

Chen Family Ancestral Knowledge Transmission Hall: A Place of Educational Exchange in Luozhou Ancient City, Fuzhou

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research are to explore (i) the history and development of the Chen family's ancestral knowledge transmission hall, and (ii) the process of transmitting knowledge and ethics, by studying documents and collecting field data through surveys, interviews, observations, group discussions, and workshops. From a group of 30 people providing information, the analysis was based on the objectives, and the results were presented in a descriptive, analytical manner. The research results found that: (i) Luozhou Ancient City, in Fuzhou is a commercial area, so people come here to meet. With its economic prosperity, it set up a system of governance that supported the king and the people, with a moral education system as the basis of knowledge. The knowledge screening system included an examination process to select knowledgeable people to enter civil service. This original system was adjusted during the Qing Dynasty to be universal. (ii) Confucius is a philosopher who has played a role in the foundation of knowledge and morality of philosophers of other schools. The main content of the philosophy is honesty, respect, kindness, gratitude, forgiveness and trustworthiness towards parents, family and friends. In summary, this research reflects the importance of education for Chinese people in the past and present. Even though education is modern, moral knowledge and ethics are still necessary for people in Chinese society.

Key words: School Model, Innovation Administration, Educational Quality

INTRODUCTION

Over a long period of academic research, the exploration of Chinese villages, towns and ethnic groups has gone through a variety of theoretical concepts. Scholars point out that the village concept in rural research in China in the 20th century can be summarized into four types: the *Shijianya* concept from the educational dimension, the *Duzanqi* concept from the cultural knowledge dimension, the Friedman concept from the family dimension, and the *Huang Zongzhi* concept from the economic dimension. In terms of research units, Fei Xiaotong, Yang Maochun and others focused on the village, Shi Jianya focused on the grassroots market, Huang Zongzhi focused on several sample villages, Friedman focused on the ethnic group, and Du Zanqi borrowed the concept of 'culture' from cultural anthropology to integrate various social and power relationships. There is no doubt that the core elements revealed by the above-mentioned four conceptual frameworks are diverse and interconnected in the daily life of villages and towns in China (Lin et al., 2020). The complexity and diversity of village life require one to be closer to the villages and towns themselves, and one must walk within the fields of villages and towns when studying Chinese villages and clans (Chang, 2003). Ancient sites are considered

a source of learning about history, ethics and philosophy for the public.

Meanwhile, in the context of the integration of globalization and cultural diversity, cultural tourism is booming. Tourists are eager to explore specific and original areas, experience unique folk customs, and appreciate the charm and wisdom contained in ancient cultures. Places that have accumulated profound history have become popular tourist destinations. As a place full of historical charm, Luozhou Ancient City has undoubtedly offered great research and development potential due to its unique family culture, rich folk customs, and diverse architectural relics (Ma, 2023). Researchers have analyzed, in-depth, the ancient city of Luozhou which can provide new examples for the development of traditional Chinese village family culture and regional culture, and can help improve the existing theoretical system. From the perspective of social development, exploring the cultural value of ancient cities and the rational development and utilization of urban resources will be conducive to promoting local cultural heritage, enhancing the cultural confidence of residents, and injecting new vitality into the cultural tourism industry. This can drive local economic growth, and achieve the coordinated development of culture and education (Chen, 2023). Since ancient times, Chinese people have had academic

places of study where some of the knowledge was comprised of family knowledge.

The Chen Family built a pavilion for the exchange of knowledge. Most pavilions have central open-air halls with raised seats for people to enter and do activities within the pavilion. This has depended on the factors of either the villagers or the money donated to build it. This place was like a club or a center where people in the community used it as a place to meet, socialize, or hold various activities together. It was also a place to gather, pray, and teach knowledge, morality, and ethics to the people from the past to the present. Therefore, this research focuses on studying this important place.

Objectives

1. To study the history and development of the Chen Family's ancestral knowledge transmission hall
2. To study the process of transmitting knowledge and ethics of the Chen Family Ancestral Hall

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted using the Chen Family Ancestral Knowledge Transmission Hall: A Place of Educational Exchange in Luozhou Ancient City, Fuzhou. The researcher has divided the research process into three stages as follows.

