

Revived Confucianism as Popular Mass Activities in China

A Case Study of Foot-Washing Performances for the Revival of Filial Piety

Fen Qiu



M. A. Thesis (60 Credits)
Chinese Society and Politics

Supervisor: Halvor Eifring

Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages
UNIVERSITY OF OSLO
Spring 2016

© Fen Qiu

2016

Revived Confucianism as Popular Mass Activities in China: A Case Study of Foot-Washing Performances for the Revival of Filial Piety

Fen Qiu

<http://www.duo.uio.no/>

Trykk: Reprosentralen, Universitetet i Oslo

Abstract

Confucianism, as the once dominant ideology in the long Chinese imperial history and a taboo for decades after the establishment of People's Republic of China, is now one of the hottest topic among the revival of traditional studies. Since the 1980s a big trend of reviving Chinese traditional culture has been witnessed throughout mainland China, by official and unofficial means at the same time, which without doubt has brought significant influences to the minds and social behaviours of Chinese people and the current political environment to a certain extent. Various phenomena can prove the existence and popularity of that trend. For instance, many Chinese Culture Faculties/Departments (*guoxueyuan*) have been built in universities in the mainland; private schools set up national studies classes to meet the booming market for pupils and entrepreneurs; even the current president Xi Jinping attended The Ceremony of Confucius (*jikong dadian*) in the year 2014 which has never happened. Chinese national studies have been awakened in different respects, clothing, literature, philosophy, morality, or social behaviors and will continue to expand its impact on modern Chinese society. And filial piety as the key element of traditional Confucianism should also be given enough attention in contemporary Chinese study.

In this paper, the study will focus on the mass activities concerning the revival of filial piety, foot-washing in particular, to give an in-depth study about the revival of the traditional studies. As no such research has been done from this perspective, the materials are chosen from video, picture and text, which on one side can include various means to present the research topic, and on the other side can provide diverse angles to dig into those activities. In the end, the author intends to give some new and comprehensive thoughts on the revived filial piety, which hopefully benefit relevant studies in the future.

Acknowledgements

First of all, I want to thank my supervisor Halvor Eifring. In the process of my doing this thesis, I have undergone a lot of pressure, anxiety and confusion, which had once been quite a hindrance for my writing. Professor Eifring, during this long period, has always been there patiently offering me professional advices and kind encouragement. Without his help, this paper can never be finished on time. Countless thanks is what I owe to professor Eifring, and very best wishes is what I want to send to professor Eifring and his family.

I would also like to thank associate professor Cuiming Pang who had been my supervisor for one whole year. Besides all the knowledge she taught me in class, she was like a close friend, always with a sweet smile and a considerate heart. She was the first one leading me into the research world, showing me enthusiasm for a researching career. I will keep the kindness and optimism she gave me in my heart and wish her little angel Uma every happy day in her life.

I've been very lucky in the life I have been through, with loving friends and family, and among all of them the luckiest thing is finding my fiance Jason. I have been foolish, perplexed, in a lot kinds of troubles, yet he is always the one standing by my side supporting me, no matter what. I want you to know: in the future please let me help guard you and your dream of writing. I will always support you like you did for me. And I believe deep in my heart you have that talent. You know, you are my unique and uncountable love, forever.

Fen Qiu

Oslo, May 27th, 2016

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	IV
TABLE OF CONTENTS	V
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1: THESIS STATEMENT.....	1
1.2: DEVELOPMENT OF CONFUCIANISM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS	7
1.3: BACKGROUND FOR THE REVIVAL OF CONFUCIANISM	9
1.4: CHAPTER OUTLINE	13
CHAPTER 2: REQUIREMENTS FOR FILIAL PIETY IN TRADITIONAL AND MODERN CHINESE SOCIETY	15
2.1: FILIAL PIETY AS <i>LII</i> IN OLD TIMES	16
2.2: FILIAL PIETY IN POPULAR MASS EVENTS	18
2.3: PREDICAMENT IN THE AGEING SOCIETY	20
CHAPTER 3: INVENTED TRADITION AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS	24
3.1: TRADITION AND MODERNITY	24
3.2: METHODS OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS	31
CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF THE MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE FOOT-WASHING ACTIVITY	36
4.1: ORIGIN OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE FOOT-WASHING ACTIVITY AND FILIAL PIETY	37
4.2: ANALYSIS OF MEDIA REPORTS OF THE FOOT-WASHING GUINNESS WORLD RECORD.....	43
4.3: ANALYSIS OF THE ARTICLE <i>FILIAL PIETY AND CULTURE OF GRATITUDE</i>	57
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION.....	62
BIBLIOGRAPHY	71
ATTACHMENTS	75

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

1.1 Thesis Statement

As well known, Confucianism once played a crucial role in the long history of traditional Chinese society and rooted deep in the mindset of Chinese people. However, since the last years of Qing dynasty the status of Confucianism had been questioned and rocked until the Cultural Revolution of 1966-1976 (*wenhua dageming*) condemned it as the evil source for feudalism and forcefully excluded it from Chinese people's life. However, in recent decades, with the growing popularity of traditional Chinese studies which is called "traditional studies craze"¹, Confucianism has once more been pushed onto the main stage of Chinese society through both official and unofficial channels. Among all the Confucian values advocated, filial piety which used to be the key element in Confucian morality takes a much positive role which should not be neglected in Chinese social studies. Many mass activities have been held in the name of reviving filial piety. Among all those diverse mass activities, a close and stable relationship has been built and recognized between foot-washing activities and the "new" filial piety. In this paper, therefore, I will try to dig into this new correlation, and find answers to questions as below:

What are the reasons to revive and call for public attention to filial piety in contemporary mainland China?

What are the different connotations between traditional filial piety and the newly promoted filial piety?

What are the strategies the government has employed to spread the new meanings of filial piety to the masses?

¹ Chen, Jiaming & Mosher, S. (2011) "The National Studies Craze: The Phenomena, the Controversies, and Some Reflections" in *China Perspectives*, p 22

How about the political and social influences of the newly promoted filial piety to contemporary China?

