Differences and Experience: A Comparative Study of Core Values Education in Colleges and Universities of China and Thailand

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Abstract. After realizing the gap with western countries, China and Thailand began to attach importance to the cultivation of talents. "What kind of talents to train, how to and for whom to train talents" has become a problem facing every country today. While China and Thailand attach importance to the training of scientific and technological talents, they have also begun to focus on the education of core values. This paper attempts to compare the education of core values of the colleges and universities between China and Thailand, and to explore the content, methods and approaches suitable for the education of socialist core values in colleges and universities in China.

Introduction

The education of core values in colleges and universities is an important part of the formation of college students' moral qualities, an important platform to show the fundamental values recognized by our country to the world, and it is also an important measure to cultivate qualified citizens with both ability and political integrity and to ensure social stability and harmonious development. Thailand is the only country in Southeast Asia that has not been colonized. The reasons are complicated. As a country with strong Buddhism, Thailand attaches great importance to education. Its modern education sprouted in the first half of the 19th century. In the process of modernization, the core values of society have also been affected. As American scholar Wilson said, "Modernization challenges all countries and needs to focus on new social conditions and reinterprets the values they inherited."[1] Thailand is gradually exploring a balance in the construction of religious beliefs and the core values of modern society. Objectively, comparing the differences between China and Thailand in the concepts, contents, methods and approaches of core values education in colleges and universities provides some reference for the education of socialist core values in colleges and universities of our country, which is also the purpose of this paper.

Background Comparison of Core Values Education in Chinese and Thai Universities

"Values, including social value systems and norms, are undoubtedly an important part of any culture."[2] Culture and values are closely related. The core values of a country also reflect the cultural essence and national spirit of a country. The education of the country's core values is influenced and restricted by economic, political, social and other factors in which cultural background and culture are nested. Therefore, a correct analysis of the educational background of China and Thailand is the primary factor to understand the education of core values of the two countries.

Core Values Education in Chinese Universities

Since ancient times, China has attached great importance to moral education, especially the education of core values. From the ethics of the "the three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues" in feudal society to the "three virtues" after the founding of the people's Republic of China, from the "five stresses and four points of beauty" at the beginning of the reform and opening up to the "socialist core values" in the crucial period of the reform, all these have demonstrated the cultural inheritance and innovation with Chinese characteristics, and also demonstrated China's
accurate grasp of the source of culture and the foundation of moral education. China has shown its national spirit and people's spirit from the "great country" in feudal society to the "invasion of foreign enemies" in modern history, from the difficult "national independence" to sticking to the Chinese dream of "national rejuvenation", which shows the Chinese national spirit and people's spirit. We are in the compressed time and space of modernization and post-modernization. The times have given us new challenges and new missions, such as the widening gap between the rich and the poor, the inaction of government officials, the decline of moral ethics, the dispersion of personal spirit and so on. These phenomena also put forward new requirements for the education of the country's core values. How to make the education of the socialist core values carry the historical mission of a better life, how to make the education of the socialist core values let the people rebuild the dignity of life, and how to make the education of the socialist core values let the people regain the hope of life are the important tasks and responsibilities of the education of the socialist core values in the new era.

**Background of Core Values Education in Thai Universities**

Thailand's long cultural tradition and national religion are prominent factors affecting the development of education. Therefore, in the process of Thailand's transition from traditional education to modern education, Thai schools have set up national schools, private schools and religious schools, and kept the coexistence of the three types of schools for a long time, forming Thailand's unique education. Thai education advocates life-long education and proposes to cultivate comprehensive talents that combine wisdom, spiritual development, physical development and social development. The educational subject of Thailand's social core values has also changed. In the past, religious education was moral education. With the development of economy and the process of modernization, Thailand's moral education has been normalized and the subject status of religious education has gradually shifted to modern moral education. The process of modernization is accompanied by the process of globalization. The country is no longer developing itself behind closed doors. From "being invaded by foreign countries" to "the second largest economy in Southeast Asia", education has played a vital role in Thailand. At the same time, Thailand has also suffered from "Thai baht" crisis and experienced the political affairs of "frequent coups". How to do a good job in the education of core values in colleges and universities and give full play to the governing and driving role of social values has become a question to be answered in the development of education in Thailand.

