

The Practice and Impact of the Humanics Philosophy of Springfield College in China in the 20th Century 二十世紀美國春田大學在中國的「人文哲學」及其影響

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Abstract

The paper will attempt first to define **humanics** from the Springfield College and Western perspectives, followed by the Chinese perspectives.

The perception and application of the humanics philosophy in the Chinese culture would be discussed in terms of the traditional and contemporary cultures. It was then highlighted by presenting the biography of John Ma (1882-1966), a Springfield College alumnus in the 1920s, and his role model in the promotion and delivery of the humanics philosophy at Tsinghua University and Mainland China. The possible role of the 2008 Beijing Olympics in promoting better international understanding and world peace was elaborated and future strategies to promoting the “study of man in his wholeness” and the humanics philosophy of the College were also presented.

摘 要

本文試從美國春田大學及西方的思想，再配合中國的概念闡釋「人文哲學」。在中國文化中，這個理念及其實踐可以從傳統和近代的角度來討論。講者介紹二十年代春田大學畢業生馬約翰先生的生平(1882-1996)，他如何作為典範，並在北京清華大學及中國各地推廣及落實這個理念。此外，北京藉著舉辦2008年奧運會的契機，能夠擴闊國際視野及提倡世界和平，進一步研究「全人教育」與春田大學「人文哲學」在華的未來發展策略。

Introduction

In 1988, the Humanics in Action Day was co-initiated and developed by the student leaders of the New Student Orientation and Dr. Peter Polito, the Distinguished Springfield Professor of Humanics. It has since become an annual event in celebration of community and civic engagement. Springfield College has been a pioneer in this area when it was founded in 1885, and thus to celebrate the international dimensions of humanics is both important and timely, especially the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and international aspects of the humanics philosophy.

Definitions of Humanics

The word humanics was defined by Prof. T. Wharton Collins of University of Louisiana as the Science of Man (1860) and the dictionary definition was the study of human nature (Burr, 1905). At Springfield College, this word was officially used when she was granted a charter by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to award the Bachelor and Master of Humanics to graduates of the Secretary course in 1905.

Dr. Lawrence Locke Doggett, the first full time President of the College in 1896, believed that the humanities curriculum should include four components: Christian ethics, the study of man physically, the study of man intellectually and the study of man in his social relations. In the College's adventure in education, the proper study of mankind is man. The uniqueness of **"The study of man in his wholeness"** was conceptualized at this early time.

Seth Arsenian (1969) suggested that humanities should consist of ten components namely:

Human-centered Man
 Knowledge of Man's Welfare
 Service Motivation
 Integration
 Emphasis on Assets
 Town and Gown
 The International Outreach
 Concern for Freedom
 Respects for Students
 Students' Values and their Changes

In 1960's, the need to produce leaders with commitment to services has led Robert K. Greenleaf to introduce the concept of servant leadership. A retired AT & T senior executive and a visiting professor at MIT, Harvard, Dartmouth and University of Virginia, Greenleaf believed that the role of the leader, to a great extent, is value based. "The main value of the leader is not simply someone who is in it for the recognition, but someone who works to create the social architecture that benefits the cartography of the people for whom that organization is responsible". He further suggested that "the servant leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve. Then conscious choice brings one to inspire to lead. The best test ... is this. Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?" (1977)

Spears and Lawrence(2004) suggested ten characteristics of servant leaders as follows:

Listening	Conceptualization
Empathy	Foresight
Healing	Stewardship
Awareness	Commitment to people
Persuasion	Building community

The Chinese's exposure to western ideas and civilization is about 100 years and its traditional education system and values have always encompassed the study of man in the forms of anthropology, sociology and arts. Its value system depends on the teaching and interpretation of the **Four Books** and the **Five Scripts**. Its philosophy reflected mainly a conglomerate of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism with selective influence from Muslim, Christianity, and Marxism.

The Chinese Culture and Humanities Philosophy

For thousands of years, China was ruled by emperors and a totalitarian government. The Government's attitude towards the West during the past 160 years has been quite hostile and China has suffered in the interaction process. It was only during the past 25 years that we witnessed a re-opening of the dialogue with the West and a gradual acceptance of the need to modernize. The importance of law and order, a more systemic structure of governance, a stable economy and quality of life became the top priorities of the current Chinese leaders. Within the framework of the governance by the one-party system, the general public was allowed to study abroad and learn of the various aspects of the humanities philosophy through the revived YMCA movement and other institutes of higher learning. With time, a humanities philosophy in the Chinese context would emerge.

The stability of the traditional Chinese government depended on the acceptance of the hierarchy between the emperor and his subjects or the ruler and his citizens. The reliance on the family and kinship remained strong although this was one of the traditions targeted to be abolished during the Cultural Revolution in the 1960's. The conflict between the old and the young generation in face of the need to modernize and the influence of western ideology would be a variable in the adoption and development of the humanities philosophy in Mainland China.

The differences in lifestyle and working environment between the traditional rural farmers and the modernized urban dwellers posed difficulties in the enforcement of policies and regulations and led to strained relationships between the Central and Provincial governments.

The reluctance to change with time, the inequity in distribution of resources, the inability to enforce compliance and the pace of modernization would remain barriers towards the development of the humanics philosophy in China.

