

## The Contemporary Significance of Promoting *Di Zi Gui* Spirit From the Perspective of the Core Socialist Values

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### Abstract

In the 18<sup>th</sup> National Congress, our party overviews the value goal, value orientation and value criterion of the core socialist values from the three aspects, the view of state, society and citizens. *Di Zi Gui* or *Standards for Being a Good Student and Child*, a book in the Qing Dynasty, is one of the classical works that represents the Chinese traditional social ethics code and conduct requirements. Its connotation is identical with the moral demands of the core socialist values, "patriotism, dedication, integrity, friendship", and become an important traditional culture source of the core socialist values. It has great significance to enhance the national cultural heritage of *Di Zi Gui* in the following aspects, cultivating the citizens the patriotic consciousness, solving the problems of moral anomie and lack of honesty, carrying forward the traditional virtues, and inspiring people's mission and sense of responsibility for their work.

**Key words:** Core socialist values; *Di Zi Gui* or *Standards for Being a Good Student and Child*; Contemporary significance

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### INTRODUCTION

In the 18<sup>th</sup> National Congress, our party overviews the value goal, value orientation and value criterion of the core socialist values from the three aspects, the view of state, society and citizens. Among them, "prosperity, democracy, civility, harmony" is the national goal and pursuit; "freedom, equality, justice, the rule of law" is the value orientation from the social dimension; "patriotism, dedication, integrity, friendship" is the value criterion from the citizen individual level, namely, the basic ethical requirements and norms of behavior. The implication of these three aspects, in fact, is the answer to what kind of country we want to build, what kind of society we want to construct, and what kind of citizens we want to be. The core socialist values fully reflect the Chinese national spirit and values, and make the whole society support it. So realizing the core socialist values needs the joint efforts of the state, society and citizens, especially the citizens, because they are the important component of the state and the society.

The core socialist values carry the essence of Chinese traditional culture. So to develop and expand the core socialist values should inherit and carry forward the fine traditional culture, absorbing nutrition from them. May 4, 2014 in Beijing University, General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out:

After several thousands of years' inheritance, Chinese civilization has its own unique value system, and rooted in the Chinese mind, influencing the Chinese people's way of thinking and behavior. Today, we should absorb nutrition from them to advocate and promote the core socialist values; otherwise it would be no vitality and influence. (Xi, 2014, May 5)

*Di Zi Gui* or *Standards for Being a Good Student and Child*, known as "the first regulation to follow in life", should become the important classics of learning Chinese excellent traditional culture. In the many reasons, the most important is the standard of moral behavior that *Di Zi Gui* advocated is not only conducive to building a

socialist harmonious society, but also identical with the moral demands of the core socialist values, “patriotism, dedication, integrity, friendship”, and become an important traditional culture source of the core socialist values. The author thinks, during the important period of advocating core socialist values, building a harmonious society and realizing “China Dream”, vigorously carrying forward the spirit of *Di Zi Gui* has great significance with the attitude of “absorbing its essence and discarding its dregs”.

## 1. CONDUCTIVE TO CULTIVATE THE PATRIOTIC CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE CITIZENS

*Di Zi Gui*, originally called “training Mongolian”, was written by a normal teacher named Li Yuxiu in Shanxi Jiangzhou during the reign of Emperor Kangxi and Yongzheng. He detailed list the etiquette and norms that young people should follow when they conducted with people, matters, and objects in daily life at home or out, taking the sixth provision of the chapter of “learning” in “*the Analects of Confucius*” as the compendium, that is “the people should be fealty to our parents, be respectful and loving to our siblings, be cautious with all people, matters, and objects in our daily lives, loving all equally, and to be close to and learn from people of virtue and compassion. Only when have accomplished all the above can we then study further and learn literature and art to improve the quality of our cultural and spiritual lives.” Later, Jia Cunren revised it and renamed *Di Zi Gui* or *Standards for Being a Good Student and Child*. Since it’s easy to understand, easy to read rhyming, in a simple style, while thorough reasoning, it has become a popular domestic children reading in the late Qing Dynasty. Until today, the book is still the main entry class of learning and inheriting the Confucian ethics.

