren Aicui. *The Default and Compensation of Ru Shi Tao Culture* [D]. Hebei University.2011(12).
- [6] Zhao Limin. *An Analysis of Cultural Adaptation between Marginal Groups and Mainstream Groups under the Cultural Conflict of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism in China - Based on the Perspective of Intercultural Communication* [J]. *Inner Mongolia Social Science*.2020(05):187-193.
- [7] Li Jifen. *The spirit of Ru Shi Dao in traditional Chinese culture* [J]. *Delta*.2023(07):181-183.
- [8] Li Na. *A study on the ethical thoughts of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism in Dream of the Red Chamber*[J]. *Philosophy and Humanities*.2013.
- [9] Cao Xueqin, Gao E. *Dream of the Red Chamber* [M]. Beijing: People’s Literature Publishing House, 2000.
- [10] Andy Pope. *Chinese narratology* [M]. Beijing: Peking University Press 2018.8.
- [11] Sun Shaozhen. *Masterpiece close reading* [M]. Shanghai: Shanghai Education Press, 2016.
- [12] Guo Yuefan. *Ideal Personality of Chinese People: An Integrated Model Based on Ru Shi Dao Culture* [J]. *Popular Literature and Art*.2023(09):205-208.