

Virtue Obtained From Idioms And Proverbs In Chinese Textbooks, Hanyu Jiaocheng 《汉语教程》 Set

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Abstract

The article: “Virtue obtained from Idioms and Proverbs in Chinese Textbooks, Hanyu Jiaocheng 《汉语教程》 Set” aims to study and analyze virtue reflection from contents and Chinese idioms as appeared in the textbooks, Hanyu Jiaocheng 《汉语教程》 set, revision 2007, publisher: Beijing Language and Culture University, total 6 textbooks and 68 idioms and proverbs. Regarding study results, it is found that idioms and proverbs in the textbooks, Hanyu Jiaocheng 《汉语教程》 set reflect 21 aspects of virtue from frequently appeared ones to being rarely appeared ones, i.e. endurance and tolerance; diligence and assiduousness and forbearance appeared equally; honesty, self-confidence, incorruptibility, equanimity, bright mood and generosity appeared equally; courage, intelligence and cleverness appeared equally; discipline and unity; meekness and humbleness appeared equally; compassion and justice appeared equally. As for the least and equally appeared ones, they are loyalty, well etiquette, politeness, gratefulness, cleanness, economy, sacrifice and solitude. Accordingly, in all 68 idioms and proverbs, there are 23 proverbs that do not contain any virtue attribute.

Keywords: 1. Chinese Idioms and Proverbs 2. Virtue 3. Hanyu Jiaocheng

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Background and Rationale

At present, instruction in Chinese language in Thailand is popular in Thailand and gain more supports from public and private sectors. This can be seen from domestic institutes in primary education, secondary education, vocational education and higher education, all of which open for Chinese language instruction in an elective, minor and major subjects. In Chinese language instruction of Thai students, books and textbooks are considered as one of crucial instruction media for encouraging and establishing knowledge for readers. “an instruction book can be referred to as school handbook, school textbook, textbook, reading instruction book, book for reading, book for instruction and etc.”. A textbook means the book determined by Ministry of Education (MOE) for adopting in such course, the book has to have a content in conformity with, as specified, a curriculum correctly and completely. textbooks may be a sheet or a sheet binding into a book or a set of books” (Ratri Phriopanit: 2015).

From a study and research of Chinese language instruction in Thailand in primary education to secondary education of Ranapol Ma-santisuk (2008), it was found that the most popular textbook in schools is “Hanyu Jiaochen” 《汉语教程》, even if some foreigners go to study in China, several schools, as well as universities adopt the book for instruction. Patchanee Tangyeunyong and Suri Chunhareungdej (2008) cited the popularity in adoption of the textbook set in Thai higher education, especially Rajabhat Universities, Rajamangala Universities of Technology and private universities.

As the content of a textbook, “Hanyu Jiaocheng” 《汉语教程》 is diverse in aspects of society, tradition, technology, linguistics, grammar and etc. It is the book laying a foundation of language from a basic level to practical level and covered in Chinese language usages from listening, speaking, reading, writing, including grammatical usage.

Aside from a content determined according to each intention of readers, the important latent aspects in the content and knowledge are virtue and teaching inserted in it which may be a direct and indirect teaching or comparison by utilizing idioms and aphorism. As the content and Chinese idioms being in the textbook: “Hanyu Jiaocheng” 《汉语教程》 reflect concepts of how to instill virtue and good value and reflect long-accumulated civilization and culture of language and this culture of language is transferred into the book by letters which, aside from, language knowledge and enjoyment contains in, there are cultures inserted in lessons to be absorbed by readers in order to instill concepts of how to perceive society and how to appropriately conduct themselves in society and to open their world of views in learning new things from original cultures as passed on into the present time.

Regarding this research, the researcher conducted an analysis on virtue obtained from idioms and proverbs in Chinese textbooks, “Hanyu Jiaocheng” 《汉语教程》 set as contents and Chinese idioms in this book are interesting: values and idioms that are still modern and widely used in Chinese society. Crucially, these contents and Chinese idioms reflect virtue or values to appropriately be adopted to conduct and to be applied according to circumstances and social conditions. Regarding a definition of “virtue”, there are many definitions as defined by many persons, most of them are not so different. According to the definition of Thailand Royal Institute Dictionary, B.E. 2542 (1999), it means /ku:na:θa:m/, [noun] behavior or attitudes that show high moral standards. Furthermore, it is appeared in regulations of The Prime Minister’s Office regarding the national encouragement of virtue, B.E. 2550 (2007), dated 13th July, 2007 as promulgated in government gazette on 15th July, 2007, the national encouragement defines “virtue” as valuable and beneficial matters, goodness, conscience, mind support to loathe wickedness, karma and seek goodness and an encouragement and driving force to create responsibility and

good consciousness possessing internal equanimity to have to be instilled especially to have an effect and be appropriate in Thai society.

