

Original Research Article

The Enlightenment of Yan Jun's Thought of "Following One's Heart without Exceeding the Rules" to Social Corruption

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Abstract: Yan Jun is an outstanding representative of The Taizhou School. His thought of "Following One's Heart without Exceeding the Rules" has an important reference function for modern society. It can regulate people's behavior and reduce social corruption. Yan Jun's Thought of "Following One's Heart without Exceeding the Rules" is conducive to the construction of a harmonious society.

Keywords: Neo-Confucianism; Social Corruption; Desire; Heart

1. Following one's heart without exceeding the rules

Yan Jun is an outstanding representative of The Taizhou School, which opened up the way of popularization for the development of Wangxue and the whole Confucianism. Taizhou School inherits and develops Wang Shouren's thought of mind, negates the sanctity of heaven, endorses the legitimacy of human desire, regards the natural state of mind as the ultimate ideal state, and affirms the existence value of human subject. Therefore, Yan Jun believes that people have their own desires, which are reasonable demands in the society at that time, but Yan Jun does not agree with people's desires, which is actually the main content of Yan Jun's thought of "following one's heart's desires without exceeding the rules". Yan Jun once said that he studied with Wang Xinzhai for four years, and Wang Xinzhai earnestly and patiently taught him that the core of Confucius' knowledge was to "follow one's heart without breaking the rules". "Following one's heart's desire without exceeding the rules" is a sentence in Confucius' Analects, which is the spiritual realm of the mean reached by Confucius following the principle of benevolence. Yan Jun inherited Confucius's spiritual realm of "following one's heart without exceeding the rules" and believed that it was the ultimate aim of Confucius' learning. For example, Yan Jun used this sentence many times in his Collection of Yan Jun to reflect his thoughts and views. Yan Jun once said that the freedom of the mind is the condition and foundation of a healthy and long life.

2. Follow one's heart

"The elimination of human desires and the preservation of the principle of heaven" is one of the important ideas of Zhu Xi's neo-confucianism thought, when people judge neo-confucianism thought afterwards, also say "The elimination of human desires and the preservation of the principle of heaven" imprisons people's freedom and don't agree with the utility of the mind of man, trying to eliminate human desire." There is not any principle outside mind. There is not anything outside mind" is Wang Yangming's main thought. In this thought, Wang Yangming focusing on the effect of "mind" on people, but he is still the defender of "The elimination of human desires and the preservation of the principle of heaven". Wang Yangming attached great importance to the effect of "mind" on people, and his thought of "mind" influenced Yan Jun greatly. Yan Jun believes that the connection between "human" and "mind" is "human". He argues that "human" is the master of all things in the world and "heart" has unlimited power. The mind can "be independent and intelligent, and adapt to no boundaries". Yan Jun believed that every mortal in the society has a "mind" that governs all things in the world, which is also what he considered to be "xingqingshenmo". "xingqingshenmo" is not only our each person's main body spirit but also the synonym of "mind". "xingqingshenmo" is created by Yan Jun himself.

Yan Jun strongly agreed that "nature and emotions" can replace "mind" in cognitive utility. Yan Jun believed that the energy of "heart" was infinite and "heart" was also unrestrained. He could speak of the "xingqingshenmo" he spoke of, just as Wang Shouren raised the "mind" to the position of being the master of all things in the world. However, Yan Jun had a totally different view from Wang Yangming on the desire caused by the mind.

Yan Jun agreed very much that people have their own desires, unlike Wang Yangming who advocated to eliminate people's human desires and stood on the side of "principles". It could be even thought that Yan Jun paid more attention to the utility of "heart" than Wang Yangming. Yan Jun believed that since the "mind" was unrestrained, the series of human desires corresponding

to the “principle” that emanated naturally from the “mind” should also be free. Yan Jun’s disciple Luo Rufang took this method of meditation to experience and practice benevolence, and wanted to curb all the desires in his heart. But soon Luo Rufang fell ill with heart fire. Later, Luo Rufang was enlightened by Yan Jun’s theory of “Controlling the desire is not the way to Experience the humanity”. Yan Jun believes that people’s desire from the “heart” is just like Mencius’ feelings of compassion, shame, modesty and the distinction between right and wrong, which we are born with. To treat this desire, we should “enlarge and fill it, just like the beginning of fire”.

