Ecological Civilization Education and Ecological Responsibilities of the Youth

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Abstract. Ecological civilization education is one kind of educational strategies and serves ecological civilization construction of China. The youth is the subject of ecological civilization education. The basic features of ecological civilization education are conversation and innovation. Furthermore, the youth’s knowledge transfer ability and imagination directly determine whether young people can assume the responsibilities of maintaining ecological justice and realizing the ideal of communism.

The Basic Features of Ecological Civilization Education: Conversation and Innovation

Organisms’ propagation involves two processes: interaction and evolution. The interaction shows competition for food among different organisms; the evolution shows the functional change of organisms to adapt to the natural environment. As a kind of advanced organisms, humans also take part in two processes of interaction and evolution. But it is more complicated because of the infiltration of rational thinking. The interactive process is developed into multiple interaction and conversation among people, nature and society from a one-way interaction between organisms and nature. The evolutionary process is developed into multiple evolution and innovation among function, society and civilization from simplex functional evolution of organisms. To highlight civilization of human beings, the process of interaction and evolution can be treated in one of conversation and innovation. As the product of human socialization and civilization, the development of ecological civilization education inevitably involves in the process of conversation and innovation. However, conversation and innovation of ecological civilization education obviously are inadequate because of traditional educational mode.

Firstly, conversation is horizontal extension. It’s a two-way, even multiway interactive mode. But the traditional educational mode gives priority to one-way transmission. In the traditional education, education subject has the absolute authority, and is lack of interaction and conversation. Ecological civilization education is an education mode which is derived from social practice, and directly facing ecological problems.

Secondly, innovation is vertical extension. The transition of human civilization forms is not natural process. It’s driven by internal innovation. “However, education has become the largest sector and career in human society. And the length of educational system becomes longer and longer as a result of the necessity of cultural inheritance and more and more tasks of that”[1]. There are rarely new data and information in traditional education. Most are memory and repetition of previous achievements. However, more and more serious ecological crisis and problems force the traditional education’s transition. Ecological civilization education must extend and innovate its education contents and methods. The profound significance of ecological civilization education is to guide students with critical thought, and then explore the alternative way of industrial civilization--ecological civilization.

Ability Demands of Ecological Civilization Education for the Youth: Transformation and Imagination

The youth is the subject of ecological civilization education. The strong body and the active
thought of the youth make it to the main force, and also the practitioners and communicators of the ecological civilization education. In view of two basic features of ecological civilization education, namely conversation and innovation, the essential demands for the youth are the abilities of horizontal knowledge transformation and vertical imagination. The ability of knowledge transformation is the core to solve ecological problems. There is no idealized “vacuum strip” to solve single problem by a single discipline. However, the subject-oriented trend of the traditional education is like an academic system in the “vacuum strip”. For example, economy which is popular in modern society is abstracted from the knowledge system of the human construction. In this way, the economic man usually is selfish and closed. But the natural world and social world are a shared and open ecosystem. The closure of disciplinary system is in contrast to the openness of ecological system. Under Chinese traditional educational mode, the knowledge structure of the youth is single and closed, which cannot solve real ecological problems. To arouse the activeness of the youth’s knowledge system and to develop the ability of knowledge transformation of the youth are a key step to solve the ecological problem and improve the effect of ecological civilization education. Knowledge transfer ability can not only broaden the width of knowledge but also present a variety of knowledge combinations. It can produce various solution methods, and provide new ideas and new solutions to solve ecological problems.

Imagination is a breakthrough way to solve ecological problems. The human beings have experienced several revolutions of science and technology, but we still have a long way to go to master all the mysteries of ecosystem. For example, the human beings have not fully mastered the variation theory and mechanism of biology. “Although the genetic engineering has gained considerable achievements now, we still can’t figure out how the variation happens in the natural environment because they are transient and hard to find and capture.”[2] However, the enrichment of human material products and spiritual heritage are the results of imagination. Those which cannot be imagined in the ancient world are coming true in the modern world. The each progress of the human is the subversion of the existing cognition. The heliocentric theory overturned the geocentric theory; the relativity theory overturned Newton’s classical mechanics; Marx’s materialism overturned Hegel’s idealism. It has been unknown whether quantum mechanics can overturn traditional theory. But its development is in accordance with the progress trajectory of the human. Humans have approached the real ecology. The most important quality is imagination. Traditional education has become the shackles of imagination, which only presents the only possibility of the test answers. Ecological civilization education is not the only answer, but possible answer. It is a process to demonstrate its rationality. Ecological civilization education should pass on ecological knowledge by “an imaginative way”. Just like wonderful chemical reaction, the knowledge change can provide ecological civilization education with new ideas of exploration.

Ecological Responsibilities of the Youth: Ecological Justice and Communist Ideals

The abilities of transformation and imagination are based on the creation of human civilization process and the evolution of biological organisms. The three subjects develop by horizontal communication and vertical extension. The abilities are direct proportional to the responsibility. In the transformation process of human civilization, the responsibilities are more important than the abilities.

The youth should be responsible for spreading ecological justice. Justice refers to making positive judgment to rightness and wrongness, goodness and evil in the field of politics, law, ethics, philosophy and so on. Justice is a positive choice from the two value standards and it belongs to social field. In the period of industrial civilization, the human specificity of justice is obvious; there is no justice in nature. However, in the transformation period of civilization, the application field of justice has changed. It’s not only applicable to society but also the whole ecosystem; that is ecological justice. The reason is that there is no difference between nations and countries of ecology. Air is flowing; water is flowing too. Ecology can not be developed behind closed doors. Justice belongs to society and ecology. Ecological justice is closely connected with ecological order. Justice is an aim and the order is a process. The aim of justice can be realized only by maintaining the order.
The stable ecological order will be helpful to the order of society; the achievement of ecological justice will be helpful to the justice of society. Ecological civilization education restores the destroyed ecological order, which will indirectly restore the order of society. Justice and order exist between people and others, people and themselves, people and society, also between people and nature. People can uphold justice for nature, which is the extension of human justice. The connotation of ecological justice may be larger than social justice because of its root. Culture is the product of society. The limitations of social justice are obstacles. Ecological civilization education is a journey for people to find their roots, which will restore the natural and essential relationship between human and nature which is cut off by industrial civilization.

The youth should be responsible for realizing communist ideals. Communism is a target set by Marx. Nowadays, China is in the primary stage of socialism. In future, China will enter into the advanced phase of socialism and finally realize communism. The overall development of human must be derived from the power of inner drive. The constraints of law and ethics can not fundamentally solve the problem of human development. The function of such external drive is limited. “The overall and free development of human” must realize the harmonious unity of inner drive and external drive. But the traditional definition of the unity is formalism and motionless. Ecological civilization education has toppled the traditional definition of the harmonious unity. Ecosystem is dynamic and diverse but it’s harmonious. It is said that original civilization and agricultural civilization know the world from the perspective of religion, industrial civilization from the perspective of science and rationality, and then ecological civilization from the one of harmony. “The harmonious perspective” is the core of inner drive, the precondition of human comprehensive development and the responsibility of the youth to realize communist ideals.

References