In order to answer those questions, I have carefully selected my materials for the analysis. As a matter of fact, foot-washing events have been organized both by governmental and non-governmental groups. In this paper, I will focus the research on official attitudes and strategies in relevant activities, those arranged only by private means will not be part of my current research for the word limit of this paper. The materials I will use in this thesis are chosen from different angles. The first one is a piece of an influential public service advertisement aired on CCTV (China Central Television), which I believe has planted the notion in Chinese people's mind that foot-washing is an act of being filial. The second one is about a large-scale foot-washing event which broke the Guinness Record for the most people washing their feet in the year of 2014². In this part I will use some official news reports. There will be words and photos as well in the reports which can provide a basis for a multifaceted study. The last material is a text borrowed from an official website *Zhongguowang*³, which displays deep thoughts from the authority about the newly promoted filial piety and meanwhile has been reproduced many times to other major official websites. Those materials from selected from three different angles, and showed by different ways, video, picture and text, will definitely contribute to a more comprehensive and in-depth study researching consult.

Research status:

Among scholars in China, there have been some noticing the development of the national studies craze, like Luo (2000), Qian (2007), Li (2007), Li (2008), Zhao (2009), etc. Most of them have paid a lot of attention to the reasons why national studies, Confucianism in particular, have been brought back to life and given quite much attention by the officials. About the influences they discuss about the pressing need for culture identification among

² <http://jiangxi.jxnews.com.cn/system/2014/09/14/013320266.shtml>

³ Zhongguowang 中国网, is a national key news website led by the State Council Information Office and the State Internet Information Office, and administrated by China International Publishing Group.

Chinese people in the context of globalization. Also, when talking about the revival of Chinese traditional culture, western culture is always set on the opposite side, as if all those bad consequences accompanied globalization and modernization root in typical western thoughts and ideals. And the solution and wisdom should be sought in eastern tradition, like Chinese traditional culture.⁴ Those papers, however, have barely put effort into specific case studies and never given enough attention to its negative influences upon the Chinese modern society, which will all be solved in this paper.

As for the current studies about filial piety in mainland China, I've found the majority of them are done in the psychological field, yet only a few in the sociological domain (Yang 2004; Mu, 2000; Mu, 2012). And among them, the focus is mostly put on the relation between the ageing problem and the need for filial piety in the modern society, none of them has picked a starting point from representations of mass activities and their ritual or symbolic meaning as I do in this thesis. This kind of big weakness will be overcome in my paper. And in the meantime I hope my paper could provide a new angle or a different perspective in the future study for the revival of filial piety in mainland China.

Although no direct studies are found to guide my research in the revival of filial piety or foot-washing activities, some works discussing the revival of Confucianism have offered valuable thoughts for me to broaden my outlooks before I do this in-depth analysis.

Firstly, the correlation between socialism and Confucianism. In the paper written by Bell (2010)⁵, the author argues that the power of socialist ideals has faded in people's minds in the mainland, which leaves a spiritual vacuum and the ruling elites find Confucianism a suitable candidate to replace it. The author mentions that the revival of Confucianism is not just government-sponsored, but also a resurgence of interest among academics. In order to deal with the current social and political predicament, intellectuals have different claims upon the revival of Confucianism. Firstly, the author makes it clear that Confucianism is not a hindrance for economic development as it was often accused in the old days. For example,

⁴ Li, Zhonghua (2007) "Perspective and Reflection on the National Studies Craze" in *Theoretical Horizon*, (1), p 27

⁵ Bell, D. A. (2010) "Reconciling socialism and Confucianism?: Reviving tradition in China" in *Dissent*, 57(1), p 91-99.

Max Weber's (2002) view that Confucianism is not conducive to economic development can not stand when facing the economic success achieved by East Asian countries like South Korean, Japan, Hong Kong and so on⁶. Then, the author lists out several kinds of Confucianism that dominate the relevant discourse, like liberal Confucianism⁷, left Confucianism⁸ and also compares the commonalities and differences between Confucian thoughts and western thoughts, giving suggestions about how to balance differentiations of those two⁹.

Another work discussing the similar topic is "Away from socialism, towards Chinese characteristics: Confucianism and the futures of Chinese nationalism". The author Cheung (2012) points out the phenomena of the waning socialism ideology and the reviving traditional Confucianism values in mainland China starting from 1980s. although there are still disputes about the idea to replace socialism completely with Confucianism among different political factions, he argues that values and traditions originating from China, Confucian discourse in particular, has already gradually displaced some socialism discourses in recent decades.

In the paper, the author has given disparate discourses the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) has utilized during different periods, which has shed light on the study of this paper. Firstly, 'the century of national humiliation' notion is used to since the late Qing dynasty¹⁰ (from about 1840 until 1980s). During that time, the big problem of identity crisis brought anxiety and desire for acceptance by the international community, and that notion of "the century of national humiliation" helped ease such an emotion. In 1990s with the growing role PRC (People's Republic of China) played in the modern and global world, the old notion seemed not suitable anymore and a different conception was in urgent need in mainland which

⁶ Bell, D. A. (2010) "Reconciling socialism and Confucianism?: Reviving tradition in China" in *Dissent*, 57(1), p 91-92

⁷ Liberal Confucianism is promoted largely by oversea scholars, and holds the idea that Confucianism can be used to promote values like human rights and democracy.

⁸ Left Confucianism intends to combine socialist ideals with traditional Confucian thoughts for the purpose of enriching and vitalizing socialism.

⁹ Bell, D. A. (2010) "Reconciling socialism and Confucianism?: Reviving tradition in China" in *Dissent*, 57(1), p 92-93

¹⁰ William A. Callahan, *China: The Pessimist Nation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010; William A. Callahan, National insecurities; Humiliation, salvation, and Chinese nationalism, *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 29(2), 2004: 199-218; William A. Callahan, History, identity, and security: Producing and consuming nationalism in China, *Critical Asian Studies* 38(2), 2006: 179-208; and Paul A. Cohen, *China Unbound: Evolving Perspectives on the Chinese Past*, London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003

brought up the revival of traditional Chinese culture, especially Confucianism.¹¹ The second noticeable is the vaguely defined term ‘Chinese characteristics’, which was introduced when the CCP decided to engaged in market reform. By bringing up the term ‘Chinese characteristics’, the CCP didn’t need to compromise the then mainstream of socialist ideology with the new market economy policy. Also, the author notices there was a gradual tendency of disconnection between Chinese characteristics and socialism, and the former one became the new parameters for the legitimacy of China’s future development.¹² The third one is about the blossom of Chinese school of social sciences in Chinese academia and the ‘culture fever’ (wenhuare 文化热) both in the popular field and state level. The author argues that the enthusiasm about Chinese traditional culture and values is not about understanding China better but to make those traditions become the main source in the cultural front against the western world and substantial support for nationalism as well.¹³ The fourth is the ideas of ‘benevolent governance’ (*renzheng* 仁政), ‘putting people first’ (*yiminweiben* 以民为本) and ‘people-based politics’ (*minben zhengzhi* 民本政治) extracted from Confucianism. Some intellectuals believes “benevolent governance” is an alternative to the status quo in China’s political transition, while others argues it can be used even after the transition. The consensus all of them have reached is that it can effectively help to secure CCP’s authoritarianism leadership in mainland for at least the near future.¹⁴ The last topic the author gives is the ‘family-nation’ rhetoric used in Hong Kong and Macao which aims to legitimize Beijing’s growing interference upon the principle of ‘one country, two systems’ mechanism. About the new ‘family-nation’ rhetoric, the author explains:

