

Enlightenment of the "Three Virtues" Thought Contained in Xi Jinping's View of Youth to the Growth of Young People from Perspective of the Film "Sultan"*

Shan Liu

Lushan College of Guangxi University of Science and Technology
Liuzhou, China 545616

Abstract—In recent years, there are many inspirational films in Chinese and foreign markets, but very few of them can have reference and enlightenment significance and be resonant for the growth of young people. The Indian film "Sultan" introduced in 2018 breaks through the old-fashioned lyrical storyline about the grassroots' counterattack and getting married with the white, rich and beautiful girl, and reflects the process of unceasing improvement of youth's morality through the Confucian "three virtues" thought (wisdom, benevolence and courage) as implied in the growth process of the protagonist Sultan. This process also fully embodies Xi Jinping's expectation and requirement for the youth as proposed on the Peking University Teachers and Students Symposium on May 12, 2018, "young people should be inspirational, set great ambitions and strive for the goal; young people should seek for truth, true knowledge and practice true skills; young people should be practical, realize the unity of knowing and doing and be a doer". By virtue of the growth experience of Sultan, this paper discusses the enlightenment of Confucian "three virtues" thought on the growth of young students.

Keywords—*inspirational; seek for truth; be practical; growth of young people; ideological enlightenment*

I. INTRODUCTION

The film "Sultan", as written and directed by Indian director Ali Abbas Zafar in 2016, was officially released in China on August 31 of the year. It does not reach the expected box-office income and attention rate similar to Indian inspirational films such as "Dangal" and "Secret superstar". But in terms of the enlightenment to the growth of young students, the Confucian "three virtues" thought contained in "Sultan" is far more inspirational for moral cultivation of young students than the previous two inspirational films.

"Sultan" tells an inspirational story of the protagonist

*Fund: This paper is a phased achievement of the "research on the innovative ideas for ideological and political education in independent colleges in the field of traditional Chinese culture" under the 2017 research project of the ideological and political education of college students in Lushan College of Guangxi University of Science and Technology.

Sultan who was an Indian unemployed youth. Through his own efforts, he gained the heart of a girl he liked, gradually grew into the Olympic and World Championship wrestling champions, and reached the peak of his life; after that he became conceited and complacent, and forgot his original intentions and led to the loss of a happy family; then, he got in in-depth reflection and introspection, and made self-redemptive efforts to achieve self-salvation and once again succeeded. Among the films produced in China, there are many films about successful counterattack of unimportant person through self efforts. Most of them attracts attention and obtains box office by good appearance and vulgar and flattering plot; but the film "Sultan" is different. Sultan's counterattack always implies the Confucian "three virtues" thought — wisdom, benevolence and courage; based on two life turning points originated from the "Feeling of shame is close to bravery" and "Being eager to learn is close to knowing things", Sultan gradually became mature and grew up through practical action of "Practice is close to be benevolent". The process of Sultan's growth is a process of unceasing improvement of youth's morality. This process also fully reflects Jinping's four expectations for the youth as proposed on the Peking University Teachers and Students Symposium on May 12, 2018: first, to be patriotic and loyal to the motherland and people; second, to be inspirational, set great ambitions and strive for the goal; third, to seek for truth, true knowledge and practice true skills; third, to be practical, realize the unity of knowing and doing and be a doer.

II. SETTING GREAT AMBITIONS AND STRIVING FOR THE GOAL: THE TURNING POINT ORIGINATED FROM "FEELING OF SHAME IS CLOSE TO COURAGE"

Confucius said: "Feeling of shame is close to courage"; In Confucianism, "courage" is divided into "the courage abiding by moral principle" and "the courage violating moral principle". The latter courage is harmful to society, so Confucius hates "those who have courage but are rude". In Confucianism, only the courage in line with morality and justice is considered as "the courage abiding by moral principle". "The courage abiding by moral principle" advocated by Confucianism also has another meaning,

namely the courage of knowing and correcting the mistakes and denying self". [1] It is not difficult to see that Confucianism considers the nature of daring to admit own faults and mistakes and make corrections in time as the courage and virtue of people; at the same time, it also considers this as the prerequisite for self perfection and further improvement. Taking Sultan's two turning points of life as the main line, this film tells the story of Sudan's growth and development course. The two turnings exactly reflect the idea of "Feeling of shame is close to courage".