The researchers studied the content of documents related to ancient Luozhou concepts, theories, and research to guide the study and analyze the results. The researchers explored the research-related locations of cultural heritage such as buildings, arches, city walls, and important places in Fuzhou in order to select information to create teaching materials. The research instrument development and methodology development process defined the steps according to documentary data collection and research areas from archaeological evidence. The research instruments included surveys, interviews, observation forms, and focus-group discussion guidelines. The research instruments were created to collect data covering the research content, population, and sample of individuals who played a role in the Chen families.

After creating the teaching materials, they were distributed digitally to provide lessons for young students who voluntarily participated in the project. The content of the media focused on the process of organizing ancient city knowledge for dissemination in online media. Thirty students participated in the study at the Chen Family's Ancient Education Knowledge Hall. Data collection was divided into historical archaeological documents to be analyzed in order to create an understanding of the ancient city. The created teaching media included written content, the steps in creating it, and the results of using that teaching media to prepare for the analysis of the data. We analyzed the data to meet the research objectives before presenting the results of the research. We analyzed and organized the content according to the issues that were specified according to the research objectives. The research data was then presented in a descriptive and analytical manner before publishing this study in internationally-recognized journals.

RESULTS

The research results were summarized by the researcher according to the research objectives, and these results have been divided into two sections as discussed below.

History and Development of the Chen Family's Ancestral Knowledge Transmission Hall

The history and development of the Chen family's ancestral knowledge transmission hall in Luzhou was incorporated into the early Shang and Zhou periods in the 11th century BCE. In 316 BCE, during the Qin Dynasty, Emperor Huiwen founded Ba Prefecture, which included most of Luzhou. After his conquest of Ba, the local economy and culture expanded as a result of advanced production techniques. Further, culture was brought in by immigrants from the rest of China. During the Western Han Dynasty (206 BCE - 9 CE), Jiangyang County was established in present-day Jiangyang County at the confluence of the Tuo and Yangtze Rivers. The county was further expanded during the reign of Emperor Wu of Han, resulting in Luzhou becoming the gateway to the Tuoqing River and leading to western Sichuan. This brought prosperity to salt refining and agriculture in the area. The Song Dynasty was an important period in Luzhou's history. The area was known as the natural granary of southern Sichuan, while its wine-refining and salt-refining industries expanded. The method of boiling salt with natural gas was discovered at that time, according to ancient literature. In addition, trade and business between the Luzhou people and ethnic groups was brisk, and the local government built defensive walls and forts. This city has been the center of education in all eras, so there are family schools that play a role in teaching children. Those who were interested in using their knowledge could compete for government jobs. Chen Family was a place of learning with facilities for teaching and learning throughout the ages until the Qing Dynasty, when there were changes due to the situation.

The education of ancient China was based on Chinese philosophy that was related to the government. The civil service examination system was used to select people to enter the civil service. The content of the civil service examination was consistent with the content of study. Therefore, education was a matter of connection and relationships. Education in ancient times was based on the content of the examination determined by the ruler, which determined the content of study and the scope of study. Upon entering the Qing Dynasty, the educational system from the Ming Dynasty was adopted, including the civil service examination system. Therefore, the form of education did not change much from the original. When entering the late Qianlong Emperor's reign, China began to experience contact with foreign countries, colonization, and internal turmoil. As a result, China, which did not accept foreign culture because it saw foreigners as uncivilized, had to move to the point of imitating foreign countries in order to fight against those same foreign countries.

Emperor Guangzhou tried to change the country to be on par with the West. He also had to fight against conservative

people such as Empress Dowager Cixi and some officials who espoused the old worldview. His efforts and those of the progressive officials and intellectuals began to be carried out gradually. In 1901, he announced the abolition of the use of the *paguwen* in the civil service examination system. Four years later, he announced the abolition of the civil service examination system and began to issue imperial decrees for the establishment of schools and for the preparation of the curriculum. These decrees established schools for women and the promotion of students and nobles to study abroad. Education was no longer for the sake of becoming a noble, but it became an education that aimed to apply knowledge and skills to various tasks. As can be seen, the educational changes at the end of the Guangxi Emperor's reign were a major educational change in China that had been ongoing for more than a thousand years. It was a chance to produce a new generation of progressive personnel, as well as a change towards modernity. Although the Chen Family Hall had a diminished role according to this situation, it is still a collection of ancient Chinese knowledge with philosophical value that should be learned.