This Confucian ‘family’ value implies that the moral hierarchy in a society is similar to the one espoused in the idea of benevolent governance, in which a paternalistic style of governance is legitimized, and individual rights are subordinated to the collective well-being of this ‘family-nation’. This reinterpretation seeks to make one country, two systems a principle which is supposed to safeguard the autonomy of Hong Kong, a source of legitimacy for Beijing’s growing interference in Hong Kong’s internal affairs, and it is made at a time when there is growing demand for democracy in the territory.¹⁵

¹¹ Cheung, K. C. K. (2012). “Away from Socialism, towards Chinese Characteristics: Confucianism and the Futures of Chinese Nationalism” in *China Information*, 26(2), p 205-206

¹² Ibid, p 207

¹³ Ibid, p 210

¹⁴ Ibid, p 211

¹⁵ Ibid, p 212-213

In this discourse the state is described as the basis of family, the Central government as a parent and Hong Kong as a small child. A child is naturally less rational and intelligent than his/her child which justifies the increasing influences CCP put on affairs with Hong Kong without any trouble. Although the author also points out there is still resilience of socialism thoughts and the uncertainty within Chinese political fractions about the revived Confucianism¹⁶, but the trend for the new life of Confucianism in modern Chinese society could never be overlooked any more.

Cheung's article offers inspiring perspectives about the revival of Confucianism in mainland China nowadays. However, for the research of this thesis, Cheung's article is more like a general background rather than in-depth study. Moreover, it focuses on the transition from the once dominant socialism ideology to the revival of Confucianism, which restricts the research scope to some extent. In the end of the article, Cheung mentions that the exact methods of how Chinese traditions are adopted and interpreted remain to be explored, which is just the purpose of this thesis.

Beside Cheung's paper, there is another one¹⁷ studying the relationship between culturalism and nationalism which also concerns some points in my case study. In ancient times, the Chinese government did contact and negotiate with foreign powers, whereas the concept of Chinese centrality was always embedded deep in its rhetoric¹⁸. The Chinese built their identity upon the identical culture and tradition, rather than nation or country. As a matter of fact, the concept of nation or nationalism never grew on the ancient Chinese soil. Just like Cohen (1994) has argued: "modern Chinese nationalism articulated since the beginning of this century by China's new elite has involved a forceful and near-total rejection of the earlier

¹⁶ A huge bronze statue of Confucius was set on Tiananmen Square (it has great cultural and political significance in China where a number of political events have happened) on January 11th 2011, and only after 100 days it was removed into the National Museum on April 20th 2011 which can reflect the conflicting attitude toward Confucianism in the highest political circle.

¹⁷ Harrison, H. (2000) *The Making of the Republican Citizen: Political Ceremonies and Symbols in China 1911-1929: Political Ceremonies and Symbols in China 1911-1929*

¹⁸ John K. Fairbank (ed.), *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968); James L. Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995)

traditional and culturally elaborated sense of nationhood”¹⁹ When China was forced to open its gate toward the outside world, the original culturalism seemed so fragile, so intellectuals studied and introduced nationalism into their motherland, trying to raise and enhance Chinese people’s sense of identification to fight against foreign powers. In that process, they offered a negative attitude and comment on traditional Chinese culture and positive on western culture. This transition from culturalism to nationalism once had a significant influence in Chinese modern history. And right now the revival of traditional studies, bringing traditional culture back to the stage, share the same aim for enhancing nationalism. Opposed means, yet the same purpose, will broaden my perspectives to do the research in this paper.

1.2 Development of Confucianism and Definition of Terms and Concepts

According to the title of this thesis, the first question needs to be clarified is about those different periods in the history for the development of Confucianism. Therefore, in this part I will list relevant background information briefly and try to involve terms and concepts which will be needed in later sections.

The beginning of Confucianism dates back 2,500 years. Confucius is said to be its founder, and together with Mencius they are usually considered as two greatest sages who have contributed for the foundation of the Confucian philosophical system. From Confucius’s works, the most important virtue is humanity/humaneness (*ren* 仁), and the building block for *ren* is filial piety (*xiao* 孝)²⁰. Starting from Confucius’s thoughts, Mencius enriches and expands Confucianism by adding his own thinking. Mencius’s representative work *Meng Zi*²¹ is a collection of anecdotes and conversations of Mencius when he traveled around to preach his political thinkings to feudal dukes or princes of different counties or areas. Mencius developed Confucius’s thought of ethics to thought of political governing. *Ren* is not only

¹⁹ Myron Cohen (1994) ‘Being Chinese: The Peripheralization of Traditional Identity’, in Tu Wei-ming (ed.), *The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, p 88

²⁰ “孝弟者也，其为仁之本也！”——《论语·学而》

²¹ Meng Zi, 《孟子》, one of The Four Books, recorded Mencius’s thoughts.

moral requirement for one person, but a perfect way for ruling²²; *xiao* does not confine to one's own parents, but to all the old.²³ Since the beginning, the core of “classical Confucianism” is composed of the teachings of Confucius and Mencius.

In Han dynasty, Confucianism was put as the only official ideology acknowledged by the government, and due to the political needs conservative interpretations were then more welcomed. After that Confucianism began going downhill with the fall of Han dynasty, until Song dynasty when “Neo-Confucianism” appeared in those rulers' sight. That was an important period for the revival of Confucianism. The most famous scholar during that period was Zhu Xi, who borrowed elements from both Buddhism and Daoism and blended those various philosophical thinkings with classical Confucianism, and in the end succeeded in enhancing Confucianism's social status and influence from that time onward in Chinese society. Zhu Xi had achievements in many respects, education activities and interpretations of Confucianism classics, etc. Most of his thoughts concerning the topic of this thesis could be found in his book *Family Rituals* (*jiali* 《家礼》), which will be cited and explained in later parts. From the early 14th century, his interpretations about Confucianism even became the basis of the civil service examination system—the most important means for common people to get governmental jobs and climb out of inferior social positions.