The first turning point occurred when Sultan showed love to the heroine Alpha who he admired but was humiliated. At this time, Sultan was a nearly 30-year dawdling punk enjoying in running for chasing broken kite together with those aged half of his age, and had neither learning nor skill, while Alpha was a national wrestling champion with higher education background and having ideals and pursuit. Sultan's enthusiasm in pursuing the girl received twice different levels of humiliation. At the first time, namely after Alpha defeated the local champion of male wrestler Bargar and Sultan pretended to ask Alfa for signature but showed his love to her, Alpha said contemptuously, "Stop your sad attempt, go away! Daddy's wrestlers may fight against you to the extent that you cannot stand up again and you may always count how many bones were broken in all your life". At the second time, she gave him two loud slaps in the face and humiliation in publics, and said "Do you have anything common with me? I am a wrestling champion. I have dreams, goals, and pursuits. What about you? You are just a clown, and can only speak stupid nonsense words. Who deserves to possess love? It is the person worthy of your respect, the person who has an influence on you and motivates you to move forward. And you have no pursuit of life, aren't you?" In facing the failure and humiliation, Sultan had a short-term depression, but instead he finally got the courage to be better man after feeling the shame. In this process, the dialogue between his father and he played a foreshadowing role. His father said, "Don't take excuse to drink wine and drink drugs, and don't think about suicide. There is a woman behind every successful man, and there is also a woman behind every failed man; but no one can withstand failure. Sometimes only after being humiliated can you be dignified. You have to work hard and double your efforts before you can win the respect from the society." The father's words "only after being humiliated can you be dignified" directly conveyed the "Feeling of shame is close to courage" in the Confucian "three virtues" thought. It was precisely based on concept, Sultan worked hard again and again and gradually grew up into a champion on the wrestling arena in the eyes of Alpha and finally won the heart of Alpha and became a famous wrestling champion on the Olympic Games and World Championship.

The second turning point occurred after he sought help from the government for raising funds for building a blood bank and found this way was hopeless. At this time, Sultan was a middle-aged destitute, sluggish, and fat man, and fully lost the image and temperament of a wrestling champion on the Olympic Games and World Championship. Facing with the fat image of him in the mirror and the contempt of the

fighting coach Fatah Singh who said, "Look at him, he is a tired loser, a living dead person who is immersed in the sorrow of the past; I will not guide the dead man.", Sultan did not give up, but said, "I gave up the wrestling, but I never gave up on the struggle against life, I am still alive". His dialogue with the coach once again reflected the "Feeling of shame is close to courage" in the Confucian "three virtues" thought. Through the two turning points in Sultan's life, it can be realized that how important it is for one's life to set up ambitions. The vast majority of young people must cultivate the spirit of struggle, have affirmed ideal, be faithful to the ideal, be not afraid of difficulties, be brave to pioneer, work hard and never give up. Happiness can be obtained by struggle, and struggle itself is a kind of happiness." [2]

III. SEEKING FOR TRUTH, TRUE KNOWLEDGE, AND PRACTICING TRUE SKILLS: CHANGE ON THE BASIS OF "BEING EAGER TO LEARN IS CLOSE TO KNOWING THINGS"

As a saying in "The Doctrine of Mean" goes, "wisdom, benevolence and courage are three virtues in the world; hence those who believe that are similar. It is known without/with learning or when having confusion, but the results are the same." Confucianism regards wisdom, benevolence and courage as the three elements of gentleman's morality, and regards it as the three virtues in the world; some people are born with the knowledge, some people can know it by learning and some people must subject to confusion before knowing it. In the film, Sultan was born with debauchery nature. He was still careless and casual in age of almost 30, and thus obviously did not belong to the category of "born with the knowledge" but belong to the typical "knowing it by learning or when having confusion". His two changes into status of "being eager to learn is close to knowing things" were the result of hard work acquired.