Since ancient times, Chinese people value the virtue of the “filial piety”. Such as the old saying goes, “Filial piety is the first virtue.” “Filial piety is the foundation of human being.” Filial piety is not only the traditional virtue of the Chinese nation, but also the main standard to judge a person’s quality. Parents give their children not only life, but also raise them. In the process of raising children, parents put their ordinary while selfless love for their children, not expecting anything in return. It is difficult to imagine that a person who is not filial to his parents would be kind to others and return to the community. It can be said, “filial piety” is one of the main essence of the Confucian culture. *Di Zi Gui* clearly states in the outline, *Di Zi Gui* or *Standards for Being a Good Student and Child* is a book that was taught by Chinese saints and sages of the ancient past. The book first teaches us how to be fealty to our parents, and

how to be respectful and loving to our siblings. It then teaches us how to be cautious with all people, matters, and objects in our daily lives; how to be a trust worthy person; and to believe in the teachings of the ancient saints and sages.” The “filial piety” was placed in the first place of the whole moral etiquette norms. As we all know, blood ties maintain the relationship between children and parents, which can’t be cut off. Parents build a home for their children with deep love. Wherever we are, home is always the warm harbor and protective shelter. Therefore, we do the filial piety to parents and elders, is bound to love and cherish their own home. However, in Chinese traditional idea home and country are linked. The country is composed of numerous families, and the family is the basic elements that make up the country. “No country, no place to stand home.” if the country does not exist, where can we build our homes? So, when we love parents, we should also love our home and country. That is to say, filial piety is the real source of patriotism.

*Di Zi Gui* stressed: “Even though an object might be small, I will not keep it a secret from my parents. If I do, I will hurt my parent feelings.” Since we can’t possession anything of our own home, the same as the things of the state or the collective units. Otherwise, it will compromise our virtues, which will make our parents feel ashamed. Of course, we can’t do that. As the saying goes: “Thirty years ago to see the father of King, 30 years after the father to see the child of King.” Some officials took advantage of their position and power to embezzle money and take bribes. When their criminal conspiracy was unmasked, be chained and thrown into prison, their parents and even the whole family would be implicated, suffer great mental pressure. This is seen as not filial. It can be said that almost all the parents in the world hope their children can work hard, and become a useful people to the state and society, which not only bring glory to their ancestors, but also realizing their own dream of repaying country’s protection. For example, Tao Kan, an official in Eastern Jin, was fair and square in performing his government functions. Yue Fei, the National hero of the Southern Song Dynasty, was remembered by all the people with the story of “serving the country with utmost loyalty”. Tao Kan and Yue Fei’s success is related to their mother’s strict education. When they were young, the two great mothers had already taught them to be incorruptible and patriotic. The mothers of Tao Kan, Yue Fei, Meng Zi, and Ouyang Xiu, known as the “four Chinese virtuous mothers”, become the model for future generations to educate their children. In this view, Tao Kan and Yue Feicai really practiced the traditional Chinese virtues – the filial piety. This kind of filial piety is beyond the limits of family, and integrates the filial piety to parents and country, which is worth our publicizing widely.

## 2. CONDUCTIVE TO SOLVING THE PROBLEMS OF MORAL ANOMIE AND LACK OF HONESTY

Since the reform and opening up, China has implemented the socialist market economy, and made considerable progress. However, the market economy is a double-edged sword. It promotes the economic and social development, while brings many negative effects that cannot be ignored. “Adam Smith, the British classical political economist, took the evil of human nature as the premise and hypothesis of economics, and took the egoism as human’s basic behavior motivation in his book of *The Wealth of Nations*” (Ye, 2014, April 17). Thus, in market economy, under the guidance of the pursuit of interests, people’s “Evil” side is constantly expanded fermentation, while the “good” side is covered. Since China is in the key period of social transformation, the changes of legal and moral norms are lag behind the development of economy. Furthermore because of the lack of supervision in all aspects and other reasons, the phenomenon of lack of credibility emerges in a large number. Some businesses do not pay attention to their reputation, not abide by integrity, make and sell fake and shoddy goods, and even maliciously cheat consumers in order to save costs and pursuit maximum benefits. In recent years there are a few significant representative things. The “melamine milk powder” incident of Sanlu in 2008, the “industrial gelatin” event of condensed yogurt in 2012, the “Clenbuterol” event of Shuanghui in 2011, and so on. Even more unbelievable is that Sanlu and Shuanghui were big companies, which had been trusted for many years. Their factories and sales agents were throughout the country. When these incidents exposed, the whole nation was startled. How to make people believe the little-known brands and small enterprises, if big enterprise was not worth believing? Obviously, this kind of businesses hurts the feelings of consumers, damages their interests, but also drives itself into a dead end, and finally bankrupts. Personally, people like this will make the society into a serious confidence crisis. Selfishness, indifference and fraudulence replaced the good behaviors, such as loving and helping each other. Then, immoralities appeared in large numbers. In brief, the lack of credibility, like a malignant tumor, not only affects the stability and harmony of our society, but also seriously hindered the healthy operation of the economic development; the more important is it corrupts social values. So, the whole society and relevant departments should pay close attention to it.