Before and after the fall of the last feudal period Qing dynasty, Confucianism began to meet its harshest time. New Culture Movement, Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, etc. almost killed traditional Confucianism in Chinese people's mind. However, at that time there were still thinkers trying to reform Confucianism and make it useful for the new world, which was later known as “New Confucianism”. Only after 1979 with more open policies to the West, the situation seemed to be brighter a little bit except around 1989, when the notorious Tiananmen Square Massacre (Tiananmen shijian) took place. After that, with interest in Marxism and socialism lessened and enthusiasm for promoting nationalism and patriotism growing, Confucianism again is raised on the official stage in mainland China as a suitable and efficient way to back up nationalism and patriotism.

²² “地不改辟矣，民不改聚矣，行仁政而王，莫之能御也。”——《孟子·公孙丑》

²³ “老吾老以及人之老，幼吾幼以及人之幼。”——《孟子·梁惠王上》

The appearance of filial piety in imperial China originated in the traditional agrarian economy, under which system experience of the elderly showed a great value in people's daily life. Seniority was a widely acknowledged advantage in a family and was promoted continually through governmental means. The most famous one was the "Twenty-four Tales of Filial Piety", in which extremes examples of sacrifice by grown children in the service of parental needs and whims were highly honored.²⁴ For example, a woman cut her flesh to make soup for her sick mother-in-law; a man jumped onto a tiger to save his father from the animal's mouth. Blind obedience and absolute reverence is the main characteristic for filial piety in ancient China. Under the modern context, the meaning of filial piety has changed a lot, especially during the revival period this paper is going to study. Those features will be presented in the analysis section.

1.3 Background for the Revival of Confucianism

After the establishment of the PRC (People's Republic of China), Confucianism have experienced a really difficult time. The New Culture Movement (from 1915 until 1923), the Cultural Revolution (from 1966 until 1976), etc. had almost eradicated Confucianism from the Chinese soil, though some Confucian thoughts or modes of behaviors rooted deep in people's mind remained.

When it came to the middle of 1980s, those thoughts deep in Chinese scholars' mind were again brought up and put into discussion, which led to the "culture craze" (*wenhuare* 文化热) throughout the mainland. The main theme for the "culture craze", claimed Li (2008), under that context was anti-tradition, with a relatively strong westernized color. He said at that time people wanted to learn and solve the correlation between traditional culture and

²⁴ Whyte, M. K., & Ikels, C. (2004) "Filial obligations in Chinese families: Paradoxes of modernization" in *Filial piety: Practice and discourse in contemporary East Asia*, p 106

modernization, they needed to deal with the situation of American and European culture unstoppably pouring into their lives, and emancipate their mind to get along with the new open policy, and also they had to give reasonable judgment and comments about those radical deeds toward tradition during the May 4th Movement and the Cultural Revolution.²⁵ Besides the reasons above, the word “national studies” (*guoxue* 国学) was carefully avoided then was because it carried improper political implications especially right after those political movements, therefore it was called “culture craze”. About the representations of this tide, root-seeking literature for example had become a phenomenon in the literary academia. Leading authors in this tide expressed their discontent toward the absolute negative attitude for the tradition during the New Culture Movement. For example, Han Shaogong said, Chinese literature should take the eastern aesthetic and thinking advantage, and then it shall have equal dialogue with the world literature.²⁶ Another writer Ah Cheng argued that Chinese people’s consciousness of modernity should be born from the nation’s general cultural prospects.²⁷ Although the content of root-seeking literature did not limited to Confucianism, Confucianism as the main body of Chinese traditional culture, has embraced a time of substantial resurgence, famous Confucian scholars like Confucius, Mencius, Cheng Yi, Zhu Xi living in ancient China and representative scholars of the New Confucianism like Liang Shuming, Xiongshili, Feng Youlan were all become the hottest subjects at that time.²⁸

From the 1990s until today, “national studies craze”²⁹ has swept the mainland. For example, more than ten Chinese Culture Faculties/Department (*guoxueyuan*) had been built in universities³⁰ in the mainland; private schools focusing on national cultural studies attract more and more students from young parents; young children are seen wearing traditional Han Chinese clothing in public places; a large number of entrepreneurs are spending a great deal of money to attend “national cultural studies” training classes to gain so-called wisdom of

²⁵ Li, Zonggui. (2008) “National Studies and Spirit of the Time” in *Academic Research*, (3), p 29

²⁶ 中国文学应该发挥东方文化的审美和思维优势，才能与世界文学进行平等对话。——韩少功

²⁷ 中国人的现代意识应从民族的总体文化前景中孕育出来。——阿城

²⁸ Luo, Chengyan & Yan, Zhen. (2000) “Confucian Culture and Chinese Literature of the 20th Century” in *Literature Review*, (1), p 70

²⁹ Chen, Jiaming, & Mosher, S. (2011) “The national studies craze: The phenomena, the controversies, and some reflections” in *China Perspectives*, (1), p 22

³⁰ For example, the first one was built in Renmin University of China (中国人民大学) in the year 2005. Besides, there were others like Chinese Culture Institutes (中国国学院), Chinese Culture Department of Beijing Humanities University (北京人文大学国学院), Chinese Culture Department of Wuhan University (武汉大学国学院), Chinese Culture Department of Qufu Normal University (曲阜师范大学国学院), Chinese Culture Department of Heilongjiang University (黑龙江大学国学院), etc.

ancient masters to improve modern managerial abilities. In 2006, a TV program called “Lecture Room”³¹ hosted by Yu Dan, with its interpretation of *The Analects of Confucius*, was hugely successful in leading the craze for the study of Confucianism among commoners. Moreover, a textbook named *The Basic Teaching Materials of Chinese Culture* (*Zhonghua wenhua jichu jiaocai* 《中华文化基础教材》)— an import from Taiwan and compiled on the basis of *The Four Books* 《四书》— was initially introduced to a few high schools, before eventually being implemented to all high schools as an official textbook in the mainland in 2013. And percent of content about Chinese traditional culture and Chinese Classics have been increased in textbooks used by primary and high school students.³² In September 28th of 2014, the newly-appointed president Xi Jinping attended The Ceremony of Confucius (*jikong dadian*), which had never been observed by such a high-level politician since the establishment of PRC. Compared with the national studies in late years, nowadays more and more people and organizations outside of the academic circle, with the introduction of mass media in particular, have become major participants in this trend. Therefore, it is not difficult to conclude that the revival of Confucianism is a phenomenon which cannot be overlooked in the study of contemporary Chinese society.