The first change of Sultan was after he was humiliated by Alpha in public. At that time although he only had participated in wrestling training for only eight days, he decided to enter for the National Wrestling Championship Tryouts and challenged the club's three seed players Yasin, Laksh and Fujia. Although he finally failed, he did not give up and said to the coach Bakat, "today's battle let me know my level". This reflected the Confucian "Being eager to learn is close to knowing things" thought, and that only by continuous learning and reflection can it be able to get closer to wisdom itself or know the truth. In traditional Confucianism, the gentleman is required to be good at knowing people, including "knowing self" and "knowing people"; Xunzi pointed out, "a wise man knows people and knows self" (Xunzi · Zidao)[1]. By battling with participants of the Tryouts, Sultan had a correct judgment on himself, so that he not only knew self and also knew people. Then in the next month, Sultan trained body fitness day and night to learn wrestling skills, and finally win the opportunity to participate in the National Championships in Faridabad. After defeating the last wrestling champion Savann, he challenged Devras who was nearly doubled his weight. This was a challenge and more a change. He said, "This battle is neither to win back her heart nor to defeat the opponent, but

my inner struggle for defending my dignity". The "Being eager to learn is close to knowing things" was reflected in the process that he changed from a dawdling punk to an ambitious and aspiring ideal companion in the eyes of Alpha.

The second change of Sultan was when he accepted the invitation of Akash to participate in the professional fighting competition. The film presented the thought of "learning in difficulty" through two details; one detail was that in facing Alpha's confession before his departure, he told her the reason of this departure, "I want to go back to the place where we lost everything. But this time, I want to fight for my dignity, yours, mine, and for our lost children". Another detail was that, in the locker room of the fighting coach Fatah Singh's Training Hall, he saw his out-of-shape body through the mirror and also saw his soul immersed in sorrow and gradually succumbs. In his tears, there are humiliation, but also shame, and more unwillingness. Only after experiencing confusion can one know what he/she really want and truly understand the significance of being successful. Just as the fighting coach Fatah Singh said, "Everyone thinks that the hero is the winner, but I firmly believe that the real hero is loser, because only he precisely knows the value of success. I saw my images on your body. Sultan, you have also lost the most precious thing in your life. Your fighting spirit is bigger than the championship title, because you have to defeat yourself; Sudan, don't let yourself down. "The two changes of Sultan in the film truly reflects that "learning must do to such extent as to seek for true knowledge, seek for truth, be aware the reason and understand and perform own duties, rather than being satisfied with fragmented information and fast-food like knowledge. The potential of human beings is unlimited and can be fully explored only by continuous learning and continuous practice". [2]

IV. REALIZING THE UNITY OF KNOWING AND DOING AND BEING A DOER: GROWTH ON THE BASIS OF THE "PRACTICE IS CLOSE TO BE BENEVOLENT" THOUGHT

"Knowing and practice are mutually connected, and can not be neglected; Rao believes that the relationship between knowledge and benevolence is close, and both of them have their responsibilities. Respectively, 'knowing' is responsible for selection, and 'benevolence' is adherence. All in all, the 'knowing' actually includes both selection and adherence. If one can only make select but cannot adhere to the selection, he/she can not be regarded as 'knowing'. This contains the meaning that true knowing must be accompanied by practice. " [3] One may be close to the core thought of "benevolence" for moral cultivation in Confucianism when he has clear objective, affirmed ideal and belief and overcomes various difficulties and fully puts himself into the practice.

As the core and foothold of the "Three Virtues", "Benevolence" is fully reflected in the two-change growth process of Sultan in the film. The growth process of the other two characters in the film is also closely related to the Confucianism thought of "Practice is close to be benevolent". One of them is the film's second chief actor, Akash Oberoi who is the founder of the Indian Professional Wrestling League and introduces this Western hot sporting event into