**A Comparative Study of Core Values Education in Colleges and Universities of China and Thailand**

**The Concept of Core Values Education in Colleges and Universities of China**

China is known as an ancient civilization. Its values education began to rise as early as the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period. Confucius put forward "benevolence, righteousness and propriety" and took "benevolence" as the highest moral value standard, which played a controlling role in the whole social value system at that time, maintaining social stability and driving social development. "Confucianism has high authority in Chinese society and spiritual life and has been the main content of people's belief for a long time."[3] Since modern times, the values of "democracy" and "science" have begun to affect China, and the education of the core values of the people has also ushered in a great baptism of thought. The October Revolution brought "Marxism" to China. A large number of scholars began to "take Russia as their teacher" one after another. In the process of the new democratic revolution and the construction of socialist society, ideological achievements and core values, such as "Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, Three Represents, Scientific Outlook on Development and New Era" have gradually formed. The socialist core value system and socialist core values are also the same values. Actively cultivating and practicing socialist core values has become an important part of the construction of socialist spiritual civilization.
The Concept of Core Values Education in the Colleges and Universities of Thailand

Thailand was founded in the 12th and 13th centuries. "It is made up of 35 nationalities, and more than 95% of the people are Buddhists."[4] Buddhism has become Thailand's state religion, and its core values are also branded with religion. Before World War II, Thailand's core value education basically implemented Buddhist education. Its basic concept is also Buddhist. The king is the representative of God. Buddhism has tight control over the political power. Thailand's Constitution clearly stipulates that the king of Thailand must be a Buddhist and a staunch Buddhist believer and protector. Under the influence of western foreign culture, Thailand chose to take the initiative to welcome and resist, which led to frequent "political affairs" in Thailand. Thailand also had several reforms during this period. However, Buddhism is still regarded as the core value of social spirit and advocates the trinity of "nation, king and religion" nationalism.[5] Buddhism spirit, Buddhism ethics and traditional ethics Buddha have been taken as the core values of the country to resist the invasion of westerners. The Thai people were required to unite in action and spirit to protect the country, religion and the king from the invasion of the westerners. The concept of Buddhism has an intricate relationship with the social life, education and even economic development of citizens. After World War II, Thailand's economy has developed, and educational reform has arisen. Buddhist education has gradually become secular, and the secular Buddhist concept has begun to enter the vision of citizens. "Buddhism conforms to modern life and combines with modern school education. Moral education is no longer equivalent to reciting sutras and meditating. It has already introduced new contents and forms."[6] The form of Buddhist education has changed, but Buddhist ideas still have great influence on people's lives. Thailand's modernization orientation is restricted by the democratic spirit of the western society and Thai-style "Buddhist spirit" education, and the concept of its national core values education is also facing double constraints.

The Content Comparison of Core Values Education in the Colleges and Universities of China and Thailand

Contents of Core Values Education in the Colleges and Universities of China

For the first time, the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China put forward the "Three Advisors" of socialist core values, proposed to actively cultivate and practice socialist core values, clarified citizens' value ideals and values rules, and at the same time put forward a correct direction for the education of core values in colleges and universities of China. In the new era, the education of core values in colleges and universities is mainly shaped from the three levels of the state, society and individual to train builders and successors of the socialist cause and realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Cultivate citizens with ideals and beliefs who can distinguish right from wrong, and realize a socialist country with Chinese characteristics with the combination of ruling the country by law and virtue. Cultivate citizens with patriotic spirit and good morals, and realize the good life for all the people.

Contents of Core Values Education in the Colleges and Universities of Thailand

Colleges and universities are training talents for social construction. The Thai government attaches great importance to the education of core values in colleges and universities, and endows colleges and universities with the mission of maintaining moral values and protecting national culture. Based on this mission, the core values education in Thai colleges and universities places special emphasis on national spirit, social responsibility, sense of moral value and other contents, so as to cultivate the spirit of selfless dedication for the justice of the country and the nation, cultivate civic spirit with social responsibility and mission sense; and cultivate the working spirit with social practice ability.