The reasons accounting for its revival are multi-faceted, and Li (2007) has some of his own thoughts on that. He thinks the reemergence of the traditional studies is a consequence brought by the policy of reforming and opening (*gaige kaifang* 改革开放) and changes under the globalization circumstance. Firstly, he said western intellectuals started to reflect on the modernization, as well as the disastrous effects it had caused between human and the nature, human and resources, therefore began to seek for solutions in east civilizations.³³ The second reason the author mentioned was the universal objection to the cultural hegemony and unilateralism implemented by the United States. Cultural pluralism, civilized dialogues between different cultures become a global trend.³⁴ The third one given by the author was about the unprecedentedly rapid economy development in mainland China. The author asked whether such a development had something to do the traditional culture or national studies

31 Lecture Room, 百家讲坛.

32 <http://bj.people.com.cn/n2/2016/0524/c233086-28388817.html> “语文版新教材替换 40%课文 增加中华优秀传统文化比重” (40% percent of the content of the Chinese textbook is replaced, increase the proportion of Chinese traditional culture)

33 Li, Zhonghua (2007). Perspective and Reflection on the National Studies Craze. *Theoretical Horizon*, (1), p 27

34 *Ibid*, p 27

and how they were connected?³⁵ The next reason discussed in that paper mentioned the opinion provided by Max Weber in his book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism: and other writings*, which was about the incompatibility between Chinese traditional culture and modernization. However, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan which all to some extent belonged to the Confucian cultural circle had seen great economic growth compared to other parts of the world. Thus, the researching enthusiasm on “East Asian model of development”, or “Chinese model of development” had facilitated the craze for national studies.³⁶ The last reason focused on the concept of “soft power”. As Bates Gill (2006) said culture was an important source for the “soft power”, the way to improve the Chinese “soft power” is of significant importance for China to have a peaceful rise on the earth. The question of whether the Chinese cultural tradition and wisdom can turn into the cultural resources to help build Chinese soft power also contribute to the revival of national studies.³⁷ Beside those reasons offered by Li, other scholars have noticed that nationalism and patriotism had become the most popular social psychology. In order to achieve self-affirmation and self-dignity to prove their own particular values, many Chinese turned to their own cultural traditions for support rather than western culture.³⁸

Researches done by those scholars listed above do shed some light when I try to dig into this historical development of the revival of national studies. However, from my point of view, changes in the political climate also played a significant role during that process. During the 1980s, along with the adoption of the “reform and open” policy, the consciousness of China’s people, especially those intellectuals, embraced an unprecedented liberation. As a result, they began to seek more political freedom and human rights on their motherland, which in the end with no doubt challenged the power and ruling status of the CCP. After the brutal suppression from the government in 1989 (Tiananmen Square protest of 1989) more depressed and terrified intellectuals turned to traditional Chinese culture studies, which seemed to be not so politically radical, as a way of self-protection. In the meantime, the study for traditional culture appealed to the needs of new trend for patriotic education throughout the whole

³⁵ Ibid, p 27

³⁶ Ibid, p 27

³⁷ Ibid, p 27-28

³⁸ Luo, Chengyan & Yan, Zhen. (2000) “Confucian Culture and Chinese Literature of the 20th Century” in *Literature Review*, (1), p 71

country as mentioned afore, therefore it received tacit consent from the government. And meanwhile the soaring economy demanded a strong recognition for cultural identity in the global environment. Moreover, under the new economic policy, more and more people chose to pursue after material enjoyment and economical gains which also discouraged intellectuals' enthusiasm for modern democracy reforms, so more and more intellectuals decided to bury themselves in tons of traditional Chinese classic.

1.4 Chapter Outline

This introductory chapter has outlined the background, research status, development of Confucianism and filial piety, definitions of basic concepts that will be used in the paper and reasons for the revival of traditional culture studies.

Chapter two will compare the differences of filial piety in traditional and modern Chinese society. In this section, mass activities concerning filial piety will be given emphasis, which can help to understand the specific context of the study in this thesis. Besides, social needs for promoting filial thoughts and behaviors will also be clarified.

Chapter three is the part for theoretical frameworks, in which those materials will be combined with theories, which will help to get the implied meanings under the surface of the performances of mass events.

In chapter four, the main part of this thesis, detailed and comprehensive analysis will be made by an in-depth study of my materials, video, text or pictures.

In the concluding chapter, conclusions and findings from the analysis section will be summarized, and questions raised in the first chapter will be answered.

Chapter 2 Requirements for Filial Piety in Traditional and Modern Chinese Society

Firstly, I would like to discuss the definition for “national studies craze” (*guoxue* 国学, sometimes translated as “Chinese classics craze”³⁹, both of them share the same meaning) in this paper. According to Li (2008), three periods have been passed for the change of content, connotation and scope of the national studies. The first one happened in ancient times until the end of Qing dynasty. The definition of “*guoxue*” meant schools or other education management institutions set up by the government.⁴⁰ The second period included the late Qing dynasty and the early Republic of China, during which time “national studies” referred to the traditional culture in general, no matter ideology culture, institutional culture, material culture, behavior, lifestyles or beliefs.⁴¹ Like Shi Deng said in the year 1905, “What is national studies? A kind of knowledge owned by one country.”⁴² Another famous scholar Zhang Taiyan had also made a similar statement⁴³ on that. The last or the most recent period meant the time from the middle of 1980s until today. About those decades, Li (2008) divides them into three parts. The one in the 1980s was the culture craze which showed an aggressive and westernized feature; the one in the 1990s promoted “national studies craze” which was wrapped under an obvious conservative color; the last one means today, a new wave for the “national studies craze” with the introduction of mass media and enthusiastic involvement of the masses.⁴⁴

³⁹ Zhao Lin (2009). “Reflections on “National Studies Craze”” in *Social Sciences in China*, Vol. 3

⁴⁰ 《周礼·春官·乐师》说：“乐师，掌国学之政，以教国子小舞。”

⁴¹ Li, Zonggui. (2008) “National Studies and Spirit of the Time” in *Academic Research*, (3), p 22

⁴² “国学者何？一国所自有之学也。有地而人生其上，因以成国焉。有其国者有其学。学也者，学其一国之学以为国用，而自治其一国也。” From Deng, Shi. (1906). Lectures on the National Studies. *Journals of the Quintessence of Chinese Culture* 《国粹学报》，(19) of the second year.

⁴³ “夫国学者，国家所以成立之源泉也，吾闻处竞争之世，徒恃国学不足以立国矣，而吾未闻国学不兴而国能自立者也。事闻有国亡而国学不亡者矣，而吾未闻国学先亡而国乃立者也，帮今日国学之无人兴起，即将影响于国家之存灭。”—章太炎《国学讲习会序》。1906.