Process of Transmitting Knowledge and Ethics

The process of transmitting knowledge and ethics by way of the Chen Family Ancestral Hall in education used the philosophy of Confucius, a great Chinese philosopher and educator, as a guideline for teaching knowledge to students. The great philosopher Confucius is credited with unifying the cultural ideas of the Chinese people and establishing the school of *Ru*. The first idea proposed by Confucius was “*ren*” (love). This idea suggested that the rulers should love and care for the people and not oppress them excessively, in order to reduce conflicts between social classes. Later, he proposed that the ruler should use morality in governing and oppose rule by violence and arbitrary punishment or killing. Other important philosophies of Confucius include “*renyi*” (love and righteousness), “*liyue*” (ritual and music), “rule by morality and refinement by education,” and “the king prioritizing the people as the main principle in governing.” *Ru* had penetrated all aspects of Chinese life and culture, becoming the main ideology of feudal culture for more than 2,000 years, and has greatly influenced the thinking of the Chinese in later eras (Figure 1).

He was a great scholar and educator in China. In the days of slavery, education was limited to the imperial court. Therefore, only the children of the upper class had the opportunity to receive education. In such a society, Confucius broke such limitations by establishing his own schools and accepting students from all classes in order to expand educational opportunities to the common people. Confucius's educational ideas included teaching according to the characteristics of the learner, which meant using different teaching methods according to the different characteristics or limitations of each learner. In addition, there were other educational ideas that Confucius promoted, such as the need for education to be constantly reviewed. He asserted that, “Reviewing or considering previous knowledge will create new perspectives.” One should learn honestly, that is, “When



Figure 1. The area inside the building that is a place for students to learn.

Source: Tian Chen (2024)

you know, say you know. When you don't know, admit that you don't know.” One must also study while thinking and considering at the same time.

The examination system in ancient China involved the imperial examination, which was a system organized by the Chinese imperial court in feudal society to select intellectuals for government service. This examination system was used from the Sui Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty. The examination was divided into several levels, such as those used by the imperial examination system in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. The important levels of examination were as follows:

1. The *Tongsheng* examination is like the modern university entrance examination. All applicants at this level, regardless of their age, were called “*Tongsheng*,” which literally means “young students.” The *Tongsheng* examination was a local examination which was divided into three levels: the county level examination, the provincial level examination, and the county level examination, which were organized by officials directly assigned by the imperial court. Of these three levels, the county level examination was the most important. The county level examination was organized by the officials of each county. If the applicant passed this level, they would be elected as a “*Sheng yuan*,” or a county-level graduate.
2. In the regional examinations, the candidates who were eligible to take the regional examinations (or “*Xiangshi*”) were called “*Shengyuan*.” The examinations at this level were held every three years in the provincial capitals. Since the examinations were usually held in the autumn, this level was also called “*Qiushi*,” or the autumn examinations. Those who passed the selection at this level were called “*Juren*.”
3. For the national examination, the “*Juren*” of the provinces came to Beijing. The national level was also held every three years. Because it was usually held in the spring, this level of examination was also called “*Chunshi*” in the spring. Those who passed this level were called “*Gongsheng*.” If any graduates passed, they would have the right to be selected to serve the emperor and advance to the path of becoming a higher official.

4. The Palace Examination, or “*Dianshi*,” was a selection held in the palace area, and used questions formulated by the king himself. Those who passed this level were limited in number, and divided into the three best groups, or “*Sanjiya*.” In each group, only three people were selected. The first, second and third place in each group composed nine people. After the examination was over, the ranking was determined. The king then granted noble titles to these graduates according to their suitability.

The philosophy that taught students to be good people was to adhere to the correct way of life that concerned the community, family and members of society. The teachings were as follows:

Loyalty

A loyal person was someone who was honest, responsible, and tried to do the work assigned to them all the way to the end. It also included showing loyalty to the leader, followed the norms of tradition, and was meant to prevent mistakes that would affect others.