China and Thailand are quite different in ideology, but both pay special attention to the cultivation of talents in colleges and universities, especially in the guidance and education of core values. The two countries also have certain similarities in the selection of core values in colleges and universities, for example, paying special attention to the inheritance of traditional culture, the
shaping of patriotism and national spirit. However, "every society has its own core values. Due to the different natures of the two countries, the main contents of the core values will be different." [7]

China and Thailand have great differences in economic status, political system, social status, cultural values and other aspects, as well as obvious differences in the content of core values education in colleges and universities. Thailand was classified as a middle-income country in 1996. [8] Through many reforms, Thailand has implemented a constitutional monarchy in politics. However, political affairs are frequent and unstable factors in social development are difficult to control. However, Thailand's education legislation is strictly implemented, making education less affected by political affairs. Thailand has set off an upsurge of learning from the West in history, but the brand of Buddhist spirit has not receded. The complex situation of the mutual combination of Buddhist organizations and politics, and the degree of openness of Thai thought also have certain limitations. The basic starting point for selecting the content of core values in colleges and universities is to cultivate the national spirit, so as to maintain the dominant position of Buddhist spirit and highlight the value of serving the country.

In the long history, China has condensed the socialist core values with Chinese characteristics in the agitation of traditional culture, western culture and Marxism. The basic starting point for colleges and universities to actively cultivate and practice socialist core values is to cultivate qualified and outstanding talents for the construction of socialist cause. The path chosen by China and Thailand in their political ideals is different, and the basic standpoint in the education of core values in colleges and universities is totally different. The Buddhist spirit plays an important role in the education of values in Thailand. Although it has absorbed new cultural values, its main standpoint is to maintain its traditional national culture and highlight the qualities of mutual respect, mutual care and mutual love in the education of core values in colleges and universities. In China's values education, emphasis is also placed on safeguarding the traditional culture of the nation. The root of the traditional culture is highlighted, which highlights the position of the people. The cultivation of core values in colleges and universities highlights the quality of serving the people wholeheartedly and the position of the people in the country.

The relationship between "morality and religion" in China and Thailand is different, and the position of religious spirit in the core values of colleges and universities is also different. In Thailand, "morality and religion are united". With the development of economy, moral education is also moving towards standardization. However, the influence of religious spirit on moral education still exists. More attention is paid to the cultivation of college students' religious spirit and etiquette spirit in order to cultivate patriotism. In China, "morality and education separate", the cultivation of core values in colleges and universities is incompatible with religious beliefs. Marx's dialectical materialism and historical materialism are mainly used to arm students and cultivate their patriotism. China and Thailand have different national conditions, social conditions and human feelings, and the emphasis on cultivating core values in colleges and universities is different. Thailand pays special attention to the professional ethics education and professional dedication of college students, and especially puts forward the requirements of "good citizens, good teachers and good knowledge" for teachers' professional ethics accomplishment. In the new era, Chinese college students should have the vision of "taking a road and making the world fair", have the great dream of realizing the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and have the great ideal of realizing the communist society.

Comparison of Approaches of Core Values Education in the Colleges and Universities of China and Thailand

Approaches of Core Values Education in the Colleges and Universities of China

**Highlight the Accuracy and Leadership of Core Values.** The first approach to educate the core values in colleges and universities of China is to input theories. Marx pointed out: "Theory can master the masses only by persuading people. However, as long as the theory is thorough, it can persuade people. Thoroughness means grasping the essence of things. However, the essence of
human is human."[9] Colleges and universities use the combination of explicit courses and implicit courses, such as classroom, college student associations and campus culture to promote the socialist core values of "teaching materials, classroom and mind". At present, colleges and universities in our country have carried out Marxist Theory and Ideological and Moral Education, which can update the teaching materials in real time. The teaching methods, such as micro-class, MOOC and the flipped class are used to highlight the leading role of socialist core values in colleges and universities, so that college students can accurately grasp the contents of socialist core values and internalize them into their ideals and beliefs.

**Pay Attention to the Cultivation of College Students' Law Spirit.** The construction of the rule of law in any society is closely related to the practice of mainstream values.[10] Colleges and universities are actively cultivating and practicing the socialist core values and also pay attention to the cultivation of the spirit of the rule of law for college students, mainly through the establishment of relevant courses, legal publicity of campus culture, observation of mock courts and other campus legal practice activities in a variety of ways. The main purpose of cultivating college students' spirit of rule of law is to cultivate contemporary college students' cognitive ability to the national rule of law system, the rule of law environment and the goal of building a rule of law society, to enhance their sense of identity and honor to the connotation of our country's rule of law system and spirit, and finally to form a positive emotion, firm will and belief to our country's rule of law construction.[11]

**Highlight "Four Modernizations" Education of Core Values.** Marx pointed out: "Consciousness is only the existence which is realized at any time, and people's existence is their real life process."[12] Xi Jinping put forward the requirement of "paying attention to the daily, specific, visualized and living of socialist core values" when he visited Shanghai in May of 2014. The first way to accept the socialist core values is through the process of daily life. College students are in an active period of thinking. In carrying out the education of socialist core values, colleges and universities should adhere to the principles of long-term, precision, affinity to the people and popularity to strengthen college students' recognition of socialist core values.