⁴⁴ Li, Zonggui. (2008) “National Studies and Spirit of the Time” in *Academic Research*, (3), p 29

The revival of Confucianism today undoubtedly cannot be ignored for the China studies. However, even if choosing only Confucianism as the studying subject, it is hardly feasible to include every respect of its revival within a limited space of a master thesis. In this paper, I will thus narrow down my topic to the revival and invention of filial piety. And in order to reach some valuable conclusions, I will employ materials about the typical foot-washing event to dig into my topic. For the propaganda about the newly invented filial piety, I found two kind of activities which have gained the largest public attention: washing parents' feet and kowtowing to parents, which convey strong symbolic meanings for filial piety among modern Chinese people.

2.1 Filial Piety as *li* in Old Times

The term ritual (*li*) had originally been used to describe the standardized modes of behaviour that distinguished the aristocracy. Subsequently a high value placed on ritual came to be one of the most commonly emphasized aspects of the Confucian canon. As Patricia Ebrey (1991) explains, "People who routinely performed proper rituals were expected to recognize their social and ethical obligations and act on them."

Historically, the first period which emphasized filial piety was the Spring & Autumn Period, the era of the Eastern Zhou Dynasty, from 770 BC to 476 BC. Generally, Chinese filial piety is believed to originated from the 11th century BC, and was clearly put forward from the Zhou dynasty, which can be proved by the unearthed bronze inscription of Zhou dynasty. For example, the Chinese character *Xiao* (filial piety) has appeared in large numbers on the Western Zhou bronzes. There were many discussions on filial piety in *The Book of History* and *Book of Chang* written in Yin and Zhou dynasties, and *The Book of Songs*, that is to say filial piety was a fairly common moral ethics at that time." (Shen, 2008)⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Shen, Hong. (2008). *Xiao Xing Tian Xia*, p 5

For the character *xiao* 孝, the upper part, *lao*, represents the old parents, and the lower part, *zi*, represents the child; from the point of view of action, the child carries the parents on the back, which means when the parents are senile and doddering they need the children to help them; from the point of view of attitude, the children should be obedient to their parents all the time.⁴⁶

In traditional Confucianism, the family (mostly extended family) is always the center for socialization, integrity and prosperity of a family is the goal for every family member to fight for. The elders, male elders in particular have the biggest power and the most important status in the family. The hierarchy among family members is strictly based on their ages, with male parents' authority never being challenged, children's emotions strongly attached to their mothers and performing filial duties when they become adults. Those kinds of topics are often employed to describe the stable and long survived traditional familial system. (Fairbank, 1986; Yang, 1945; Yang 1959; Fei, 1939.)

Confucian rituals originate from family life, especially the relationship between parents and children. Because filial piety is of crucial importance to keep the harmony among family members, it is a valuable tool to keep social stability for the ruling of the whole country. For Confucius, who asserted humanity (*ren*) as the highest goal for a person, believed filial piety (*xiao*) was the root for achieving humanity⁴⁷; and for Mencius, he claimed the reasons for the excellent ruling of Yao and Shun (Yao and Shun were two of the greatest rulers in ancient Chinese history) was nothing but filial piety⁴⁸.

And then as for Zhu Xi⁴⁹, who is widely acknowledged as the most influential Confucian master after Mencius, his interpretations and commentaries for the Confucianism Classics—*The Thirteen Classics* carried the same high evaluation for filial piety. In *Family Rituals* 《家

⁴⁶ Shen, Hong. (2008). *Xiao Xing Tian Xia*, p 2

⁴⁷ 《论语·学而》：有子曰：其为人也孝弟，而好犯上者，鲜矣；不好犯上而好作乱者，未之有也。君子务本，本立而道生。孝弟也者，其为仁之本与！

⁴⁸ “尧舜之道，孝悌而已矣”——《孟子》

⁴⁹ Zhu Xi or Chu Hsi 朱熹, a Song dynasty Confucian scholar, a leading master of Neo-Confucian in China. He has been called the second most influential thinker in Chinese history, after Confucius.

礼》⁵⁰, Zhu Xi introduced four main rituals to perform at home. And through lines he wrote in the book, he talked about how to perform filial obligations in practice. For example, younger members should always ask for permission from elders in the family no matter what they themselves would like to do; sons and daughters-in-law should never keep private property; parents have much a bigger power to interfere or change children's marital status than themselves; parents can expel children they deemed not filial enough from the big family. Filial piety was said not to be only constrained in what younger ones do, but also in their inner attitudes towards parents.

Chinese filial piety is beyond the scope of a simple parent-child ethics, but integrated with politics, not only affects the socio-political structure, but also penetrates into legislation, education and other social aspects.⁵¹

2.2 Filial Piety in Popular Mass Events

Filial piety in traditional Confucianism is considered as family rites, something practiced mainly in families and between family members rather than communities or the whole society.

From the 1980s onwards, many important documents of the CCP Central Committee have emphasized the significance of propagating good traditional culture; and the 15th and 16th National Congress of the CCP have made it clear that the construction of socialist culture must dovetail with the cultural traditions, to carry forward the good traditional culture and cultivate national spirit.⁵²

⁵⁰ *Zhuzi jiali* 《朱子家礼》, Zhu Xi's work, which informed ritual practice for much of society in late imperial China since the Yuan dynasty.

⁵¹ Yuan, X., & Wang, Q. (2011) "A Tentative Study on Differences and Integration of Sino-Western Filial Piety Culture" in *Asian Social Science*, 7(8), p 101

⁵² Qian, Shu. (2007). "Strengthening the Research and Guidance of the Continuous and Healthy Development of the National Studies Craze" in *Theoretical Horizon*, (1), p 29

However for the trend in recent years, the new practices of filial piety show the tendency of becoming popular social events, performed before the public, viewed by the public and judged by the public. For example, in mass media nowadays, many activities about filial piety can be found relates to Guinness World Records, such as “small filial piety in China”⁵³ which called on people to write down grateful words for their parents through a newly developed Chinese communication service –*Wechat (weixin)*; a chess competition titled as “filial piety in Central Plains”⁵⁴; a 99-meter scroll with ten thousand Chinese character *xiao* (filial piety 孝) of different styles⁵⁵; the biggest tablet engraved with the whole text of *The Classic of Filial Piety (xiaojing)* as well as pictures and characters (the pictures of Confucius and Zengzi were composed of characters *xiao* (filial piety) and *shou* (longevity)⁵⁶, and as well as that foot-washing event with more than ten thousand participants⁵⁷. Some of them mentioned above did get the certificates of Guinness while others proclaimed Guinness as their goals. Besides, with the proliferation of reality TV shows in the mainland, there even appeared two reality shows about filial piety, “taking your parents to travel” (*daizhe bama qulvxing*)⁵⁸ and “Amazing Filial Child” (*xuanfeng xiaozi*)⁵⁹, both of which have achieved considerable ratings.