Gratitude

Slave society was ruled by blood relationships. Gratitude was a human relationship in terms of morality and ethics, and was a political morality. After entering feudal society, the important role of gratitude was that people had to respect and follow their parents’ teachings. They had to speak, act, and receive warnings for things they did wrong to their parents.

Trustworthiness

Honesty and not deceiving were the main principles in making friends. It was also one of the moral principles in governing the country. An honest person was considered to have an honest heart. Words were to be trustworthy, but maintaining trustworthiness required principles and practices along with morality and truth.

Justice

This trait originally showed fairness that was a moral norm, and that was included in the way people lived in society. People regarded justice as the central core of morality, leading to the courage to do things that were fair and benefited are separated but asking people.

Forgiveness

People agreed that it meant putting yourself in other people’s shoes. When one was in society, they had to know how to socialize. Other people could do it. If one could not do something by themselves, they did not have to blame it on others.

Giving promotes giving

Governing the country required a mind of humility, gentleness, goodness, respect, frugality, and patience. People were to be

taught that when they were famous and had power, they should consider others before thinking about themselves. When in the office, they were required to follow the laws of the people and were to consider themselves before thinking about others.

Two aspects of good conduct

The first aspect was that one must have a serious and solemn manner. The second was to be humble, accept other people’s opinions and agree with others. This is one of the ethics and morals that was to be highly promoted, including warmth, goodness and frugality. The younger generation called them The Five Morals.

Two aspects of respect

The first was to be serious and dedicated to one’s work and affairs. The second was to treat others with sincerity and do everything with dedication. Respecting others’ ideas was the oldest moral theory in China. It involved respecting parents, elders, and friends; and these were the principles that people must follow.

Educational thought

For a person to have morality, it was necessary to instill in people who had political knowledge and ability, were complete in morality, and could teach without any plans to initiate the creation of their own schools first. In one’s life, they taught people tirelessly, accumulated experience in teaching, and also created scientific methods and teaching methods, which gave rise to complete educational thoughts.

Educational content

This was required to include training and developing people with morality, emphasizing the individual qualities of each person. This included their abilities to teaching with morality as an important factor. The content covered morality, intelligence, body, music and good morality.

Methods of education

They were to teach students according to their abilities. Studying was a way to increase knowledge for both students and teachers. It gradually persuaded them to study in a sequential manner. Knowing one thing could be linked to many other things. When students wanted to talk but could not speak, they devised a teaching method that linked it to science and a flexible teaching format.

Traditional knowledge has been replaced by universal modernity. However, moral and philosophical knowledge is still necessary to be learned as a model for living happily together in society.

DISCUSSION

The research results were found to be consistent and yet different from the concepts, theories, and research studies, as

well as consistent with the objectives of the study. Knowledge found, and attitudes about inheriting the culture of learning the art of paper cutting were brought forth to discuss the results as follows.

China has attached importance to education management in every dynasty. There has been the establishment of schools of knowledge in the form of philosophical temples within the sects of scholars, as well as family learning centers such as that of the Chen Family. They have provided facilities for gaining both academic and independent knowledge, and the philosophy of life and the pursuit of knowledge has been adjusted according to the era. The schools in China are similar and consistent with the study results of Lijuan and Champadaeng (2025). Their research results, such as in the model of ancient Chinese academy education, show that Songyang Academy's educational philosophy was closely related to modern general education. The academy focused on moral education and personality cultivation, while emphasizing the combination of knowledge and practice. These concepts provide valuable experience for modern general education. Today, reviving the academy education model and combining it with the concept of modern general education can provide new ideas and methods for cultivating all-around social talents. In the process of modern educational reform, one should fully learn from and absorb these traditional concepts. At the same time, one must innovate and develop them in combination with the actual needs of modern education.