Anuchit Jitanukul (2007) said that virtue means characteristics of goodness, morality born from good and strong dharma and expressed as behaviors and conducts and these kinds of behaviors and conducts being accepted by society as a good matters and benefits for him/herself and other one.

To be summarized, virtue is goodness, appropriateness expressed as behaviors or thought in the mind to be a correct one, good one, not to cause him/herself and anyone trouble and to be a creative thought for creating new things for him/herself and other.

Chinese idioms are called "chéngyǔ" (成语). According to the definition of Language Research Institute of the Social Sciences Academy of China (中国社会科学院语言研究所:1999) is a short sentence or phrase having fixed, brief, concise, deep and covered forms. They have been using for a long time. Most Chinese idioms are comprised 4 words "chéng xīn chéng yì" (诚心诚意) (to bare you heart). A letter in some Chinese idioms can convey an understanding easily, some idioms related to backgrounds or ancient books; therefore, readers must understand them in order to understand the idioms. Moreover, there is "sú yǔ" (俗语) which is fixed, simple, widely used, short and concise sentence and can understand a figure of speech. Most of them are idioms originated from labor force, reflecting experiences and desires in life, for example "tiān xià wú nán shì, zhǐ pà yǒu xīn rén" (天下无难事, 只怕有心人) (nothing in the world is difficult for one who sets his mind into it) and "yàn yǔ" (谚语) is a phrase or fixed sentence widely used in public, this one uses simple words to reflect deep reasons such as "sān gè chòu pí jiàng, sài guò zhū gé liàng" (三个臭皮匠, 赛过诸葛亮) (Three shoemakers unite and the sage is defeated: Unity is strength).

The researcher considered and found that the textbook which is adopted for teaching foreigners is, additionally, rich with contents to teach learners to possess knowledge according to sciences and fields as an arrangement target of such book or set of book. Virtue inserted in the contents may be author's intention or not, which is ones of value to be studied as learners will, not just, gain knowledge from the textbook, but also adsorb virtue and morality appeared in it literally. Therefore, the researcher perceived that the study and analysis on virtue appeared in Chinese idioms from the textbook, "Hanyu Jiaocheng" 《汉语教程》 is beneficial to good value encouragement, to be a development guideline in a document and textbook inserted with virtue in contents, to be a model in instilling virtue and morality and to Chinese language study and culture henceforth.

Objective

To analyze virtue appeared in Chinese idioms from a set of textbook, "Hanyu Jiaocheng" 《汉语教程》.

Research Methodology

1. Population

A population in this research is contents, lessons and idioms appeared in 6 textbooks "Hanyu Jiaocheng" 《汉语教程》, revision 2007, Beijing Language and Culture University.

2. Tools

Tools utilized in this research are 21 virtue themes and analytical table of virtue from contents, lessons and idioms appeared in textbooks "Hanyu Jiaocheng" 《汉语教程》.

3. Research tools

Theme analysis

3.1 Select virtue themes from 3 original sources

- 8 basic aspects of virtue (MOE: 2009)
- 12 crucial aspects of virtue (Amara Lekroengsin, 1999: 96 referred from Na Wei, 2007:29-30)
- 18 human aspects of virtue (Andrea Comte Sponville, 2006 : 2-3 referred from Na Wei, 2007:30)

3.2 Steps of creating analytical themes

- Enumerate frequency of virtue contents from original sources by counting frequency scores
- Select virtue themes according to frequency and determine the theme according to high to low one.
- In case virtue themes have frequency as 1, this selection method shall be applied:

(1) Select virtue themes that have clear behavior extent.

(2) Select virtue themes that are considered to be necessary to present society.

- In case there are similar virtue themes, an extent of definition of words in those virtue themes shall be applied to consider.

- Some virtue themes which have similar characteristics should be considered according to definition and extent, in case of wide extent, they will be individually considered.

- Use virtue themes as abstract noun.

3.3 Bring all 25 virtue themes to check and consider whether they are appropriate with contents to be analyzed or not, 4 unclear virtue themes are left out, i.e. humor, easiness, sincerity and pureness; therefore, 21 virtue themes remains: (1) Diligence and assiduousness (2) Honesty and incorruptibility (3) Discipline (4) Endurance and tolerance (5) Compassion and kindness (6) Bravery (7) Unity (8) Loyalty (9) Well etiquette (10) Gratefulness (11) Meekness and humbleness (12) Cleanness (13) Economy (14) Sacrifice (15) Self-confidence (16) Solitude (17) Cleverness (18) equanimity and bright mood (19) Generousness (20) Justice (21) Forbearance

3.4 Bring those specified virtue themes to create indicative behavior to be a frame for analyzing virtue contents and Chinese idioms appeared in a set of textbooks, "Hanyu Jiaocheng" 《汉语教程》.