In the sixth Plenary Session of the 17th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, our party said:” it is more urgent to consolidate the ideological and moral foundation of the whole Party and people, with the core socialist value system leading the ideological trend,

because of the moral anomie, lack of honesty, distorted life outlook and values in some areas, on some people. It is important and heavy.” The Chinese nation is a nation with a fine tradition. Its five thousand years’ history and splendid culture breed excellent fine traditional virtues of the Chinese people, such as honesty, faith, modest, courteous, selfless and so on. Facing these negative phenomena in society at present, we should actively find the way to solve it from the excellent traditional culture and traditional virtues but complaint or take negative attitude.

At the beginning of the chapter of “integrity”, *Di Zi Gui* pointed out: “When I speak, honesty is important. Deceitful words and lies must not be tolerated.” Just as the old saying goes, “what is said can never be taken back.” We must do what we promised. It is not unique, but has its counterpart. Confucius said: “people should be honest to others.” Mencius said: “Shaft is to a cart what credit is a man.” That is to say, carts can’t go without wheel and man can’t do anything without a good credit. In a word, integrity is the fundamental virtues for people. We should keep our promise, because it is the basic moral principle as a man. At the same time, the speech should be honest and trustworthy. We shouldn’t exaggerate the truth to deceive others with slick talk. Cheng Yi, the Neo-Confucianism master in Northern Song Dynasty, believed that “Treat others with sincerity, and you will be treated likewise.” It likes the old saying, “Sincerity smooths the way to success.” If we all abide by integrity, treat people with sincerity, care for and love everyone around, there will have no indifference, deceit and hurt between people. And our society will become a kind and loving family. “If I am asked to do something that is inappropriate or bad, I must not agree to it. If I do, I will be doubly wrong.” Similarly, companies and businesses must adhere to the principles of integrity, avoid making false products deceive consumers, and not overstate the efficacy of their products in the sales process. Deceiving the consumer is sure to be nothing but a dead end. Besides excellent product quality, integrity is the talisman for companies and businesses to be success in the long-term.

## 3. CONDUCTIVE TO CARRYING FORWARD THE TRADITIONAL VIRTUES OF BENEVOLENCE, COURTESY AND TOLERANCE

As mentioned before, the trust crisis led to an indifferent relationship between people. Many people regarded it as their own philosophy of life, “Adopt a nonchalant attitude towards things of no personal interest”. In Chinese traditional culture, the traditional virtues of benevolence, courtesy and tolerance play an important position, such as “aim at helping others out of good will”, “endure

humiliation for the sake of a higher objective” etc.. With the influence of these ideas, a large number of benevolent gentlemen appeared. They use their own action interpret the traditional Chinese virtues. For example, “Kong Rong gave away bigger pears” in the Eastern Han Dynasty, “General and Premier Make Up” in the Warring States period, and the “six feet lane” in Qing Dynasty.

At the beginning of the chapter of “love all equally”, *Di Zi Gui* pointed out: “Human beings, regardless of nationality, race, or religion-everyone-should be loved equally. We are all sheltered by the same sky and we all live on the same planet Earth.” so we should love each other, help each other, and build a warm and harmonious society together. Just like the old saying goes: “Care for the old and the young like they were your family.”

“I must repay the kindness of others and let go of my resentments. I will spend less time holding grudges and more time paying back the kindness of others.” It is harmful to put resentment and hatred in the heart for a long time, for oneself, it is a painful torment. Confucius had taught his students Zigong to take “forgiveness” as a principle throughout the life. What’s the meaning of “forgiveness”? It means forgiving one’s mistakes leniently. “Ancient gentleman is strict with himself and tolerant to others, it is what we usually say “be strict with oneself, be lenient with others”. Only strict with oneself, can we discover and correct our deficiencies. It’s not weak or compromise to be lenient with others, but responsible and care for others. While, it’s hard to be strict with oneself, and be lenient with others. First, we must have a broad mind and a sympathetic and friendly attitude. We must remember the kindness of others, because “Drop the boon of the water, be to flow out spring to report mutually”. We should always have the consciousness of “Return a favor with a favor”.