As can be seen from the examples given above, for the revived filial piety nowadays, proper deeds are not restrained within a family, performances in front of the public yet have been employed as the main means to spread the new meaning of filial piety. Those activities were always organized with the goal to reach as much audience as possible. Meanwhile, those activities held were wrapped with a casual and relaxed atmosphere, lacking the seriousness of rituals, which also differs a lot from filial practices in traditional Chinese society.

⁵³ “微孝中国”. September of 2014. <http://xmwb.xinmin.cn/xmwbzone/resfile/2014-05-15/03/03.pdf>

⁵⁴ “中原孝德杯”棋王挑战赛. October of 2014. http://newspaper.dahe.cn/dhb/html/2014-10/30/content_1168908.htm?div=-1

⁵⁵ “万孝长卷”. September of 2014. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/hqgj/jryw/2014-09-29/content_12467807.html

⁵⁶ “孝贤碑”. September of 2014. <http://society.people.com.cn/n/2014/0925/c136657-25733879.html>

⁵⁷ “最多人洗脚” 吉尼斯世界纪录 http://www.guancha.cn/broken-news/2014_09_14_267057.shtml. This is the case that will be studied in this thesis.

⁵⁸ “Taking your parents to travel” 带着爸妈去旅行, launched by Jiangxi TV channel, is the first reality show in the mainland focusing on filial piety. Five stars were invited to bring both of their parents to travel to other countries in the program. From December of 2014 until April of 2016 two seasons have been aired, each season consisting of 12 episodes. The video has been hit around 193 million times on the internet—no.2 throughout the whole country, and for about 1.2 billion times relevant microblogging topics have been read.

⁵⁹ “Amazing Filial Child” 旋风孝子 was aired from January of 2016 until April of 2016, with 13 episodes in total. The content is that six celebrities, taking one of their parents, went back to the place where they spent their childhood to live together for 6 days. According to CSM, the largest market researching organization in China, all of the 13 episodes of this reality show has ranked first in the audience ratings among programs aired at the same time in the country.

2.3 Predicament in the Ageing Society

Social benefits, especially those for the aged, have never been in a good situation in mainland China. According to the National economy and society developed statistical bulletin of 2014, Chinese people who were over 60 years old took 15.5% of the whole population, and those over 65 years old 10.1%, which surpassed the universal criterion defining an aging society which was 10% for people over 60 and 7% for people over 65 respectively. Predicted by the WHO (World Health Organization) China will have more than 35% of its population over 60 years old by the year 2050 and face the biggest aging problem throughout the whole world.

In Mu (2000)'s paper, three major means for the elderly support in the mainland have been listed based on who is the fund provider for the old: the support from the family, the support from the society, and self-support of the aged themselves.⁶⁰ And the first one, family support for the elderly has become an institutionalized tradition.⁶¹ As the Article 49 in chapter two of PRC Constitution states: "Parents have the duty to rear and educate their children who are minors, and children who have come of age have the duty to support and assist their parents."⁶² According to the survey of population changes done by the National Bureau of Statistics in October of 1994, 57.1% of the elderly relied mainly on children or other relatives for financial assistance. Thus, in general, family support is clearly the main form for the old to get access to living resources.⁶³ However, in recent years, the function of family support has seen a clear tendency to get weakened. The reasons accounting for that are for example: the decrease of the number of children; the living style change from the adult children cohabitating with their parents to the adult children living in small nuclear families; more and

⁶⁰ Mu, Guangzong. (2000). "The Reform and Prospect of Traditional Ways to Support the Elderly" in *Journal of Renmin University of China*, (5), p 44

⁶¹ Ibid, p 39

⁶² http://legal.china.com.cn/2013-09/04/content_29923357.htm

⁶³ Mu, Guangzong. (2000) "The Reform and Prospect of Traditional Ways to Support the Elderly" in *Journal of Renmin University of China*, (5), p 42

more young adult plunging themselves into the labor market and getting competitive in the society.⁶⁴

In face of the worsened environment for family support for the old, state or society supports seem to be more in need of under the current situation. In contemporary China, however, there are still a lot to overcome for social facilities to shoulder that kind of responsibility. In Mu's paper published in 2012, he points out six problems met by the current institutional care facilities (nursing homes in particular, both public and private) in the mainland. Firstly, institutional care facilities are in short supply and in the meantime haven't been used to their fullest. In accordance with the international standard of a thousand old men should occupy 50 beds in average, the elderly throughout China in 2012 should need around 8 million beds yet there were only about 2.6 million in total at that time, which were far less than enough. And under that circumstance, empty beds are not uncommon to see. That is because public nursing homes offer limited beds, and private ones charge too much.⁶⁵ Secondly, very little profit or even ending up in debt results in the poor ability for self-development. The main reason for the little income was the lack of preferential policies from the government, which in turns made institutional facilities (private ones in particular) to cut down labor costs, reduce service or sacrifice serving quality to survive the harsh circumstance.⁶⁶ Thirdly, relevant nursing and medical support is in great need. In the "Research on the status of the elderly in urban and rural areas" issued by China Ageing Research Center (*zhongguo laoling keyan zhongxin*) on March 1st of 2011, it can be seen that nursing homes equipped with clinics took less than 60% of all the nursing homes, the ones with rehabilitation centers less than 20%, and more than half of them had no doctors at all.⁶⁷ Fourthly, residents in nursing homes do not recognize the institutions as homes and are in want of familial nourishment. That has something to do with the long-time tradition for the elderly to be supported at home by their children. The fifth is the shortage of professional and responsible elderly care workers and management personnel. The author Mu predicted in 2012 that 10 million care worker would be needed in the year

⁶⁴ Ibid, p 43

⁶⁵ Mu, Guangzong. (2012) "The Predicaments and Solutions of Institutional Support for the Elderly in China" in *Journal of Huazhong Normal University (Humanities and Social Sciences)*, 51(2), p 32