Yan Jun not only proposed the benefits of “following one’s heart’s desire” to us, but also pointed out how to make people achieve “following one’s heart’s desire”. Yan Jun once advised his disciples not to exert themselves to restrain their rational desires from the heart, for which we should be able to “rest assured”. The patient’s attitude towards things recorded in *The Biography of Mr. Yan Shannong* elaborated a truth: Only when we achieve the “rest assured”, can we be calm in our heart, can we look down on everything, truly put down the people or things we care about, and face life with a normal heart.

3. People don’t do things beyond the rules

Although Yan Jun did not agree with people’s “desire control” and did not allow us to contain our own natural desires, he broke the traditional moral model of restraint. For example, his ideas such as “xingqingshenmo” and “desire control is not experienced benevolence” all showed that he was opposed to people’s forced restraint of their desires. However, Yan Jun did not refute the thought of “caution and fear” of Confucianism, because his thought did not go beyond the structural framework of Confucianism, and he was still a Confucian. He opposed “controlling desire”, but did not agree with “indulging desire”, so he put forward the idea of “not breaking the rules” on the basis of “following one’s heart’s desire”. The word “not breaking the rules” here is the thought of “caution and fear”. The thought of “caution and fear” means being in awe of what you cannot see or hear. To be in awe and outwardly sedate and solemn is the moral embodiment of the thought of caution and fear. Studying the cause and reason of things and often understanding the external knowledge and experience is the requirement of the thought of caution and fear in knowledge. Although Yan Jun emphasized the freedom and freedom of the heart, he increased control in the use of the heart, focusing on the elimination of the heart fire and stabilizing various “heresy”, that is, excessive fame and wealth of the heart, which showed the content of the thought of caution and fear. The Master Kong said, “The position gained by “reason and wisdom”, if one does not persist in “caring for others”, he will surely lose it. The status obtained by “reason and wisdom” can also insist on “caring for others”, but the management is not strict, then the common people will not restrain their behavior. A position obtained by “reason and wisdom” can be upheld and rigorously governed, but it is not good enough without institutions.”

The general meaning of this sentence is Yan Jun’s thought of caution and fear. In particular, the meaning of “reason and wisdom” is in the level of understanding, needing to study and accumulate the learning experience; the meaning of “caring for others” is a requirement for our inner virtue, need to keep the “caring for others” of nature of ontology. This sentence of Master Kong requires that people’s external language, behavior is stable and in line with the common moral norms.

Yan Jun pays attention to the utility of knowledge experience in the tao, which seem to be similar to those valued by Neo-Confucianism. Both of them focus on the utility of knowledge experience in the tao, but there are also differences between them, Because the kungfu of “caution and fear” and “experience in the tao” by neo-confucianism generate utility at the same time. However, the kungfu of “caution and fear” and “experience in the tao” by yan Jun do not work at the same time. Yan Jun thinks that if people have a malfunction after “follow one’s heart’s desires”, then they can correct it with the method of “caution and fear”. When Yan Jun understood the relationship between “reason and wisdom” and “caring for others”, he paid more attention to emphasizing the utility of “reason and wisdom”. It means that the precondition for people to experience in the tao is often the learning of knowledge. Therefore, “reason and wisdom” is the foundation of “caring for others”. To some extent, Yan Jun’s “rules” is what Neo-Confucianism calls “the principle of heaven”, or Confucian ethics. Yan Jun believes that only our hearts can get rid of the indulging desire, can we achieve happiness, remove the disease of heart fire. It can be seen from this that Yan Jun’s thought is within the limits of “rules”. He thinks that if people “break the rules”, they will be “indulging desire”. When dealing with excessive desires in people, namely “lust”, Yan Jun advises us to “cleanse the heart” and to remove the excessive desires surrounding people’s heart, so that our mind body can reach a natural and pure state. Because he believes that only after people have washed their hearts can our hearts be as clear as water and our legitimate desires be respected. Yan Jun once created a seven-day closed-door method to achieve the purpose of “heart washing” and made our heart clear and clear.