**Approaches of Core Values Education in the Colleges and Universities of Thailand**

"Thailand's moral education in schools adopts the principle of focusing on morality and Buddhism, but it is also supplemented by corresponding comprehensive infiltration and behavioral training."[13] There are four types of higher education in contemporary Thailand: national universities, private colleges, national colleges and private specialized colleges. The Thai government attaches great importance to the education of core values in colleges and universities, which is mainly reflected in the following aspects:

**Highlight Authority and Effectiveness.** In order to highlight its authority, Thailand's colleges and universities have constructed a trinity of "state - Buddhism - king" ideological education to create a unified and effective value cultivation model throughout the country. First, strengthen national identity. Thailand is made up of 35 nationalities. Multiculturalism has resulted in ethnic estrangement and cultural conflicts. In order to overcome the negative effects brought about by multiculturalism, the Thai government has always emphasized the identity education of "Thais". From primary school to university, there are special courses to inculcate theories, supplemented by life education. Second, the Buddhist education and the education of core values follow closely. The dominant position of the Buddhist spirit has changed, but its position is still very important. The purpose is to enable the educated to inherit and carry forward the traditional culture, "to stimulate their strong feelings for the national arts, culture, virtue, religious traditions and customs, and precious historical relics, and to enhance their understanding of the importance of protecting resources and the environment."[14] Finally, since modern times, Thailand has seen frequent political and military changes. On the contrary, its economy has become a moderately developed country. This contrast situation is caused by many factors, of which the king's moral authority plays a certain role in reversing the situation.

**Highlight the Daily and Daily Life.** The core values education in Thailand's colleges and
universities is especially prominent in its daily and daily life, creating a unique practical education. In addition to setting up special moral education courses, Thai colleges and universities pay special attention to students' practice in daily life. As a powerful extension and expansion of moral education, practical education is a beneficial supplement to the classroom education and a process of "externalization" of moral education theories. Therefore, practical education has become an important second classroom in Thailand and has played a certain role in cultivating citizens' good moral character.

**Show Persistence and Permanence.** The core values education in Thailand's colleges and universities has shown persistence and permanence, forming an effective "family - school - infiltration" trinity infiltration education model. In addition to setting up special moral education courses, colleges and universities have also infiltrated the core values into other disciplines. The practice courses and Buddhism courses are extended from primary school to university, and each student is required to complete credits before graduation. It can be said that Thailand has fully exploited its religious and traditional cultural resources and strengthened the recognition of college students' core values.

**Enlightenment**

Through the comparison of the education of socialist core values in Chinese and Thai universities in the four aspects, such as background, concept, content and approach, we understand the uniqueness and superiority of the education of core values in the colleges and universities of Thailand, but at the same time we also notice its defects and deficiencies. In view of this, we can absorb its excellent experience and provide valuable experience for the education of socialist core values of the colleges and universities of China.

First, in the process of cultivating the core values of Thai colleges and universities, special attention is paid to the inheritance of traditional culture and the full exploitation of traditional cultural resources, in order to cultivate the national spirit and patriotism of college students, especially in respect for religious beliefs and the authority of the king, which benefits from the promotion of traditional culture. Second, Thailand pays special attention to learning from western countries in the process of its transition to modernization. By organically combining western teaching concepts and methods with its own characteristics, Thailand has formed its own characteristics of core values education. When learning advanced knowledge and technology from the west, China should also pay attention to giving full play to its own advantageous resources and its modest attitude of learning from the west. Third, Thailand pays more attention to the three-dimensional moral education model of "school - family - society", gives full play to the effective complementary role of family and society in the core values education of students, standardizes the core values education model of colleges and universities, and practically strengthens the role of family and society in the core values education of college students.

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