(12) 一笑了之 yí xiào liǎo zhī

Laughter to the past, it is water under the bridge (forgive and forget).

3. 6 idioms of honesty and incorruptibility:

(1) 马马虎虎 mǎma hūhu

Simple-minded (on your feelings, to bare your feelings and not pretend)
(latent virtue).

(2) 滥竽充数 làn yú chōng shù

The incompetent shrouds among ace (latent virtue)

(3) 自相矛盾 zì xiāng máo dùn

Conflict (latent virtue).

(4) 诚心诚意 chéng xīn chéng yì

Sincerity (latent virtue).

(5) 真心真意 zhēn xīn yì yì

Sincerity (latent virtue).

(6) 当家做主 dāng jiā zuò zhǔ

As head of the family, one who own a country (latent virtue, connecting
meaning from idioms).

4. Self-confidence, equanimity, bright mood and generousness equally appeared.

5 idioms of self-confidence:

(1) 低人一等 dī rén yì děng

Being inferior for one rank (underdog) (latent virtue)

(2) 酸甜苦辣 suān tián kǔ là

It's sour and sweet, yet bitter and spice (bittersweet)(latent virtue).

(3) 不知不觉 bù zhī bù jué

Head in the clouds (latent virtue).

(4) 当家做主 dāng jiā zuò zhǔ

As head of the family, one who own a country (latent virtue, connecting meaning
from idioms).

- (5) 打退堂鼓 dǎ tuì táng gǔ
Quitting in the middle of something (abruptly quitting) (latent virtue).

5 idioms of equanimity and bright mood:

- (1) 秋高气爽 qiū gāo qì shuǎng
Refresh and cool spring (latent virtue).
- (2) 刮目相看 guā mù xiāng kàn
Eyes on stalks (latent virtue).
- (3) 当家做主 dāng jiā zuò zhǔ
As head of the family, one who own a country (latent virtue, connecting meaning from idioms).
- (4) 兴致勃勃 xìng zhì bó bó
Interestingly praising (latent virtue).
- (5) 一笑了之 yí xiào liǎo zhī
Laughter to the past, it is water under the bridge (forgive and forget).

5 idioms of generousness:

- (1) 在家靠父母，出门靠朋友 zài jiā kào fùmǔ, chū mén kào péngyou
Relying on parent when being home, relying on friends when being outside.
- (2) 胡思乱想 hú sī luàn xiǎng
good-for-nothing, cranky (latent virtue connecting meaning from idioms).
- (3) 当家做主 dāng jiā zuò zhǔ
As head of the family, one who own a country (latent virtue, connecting meaning from idioms).
- (4) 乐于助人 lè yú zhù rén
Lending a hand with gratefulness.
- (5) 七手八脚 qī shǒu bā jiǎo
Commotion (latent virtue).

3 idioms of unity:

- (1) 互不相让 hù bù xiāng ràng
Not yielding up, refusing to accept (latent virtue).
- (2) 当家做主 dāng jiā zuò zhǔ
As head of the family, one who own a country (latent virtue, connecting meaning from idioms).
- (3) 七手八脚 qī shǒu bā jiǎo
Commotion (latent virtue).

3 idioms of meekness and humbleness

- (1) 马马虎虎 mǎ mǎ hū hū
Simple-minded (latent virtue).
- (2) 南辕北辙 nán yuán běi zhé
Heading to south but heading to north instead (latent virtue).
- (3) 当家做主 dāng jiā zuò zhǔ
As head of the family, one who own a country (latent virtue, connecting meaning from idioms).

7. Compassion, kindness and justice equally appeared.

2 idioms of comparison and kindness:

- (1) 恋恋不舍 liàn liàn bù shě
Mournfulness (latent virtue).
- (2) 当家做主 dāng jiā zuò zhǔ
As head of the family, one who own a country (latent virtue, connecting meaning from idioms).

2 idioms of justice:

- (1) 当家做主 dāng jiā zuò zhǔ
As head of the family, one who own a country (latent virtue, connecting meaning to the idiom).
- (2) 先来后到 xiān lái hòu dào
Being in order.