The seven-day closed-door method borrows and absorbs the Buddhism meditation kung fu and Taoist kung fu of “sitting in forgetfulness”. By restricting people’s body meditation, it eliminates the excessive desire in people’s heart, so as to limit people’s desire within a certain “rules”. To sum up, it can be seen that Yan Jun attaches great importance to people having their own reasonable desires, and does not agree to restrain or eliminate them compulsibly. People should be spontaneous, because only in this way can they be “experienced benevolence”. However, Yan Jun advocated that we should have our own reasonable desires under the condition of “not exceeding the rules”. Yan Jun believed that when people pursue their desires, if they “exceed the rules”, that is “lust”. Therefore, in Yan Jun’s thought of “following one’s heart’s desire without breaking the rules”, “following one’s heart’s desire” is the dominant position, while “not breaking the rules” is the premise.

4. The enlightenment of Yan Jun’s thought of “following one’s heart without exceeding the rules” to social corruption

In this fast-growing economy and restless society, many people indulge in material enjoyment and vanity, but few people care for the dignity and sublime of human nature. In the face of interests, some people violate their moral principles and lose their human conscience. Knowing that it is evil, they intentionally do it. They would rather disregard morality to gain immediate interests or

personal interests. So a series of corruption appeared in the society, which caused serious harm to the society. On September 28, 2020, the deputy Secretary-General of the Political and Legal Commission of the CPC Central Committee introduced that a total of 3,869 people involved in crimes, corruption and “protection umbrella” were investigated, and over 128 billion yuan of assets were seized, impounded and frozen. Ji Lijun who is the former party branch secretary of the grain reserve in Lijin County, Dongying City, Shandong Province, had problems in official reception. From 2017 to 2018, when ji lijun served as party secretary and director of the lijun county grain reserve bank, he violated relevant regulations on official receptions by spending RMB 7,39,72.68 on receptions, including tobacco and alcohol expenses of RMB 2,580, in the absence of such materials as a list of receptions. Later, Ji Lijun together with Tong Qunlei, deputy director of the Food reserve bank of Lijin County, forged official reception lists, business trip approval forms and other materials to supplement the accounting materials. The reason why corruption occurs frequently in modern society is that modern people do not deal with the relationship between “Follow one’s heart” and “not exceeding the rules”, and forget to “not exceeding the rules”. When “Follow one’s heart”. Yan Jun advocated “desire control is not experienced benevolence”, and fully agreed that people have reasonable desires. Master Kong also said that it is too difficult for a person to have no desire in reality. Since “desire” cannot go away, “desire” is reality, so “desire” should be regulated by “virtue” or “law”. This requires a measure like a “rules”. General Secretary Xi Jinping has stressed that without rules, one cannot become a political party, let alone a Marxist political party. If rules are not established or strictly enforced, many problems will gradually arise. Some leading cadres who violate discipline and law often start from breaking the rules. In the long run, establishing rules and observing discipline is an important way to maintain the party’s advanced nature and purity and promote the modernization of China’s governance system and capacity. “Follow one’s heart” is not to do what you want; therefore the freedom of restraint, is true freedom.21/5000 The heart of “Follow one’s heart” is not selfish, but public. It is the pursuit of the lofty realm of selflessness, requires people to do public before private and must not be selfish. Only in this way can the corruption of the society be gradually reduced and the society develop healthily.

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