We will find that the core socialist values answered the question of how to construct, coordinate, and develop the relationships between man and nature, man and society, man and man, man and self. And it put forward very rich, instructive and constructive suggestions. The core spirit of them is social harmony. (Yin, 2014)

We know that social harmony includes not only the harmony between man and society, but also includes the harmony between people and harmony between man and nature. If the harmony between people depends on the virtue of tolerance, kindness, generosity, and dedication, then the harmony between man and nature lies in the human beings. Chinese ancients have put forward the idea of “Human beings are an integral part of nature”. It emphasizes that human beings should be combined with nature, and has the awareness of protecting the natural environment and animals. In recent years, the rapid development of science, technology, and the industrial civilization has led to a variety of environmental problems. How to deal with environmental problems has become a global issue. But the human’s crazy and cruel slaughter

makes many animals be threatened with extinction, which deteriorated the extent of environmental degradation. Imagine one day, with the extinction of animal and plants, how human beings live on the earth? Qin Dongkui, China’s famous moral educator and social philanthropist, pointed out: “As a gentleman, you should not only love the people, but also the living things.” (Qin, 2013, p.181) Bai Juyi, a poet of Tang Dynasty, said: “Regardless the kind of them, all the living things are equal. So, don’t hit the mother bird on the branches, her son is waiting for her in the nest.” Humans are evolved from animals. Therefore, the chapter of “love all equally” in *Di Zi Gui* tells us we should not only care for our own kind, but also protect the nature and be good for the animal. Only in this way, our society can be harmonious, and the world will develop in a healthy and harmonious direction.

#### 4. CONDUCTIVE TO INSPIRING PEOPLE’S MISSION AND SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR WORK

Mother Teresa said, “I can’t do great things, but I can do small things with great love.” As ordinary citizens, we all haven’t the ability to accomplish great deeds, but we can be strict with ourselves according to the requirements in the core socialist values, return the society with our practical action, such as loving our job, being dedicated to our profession, and performing our duty. Loving one’s job and being dedicated to one’s profession are closely related. The former means working with all your heart. The latter consists of two aspects: One is the recognition of his work, and having the sense of occupation honor; the other is the strong sense of responsibility and initiative for his occupation. Loving one’s job is the foundation, of which we can be dedicated to our profession. After all, they are the traditional virtue of Chinese workers. There are plenty of people work hard and not be upset by criticism in their post of duty since ancient times. *Di Zi Gui* pointed out: “I will maintain a permanent place to stay and lead a routine life. I will persist in whatever I do and will not change my aspirations at will.” However, in real life, some people lack the enthusiasm to their work, complain, dislike, and even rejection their work. Some people frequently change jobs. These behaviors not only reduce their credibility and the sense of occupation accomplishment, but also objectively bring a certain loss to the original unit.

In recent years, *Di Zi Gui* has been approved and become the regulations for training and managing their staff in many company. Among them, the most successful one is the Beijing Huitong Huili Company. Its chairman, Mr. Hu Xiaolin, studied *Di Zi Gui* carefully, applied and popularized it to his businesses. He thought a man with good virtues would be love and loyalty to their jobs and their colleagues. And also has love-minded, tolerant, selfless devotion and public service virtues. So, in the

practical work, what problems should we pay attention to? *Di Zi Gui* taught us “we will avoid doing things in a hurry, as doing things in haste will lead to many mistakes. We should not be afraid of difficult tasks, and we will not become careless when a job is too easy.” Therefore, *Di Zi Gui* can stimulate people’s mission and sense of responsibility for their work, so that we can also establish a positive attitude and life values of serving the public and society.

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## CONCLUSION

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In a word, *Di Zi Gui* is identical with the moral demands of the core socialist values in civil level, and become an important traditional culture source of the core socialist values. Although it written in the Qing Dynasty more than three hundred years ago, *Di Zi Gui* still has a positive significance for the construction of the core socialist values, the construction of the Chinese characteristic socialism, and the achievement of the great rejuvenation of China dream. Because it can restore people’s good nature, so as to achieve the purpose of curing the social

problems. On December 30, 2013 in the speech of the twelfth collective study of the CPC politburo, Xi Jinping said, “we should effort to achieve the creative transformation of Chinese traditional virtues and the innovative development of it, guide people to the ethical life, and let every people to be the mainstay of spreading the Chinese culture.” We should do that to spread the positive energy.

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