India. Due to "suffering from the local conditions" and improper operation, the performance of the first two quarters was bleak so that the sponsors did not get return. The board discussed to give up holding the sporting event, and at this time, Akash was also confused about whether to insist on or give up the event? Under the encouragement and advice of his father, the former Olympic Committee President Keen Oberoi, Akash invited Sultan to participate in the competition and was deeply inspired by Sultan's unyielding spirit, and pushed the professional league to success. Akash's attitude was gradually changed from the previous fully treating the club and professional wrestling league as a business to the struggling for growth and obtaining his father's recognition and respect. Another character is the fighting coach Fatah Singh; as an outstanding wrestler, he originally had a very good development prospect but was deported from the United Kingdom due to being framed as drinking drugs. After returning to India, Fatah gradually became coach from athlete and realized his dreams of retreating and regaining his self-esteem by virtue of training outstanding athletes. He never gave up fighting for life and pursuing and insisting on his dream, and cultivated countless wrestling champions and fighting champions. The images of Akash and Fatah both reflect the Confucian thought of "Practice is close to be benevolent". The characters in the film all have ideals and pursuits, and are making efforts unceasingly in practice. "The true benevolence is reflected in the practice of those who have courage and no confusion. A wise man knows benevolence, and a man having courage can realize benevolence; hence, wisdom lies in benevolence." [4] From the experiences of Sultan, Akash and Fatah, it is not difficult to see that "Both studying and working must face the reality, in-depth practice to seek for true knowledge, and must be done in strict and practical manner, as no pain no gain. The vast majority of young people must strive to become doers having ideals, knowledge and talent, to make something different in the new era. In long-term work, it is mostly deeply experienced that socialism can only be realized by practice. [2]

General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized in the report of the 19th National Congress that if the youth is prosperous, the country is prosperous, and if the youth is strong, the country is strong. If the younger generation has ideals, skills, and responsibilities, the country will be promising and the nation will be hopeful. However with the rapid development of the economy and society and the popularization of Internet applications, due and impacted by economic interests and multicultural thinking, some young students lost their way and became confused on the road of their life growth. For example, some young students lack ideals and beliefs, excessively pursue for self value, are eager for quick success and instant profit and are psychologically vulnerable, and have poor ability to resist setbacks. Those factors seriously affect the healthy growth of young students. China's excellent traditional culture contains rich moral concepts and norms, and has accumulated diverse precious spiritual wealth which (especially the Confucian "three virtues" thought) has long-lasting educational and enlightenment meaning for the growth of young people. Therefore, it is necessary to fully absorb the valuable

resources in the excellent traditional Chinese culture in the process of guiding youth's growth by education.

V. CONCLUSION

General Secretary Xi Jinping has always been attaching importance to the inheritance and development of Chinese excellent traditional culture. He almost can cite from the classics or ancient works appropriately in various occasions. It can be seen how large it is the influence of Chinese excellent traditional culture on Xi Jinping in his growth process. People's Daily Press well summed up his cites and published the "Classics Cited by Xi Jinping". The article about self cultivation in the book fully shows the "three virtues" thought contained in Confucian culture. On the Eighteenth Congress of the Party in 2012, General Secretary Xi Jinping proposed to advocate the awareness of "community with a shared future for mankind". At that time, "Xi Jinping's thought of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era" had not yet formed but had already had a positive impact on the international community. Since then, he had introduced the Chinese excellent traditional culture to the world. Indian filmmakers brought Chinese excellent traditional culture into their film and television works; hence, "Sultan" was produced. The film fully reflects the enlightenment of the "Three Virtues" thought contained in Xi Jinping's view of the youth on the growth of young people. It also demonstrates that, the enlightenment role that Chinese excellent traditional culture plays in the growth and development process of young people has no boundaries, and it is a beneficial innovation to integrate Chinese excellent traditional culture into the ideological and political education of college students.

REFERENCES

- [1] Ge Rongjin. The Thought of "Three Kinds of Moral Integrity" of Confucianism and the Personality Molding of Modern Confucian Businessmen [J]. *Academics* (bimonthly), 2007, (6). (in Chinese)
- [2] Xi Jinping's speech on the Peking University Teachers and Students Symposium [N]. *People's Daily Online - People's Daily*, 2018-05-03. (in Chinese)
- [3] Xu Jiaying. Raolu's Interpretation of the Effort of the Doctrine of the Mean and Its Breakthrough on Zhuzi [J]. *Journal of Shandong University (Natural Science) (Philosophy and Social Sciences)*, 2015,(2). (in Chinese)
- [4] Li Ruohui. The Variation of "Three Virtues" and Its Historical Significance [J]. *Chinese Philosophy*, 2018, (3).