The success of the Chinese athletes in the Olympic and Asian Games reinforced the need to develop a sport culture, and the dual importance of sports for the elite athletes and sports for all. The status of sport as a social institution has been gradually established and people were more conscious of quality of life, longevity, setting proper priority and good time management. Economic independence, National identity and pride are essential elements in the cultivation of an attitude to give and serve others and become a servant leader. The present Chinese leaders realized the importance of providing its citizens with a good and stable economy instead of pursuing a political agenda that has yet proved to be accepted by the Chinese people.

The Father of Physical Education in China – John Ma (1882-1966)

John Ma's parents were Christians and his elder brother was called Paul. His mother died in 1885 and his father in 1889. The two boys were taken care of by relatives and friends of the Church. John was only able to go to school in 1895, when he was 13 years old. They moved from Xaomen to Shanghai in 1900 and studied at the YMCA Ming Qian Secondary School. In 1906, John was accepted by St. Johns University, one of the most prestigious universities in China founded by the YMCA. He graduated in 1911 with double majors in science and medicine and was appointed as an instructor at the Dept of PE at Tsinghua University in 1914. He worked there until his death in 1966.

In 1920, John was awarded a sabbatical leave to study for his bachelor degree at the International YMCA College. His thesis advisors were Hanford Burr, James McCurdy and Ralph Cheney. He has first hand experience of the pioneer enterprise of the International YMCA College and the humanics philosophy. He graduated in 1921 but returned to Springfield to study for his Master degree in 1926. His thesis on "The Transfer Value of Athletics" provided him the opportunity to interview many prominent US physical educators such as CM Child, GA Coe, HS Curtis, Irwin Edman, Karl Groos, WE Hocking, WH Howell, CW Kennedy WH Kilpatrick, GR Ladd,

M Montessori, EC Moore, EA Ross, DA Sargent, D Starch WE, Stratford, EL Thorndike, JB Batson and JF Williams.

Another prominent Chinese scholar in PE was Gunsun Hoh who studied at Springfield for the Bachelor degree in 1922-23.

John has served as the Department Head of PE at Tsinghua University for over 20 years and has also served as Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Chinese Olympic Committee as well as Head and Deputy Head of the Chinese Delegation to the Olympic Games.

John Ma's exposure at the College – its faculty, College's pioneering spirit, the humanics philosophy had enabled him to fully understand the importance of spirit, mind and body and dedication and commitment to the profession. This quality put him above others and has enabled him to survive during crises in his career and life. His Christian faith and positive outlook in life gave him strength in overcoming difficult times. His achievement and accorded status in the profession in China reflected his understanding, commitment and practice of the humanics philosophy.

Tsinghua University, Beijing, China

The University was founded in 1911 and has since become the most prestigious University in China. Its motto is "self-discipline and social commitment". It has trained most of the leaders in China for many years. Its strength was in the natural sciences and engineering. But it is now equally strong in all disciplines, including PE and sports.

In the 1990's, it has built a self-financed indoor swimming pool with diving facilities, an indoor multi-purpose hall, an outdoor athletic stadium and many sports facilities. Undergraduate students are required to take a sport skill subject every semester for 4 years.

The University has long supported the importance of the physical wellbeing – a sound mind and a sound body. Its pioneering spirit and emphasis on the importance of mind and body affected the development of higher education in China for the past 90 years and would continue to be so in the future.

The 2008 Beijing Olympic Games

The major objective of the Olympics Games is to promote better international understanding and world peace through sport competitions among countries. The International Olympic Committee has been promoting this since 1896 and has met with mixed success.

The emphasis on recognizing and respecting human values and dignity despite differences in race, religion and socio-cultural background is in fact a transformation and application of the humanics philosophy of the College.

There are more similarities than differences in the traditional Chinese value system with the humanics philosophy. This is also true with the other ancient cultures – the Egyptian, the Indian and the Persian. The harmony to be attained between the traditional and the modern way of life and thinking can hopefully be achieved through various international activities such as the Olympic Games.

The 2008 Beijing Games would strive to promote better understanding and acceptance of the Chinese people as well as other nationalities who are all basically peace loving, in need of self-confidence and identify, and yearning for quality of life.

Summary

The focus on “the study of man in his wholeness” has existed in different civilizations and cultures, with different emphases such as on religion, quality of life, knowledge and social relations. The humanics philosophy of Springfield College has been practiced in parts for many years. The YMCA movement started in England in 1844 and began in Boston in 1852 has affected the world and the US for the past 160 years. Its emphasis on religion has limited its impact and outreach to many parts of the world. The U.S. Peace Corps in the 1960’s attempted to help under-developed countries to attain quality of life through their own resources and strengthen social relations at the same time. The admission of international students in the US, UK and other countries showed a commitment to enhance the intellectual support that most developing countries needed to achieve and sustain future growth. But they all have one common weakness – politics has never been a consideration.

Time has changed and it might be appropriate for us to map out strategies that would convince politicians that the humanics philosophy is the way forward in achieving a more harmonious society and world peace. We are all Sons of Adams and we must learn to live in peaceful co-existence rather than through threats and force. The hosting of the International Humanics Day at Springfield College on March 28th, 2007 was indeed very timely since the College has again demonstrated her pioneering and enterprising spirit in developing a vision for the way forward for our future generation.

The mission of Springfield College - “To educate the whole person – spirit, mind and body, for leadership in service to humanity” will continue to be the cornerstone of our life purpose and inspiration.

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