Traditional Chinese education based on moral principles comes from the teachings of philosophers who used the principles as a guideline for teaching. Also, they learned to apply their knowledge to the civil service examinations which the state organized to give rise to many schools in line with Srisunthonphinit and Worachaiyut (2019). Their study found that ancient Chinese thought based on Chinese philosophy related to the structure of government and principles. Morality in Chinese society came from education as the foundation of government. People who entered the government administration system were required to have knowledge and ability to perform their duties. Chinese history demonstrates a top-down system, with the emperor as the highest authority. Officials were the driving force of the administration, with the media between the emperor and the people. Therefore, education was the first step towards the examination system to select officials in order.

Studying is the most important and powerful factor of society because education helps develop people and people develop the nation. Social units require a process of transferring knowledge from one generation to the next. Therefore, education is an important social institution of society in line with the theory of social structure (James and Beverly, 1994). Educational institutions require a plan for thinking and acting on the subject of training new members of society, including the transmission of culture from one generation to the next. It is an institution that covers various topics within the curriculum, such as entrance examinations, teaching, training in various fields, and promotion.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic Interactionism assumes that human society is complex and multidimensional. Symbols of meaning around the members of society are difficult to interpret and use in order to interpret consumption behavior, culture and education in line with semiotic theory. Wang (2024) that suggests that this is because:

1. Humans have meaning, live with meaning, and use meaning.
2. Things around humans are given more complex meaning.
3. Humans live with symbols, which are used to describe things.
4. Humans live with a host of symbols that are created by society, marketing, politics, entertainment, and news.
5. Symbols are involved in the production process of goods and services. They including culture, traditions, and education.
6. Symbols are used in many ways of life, beliefs, ideologies, and consumer behavior.

The Cultural Ecology Theory

The Cultural Ecology Theory describes that cultural landscape science is a combination of landscape science and the movement between life and land. It uses the study method of retrospective science as a basis for looking at the future. It also looks at the landscape through an understanding of the culture and the power of social, economic, and educational dimensions that created it. But later, the study process using the Retrospective Science method searched for the traditional past, more than looking at current movements or change within the culture and social phenomena. Chen Family Hall was built under a cultural ecology, emphasizing the use of teaching and learning in line with the theory of cultural ecology. Xiao (2024) proposed that the cultural ecology theory is an anthropological and sociological theory aimed at exploring the interrelationships between culture, society, and the natural environment. This theory holds that the development and changes of human culture are the result of interactions with the natural environment, and are also influenced by global and regional environmental factors.

Cultural Inheritance Value

Cultural Inheritance Value references inheriting national spirit. Through research, one can deeply explore the national spirit and values contained therein, such as in family values, ethics and morality, and patriotism, providing spiritual nourishment for contemporary society (Duan, 2023). As to protecting traditional culture, the culture of the Chen Clan Ancestral Hall and the resources of Luozhou Ancient Town are important treasures of Chinese traditional culture. Studying them can help protect and inherit these precious cultural heritages, and maintain cultural diversity.

Significance of Social Development

The significance of social development involves promoting local economic development. The protection and

development of ancient town resources can drive the development of entities such as local tourism and cultural industries. It can promote local economic growth, and improve residents' living standards. In order to enhance social cohesion, cultural identity is an important foundation of that social cohesion. Studying the role of the Chen Clan Ancestral Hall and Luozhou Ancient Town resources for the promotion of social and cultural identity can help enhance social cohesion and promote social harmony and stability.

Academic Research Significance

Academic research significance emerges from the enrichment of several academic research fields. This study involves multiple disciplines such as history, sociology, and cultural studies. Further, the research results can enrich the research content of these disciplines and promote their development. It can also provide other references for related research. Through in-depth research on the culture of the Chen Clan Ancestral Hall and the resources of Luozhou Ancient Town, useful references and inspiration can be provided for the protection of cultural heritage and the study of social and cultural identity in other regions.

CONCLUSION

The Chinese people have an extensive history of educational culture. There is a long history of education recorded by the sage cult because education supported the rule of the king based on the principle of morality, which was, in turn, supported by the nobles at various levels. These people studied in the schools that provided education, including the Chen Family, which promoted education. The civil service examination was organized by the state. When entering the colonial era, there was an impetus to organize the education system within the Qing Dynasty. Since then, it evolved into an international education system even before the modern Chinese era. However, the old system still retains the values of morality and ethics that are necessary for the new generation of the Chinese people.

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