8. Loyalty, well etiquette, politeness, gratefulness, cleanness, economy, sacrifice and solitude equally appeared.

One of them appeared in an idiom:

当家做主 dāng jiā zuò zhǔ

As head of the family, one who own a country (latent virtue, connecting meaning to the idiom)

In all 69 Chinese idioms, there are 23 ones not having hidden aspects of virtue as follows:

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|------|------|----------------------|--|
| (1) | 马马虎虎 | mǎma hūhu | easygoing, simple |
| (2) | 丢三落四 | diū sān là sì | Forgetful, absent-minded |
| (3) | 一举一动 | yī jǔ yī dòng | Behavior, conduct |
| (4) | 一言一行 | yī yán yī xíng | Every saying, every conduct |
| (5) | 哭笑不得 | kū xiào bù dé | Jaw dropping |
| (6) | 烈日高照 | liè rì gāo zhào | Blazing |
| (7) | 万里雪飘 | wàn lǐ xuě piāo | Full of snow |
| (8) | 左顾右盼 | zuǒgù yòu pàn | Fidgetingly looking left and right |
| (9) | 半死不活 | bàn sǐ bù huó | Being half death (at death's door) |
| (10) | 不约而同 | bù yuē ér tóng | (Action) in unison without appointment |
| (11) | 手忙脚乱 | shǒu máng jiǎo luàn | Helplessly confused |
| (12) | 不知所措 | bù zhī suǒ cuò | Feeling awkward |
| (13) | 绞尽脑汁 | jiǎo jìn nǎo zhī | To beat one's brains out |
| (14) | 小心翼翼 | xiǎo xīn yì yì | Overcautious |
| (15) | 兴高采烈 | xìng gāo cǎi liè | Overjoyed |
| (16) | 成千上万 | chéng qiān shàng wàn | Innumerable, The thousands and tens of thousands |
| (17) | 恍然大悟 | huǎng rán dà wù | Suddenly aware |
| (18) | 应有尽有 | yīng yǒu jìn yǒu | All prepared and available |
| (19) | 心甘情愿 | xīn gān qíng yuàn | Voluntarily accepted |
| (20) | 家喻户晓 | jiā yù hù xiǎo | Universally known |
| (21) | 女扮男装 | nǚ bàn nán zhuāng | Girl disguising as boy |
| (22) | 一见如故 | yī jiàn rú gù | Meeting at first sight like meeting an old Friends |
| (23) | 翩翩起舞 | piān piān qǐ wǔ | Gracefully dancing |

Discussion and Summary

From the study, it is found that studies on idioms appeared in several writings have been interested by Chinese and Thai academicians such as Na Wei (2007) who analyzed virtue in epigrams from a masterpiece literature: The Three Kingdoms to be a model for Thai instruction for Chinese who studies Thai as secondary language, from the study, it was found that the mostly appeared epigrams from The Three Kingdoms are consisted of 8 themes from the first one: cleverness; second one: compassion and kindness; third one: honesty and incorruptibility; fourth one: self-confidence; fifth one: gratefulness, sixth one: bravery; seventh one: responsibility and the last one: humbleness and meekness.

As for Thai academician, the researcher finds that Phanatda Lerloetyuthitham (2001) conducted a study on Chinese proverbs in Teochew community in Thailand. Conducting a study on Chinese proverb structure, rhyme and harmony, idea, attitude and belief of Teochew people as reflected on the proverbs themselves, the results show structures of sentence and usage of words; furthermore, it is show a reflection of a way of life, social structure and characteristics of Teochew people.

In addition, Wanida Thangthienchai (2009) has conducted a study on language structure and usage intention of Chinese idioms and found that Chinese idioms have 8 forms of phrases. As for a sentence, it is divided into 2 forms. The intentions according to definition have 5 characteristics, i.e. reprimanding, warning, suggestion, appreciation and sarcasm.

To be said, a set of textbook, “Hanyu Jiaocheng” 《汉语教程》 is considered to be another form of writings adopted to be the textbook for foreigners for 10 years. The books have been reproduced to use in instructions for interested one, Thailand also adopted them to use in instructions as well. It can say that this is very popular books.

The study on “virtue obtained from idioms and proverbs in Chinese textbooks, “Hanyu Jiaocheng” 《汉语教程》 set, therefore, is able to reflect roles of a set of textbook, “Hanyu Jiaocheng” 《汉语教程》 towards education in an aspect of virtue insertion crucial towards learners such as virtue in aspects of endurance, tolerance, diligence and assiduousness reflected more than other aspects. Those crucial aspects are for being aware by learners to be apply in their lives. Nevertheless, the study also conducts on dimensions of aspects of virtue appeared in the idioms and finds that there are 23 idioms not having any characteristic definitions of virtue; however, these 23 idioms emphasize on behavior reflection in human. i.e. 烈日高照 (liè rì gāo zhào) meaning blazing or 翩翩起舞 (piān piān qǐ wǔ) meaning dancing gracefully and 丢三落四 (diū sān là sì) meaning absent-minded or forgetful and etc. Regarding behavior reflections in human, it is a characteristics of good idioms as created from environmental factors of human. A creation of idioms, therefore, depends on social context. A reflection of definition bases on foundation in each society; thus, idioms are also an excellent cultural learning source.

Suggestion

A study on idioms appeared in other forms of literature, such as child’s books, novels and newspapers should be conducted.

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