⁶⁶ Ibid, p 34

⁶⁷ Ibid, p 34

2015 while there were only 20 thousand with certificates in 2012.⁶⁸ The last problem is about the development of institutional facilities in rural areas. Because of the substantial outflow of young men/women from rural areas to big cities, the ageing problem became bigger there, which got a lot of nursing homes and home care service stations established. But among all the facilities, most of them were not regularly run, and some even didn't have the safety assessment and fire-control license from the governmental departments.⁶⁹

Without doubt, Chinese government has tried to improve the unsatisfied situation for the social support for the elderly, yet the result is still far from being optimistic. Family support, rooted deep in Chinese people's mind as a tradition, is and will still be the dominant way for the old to get financial help and care. On February 9th 2006, the General Office of the State Council presented "Proposal on accelerating the development of service industry for the elderly" jointly made by the Office of China's National Committee on Ageing, NDRC (the National Development and Reform Commission), Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Civil Affairs and the State Administration of Taxation, etc., and claimed to "gradually establish and improve the service system of home care as the basis, community service as the support, and institutional care as the supplement."⁷⁰

In order to increase the number of children in every family, the only child policy, carried out from the year 1980, has been gradually relaxed by the government from the year 2011, and in the year 2015 finally every couple have the right to have two children.⁷¹ This implementation of such a policy demonstrates the governmental attitude to enhance family support for the elderly in the future in order to help solve the ageing problem in the mainland. In other words, children remain as the main caretaker for their aged parents, rather than the government or public sectors.

⁶⁸ Mu, Guangzong. (2012) "The Predicaments and Solutions of Institutional Support for the Elderly in China" in *Journal of Huazhong Normal University (Humanities and Social Sciences)*, 51(2), p 35

⁶⁹ Ibid, pp 35-36

⁷⁰ 2006年2月9日, 国务院办公厅转发了全国老龄工作委员会办公室、国家发展和改革委员会、财政部、民政部、国家税务总局等10部委联合制定的《关于加快发展养老服务业的意见》, 提出“逐步建立和完善以居家养老为基础、社区服务为依托、机构养老为补充的服务体系”

⁷¹ <http://politics.caijing.com.cn/20151029/3997804.shtml>

In modern society, with globalization and the development of individualization, simply increasing the number of children for each family is not enough for young adults to shoulder the responsibility for the elderly. Under that circumstance, the revival of Confucianism, with its crucial element filial piety, advocated by the government seems more meaningful and meanwhile effective to persuade young adults to perform filial duties. For thousands of years filial piety has influenced Chinese people's life, which makes it even more reliable for the government to believe the result.

Chapter 3 Invented Tradition and Discourse Analysis

For my case study, Confucianism is a tradition which had been oppressed and now has been revived. And in this process, the newly revived Confucianism displays new, modern features, which can be explained by the theory of tradition and modernity. Also, all the materials to be used in the next part, the video, photo, or text can be analyzed with the method of discourse analysis. Therefore, in this section I will provide an overview of the theory of tradition and modernity and the method of discourse analysis before I dig into my materials and give a detailed research.

3.1 Tradition and Modernity

Tradition in former research, is always portrayed as opposite to modernity. Yet in the case study of the revival of filial piety, it can be seen that the relationship between tradition and modernity is not that simply. Sometimes the legitimacy of modernity has to be based on the tradition, and the inheritance of traditional elements has to disguise under the modern cloak. For example, in order to persuade people to carry on filial duties, the phrase “Chinese traditional virtues” (中华民族传统美德) appears almost in every case and normally is put in the first line. So the legitimacy of the newly promoted filial piety relies on the fact that filial piety once was a tradition. Also, in the analysis in the next section, it can found that the new filial piety promotes many old elements from the traditional filial piety, like the hierarchy between the old and the young. Among all the mass activities connected with filial piety, foot-washing is the one most widely promoted. The posture of foot-washing, the young lowering his/her head to the old, represents the hierarchy. And hierarchy itself goes against modernity and individualism which modern Chinese people have already accepted, but when it is interpreted by the modern word “gratitude” (感恩) and presented in a new way, foot-washing,

rather than kowtow like the old times, it can find a way to get into the minds of the masses nowadays.

Among referential works done concerning the relationship between tradition and modernity, I choose Gusfield's work⁷² to support my theoretical part here. For this specific case study, it means to prove that traditional thinking, Confucianism, or filial piety in this paper, once regarded as the hindrance for the development of Chinese society is now an officially acknowledged powerful tool to help solidify patriotism, nationalism, economic development and social stability in modern China.

In Gusfield's work *Tradition and modernity: Misplaced polarities in the study of social change*, upon materials mainly focusing on modern India political and economic field, he lists seven commonly-seen fallacies about the relationship between tradition and modernity in the linear theory of change:

Fallacy 1: Developing societies have been static societies.

Fallacy 2: Traditional culture is a consistent body of norms and values.

Fallacy 3: Traditional society is a homogeneous social structure.

Fallacy 4: Old traditions are displaced by new changes.

Fallacy 5: Traditional and modern forms are always in conflict.

Fallacy 6: Tradition and modernity are mutually exclusive systems.

Fallacy 7: Modernizing processes weaken traditions.

⁷² Gusfield, J. R. (1967) "Tradition and modernity: Misplaced polarities in the study of social change" in *American journal of sociology*, p 351-362

To overthrow those fallacies and prove his own thinkings about the relationship between tradition and modernity, the author, based on his political and economic materials, makes his refutations respectively as (1) “traditional society” itself is often a product of change because of the conquests of foreign powers and the growth of social and cultural movements which influenced the character of family life, religious belief and practice and social structure in India⁷³, (2) tradition can provide legitimizing principles for a wide set of alternative forms of behavior⁷⁴ and (3) can permit acceptance and implementation of innovating economic behavior⁷⁵, (4) the acceptance of new products or new religion does not necessarily displace old traditions but increase the range of alternatives⁷⁶, (5) traditional structures can supply skills in pursuit of new goals and with new processes⁷⁷, (6) the role of traditional values in the form of segmental loyalties and principles of legitimate authority are of great importance in a nation attempting to draw groups into a national identity⁷⁸, as well as (7) the technological consequences of increased transportation, communication, etc. can further and intensify the spread and influence of the traditions across various social levels⁷⁹. Through those analysis, it is clear that in a process of change, tradition and modernity have a more complex interaction rather than simply reject each other. In my research, when analyzing the revival of the filial piety tradition it is also clear to see that propensity between tradition and modernity, the great impetus of the prevalence of mass media for promoting the foot-washing activities and the new filial meanings they carry.

However, when applying Gusfield’s theory, it should be mentioned that there are differences between the author’s materials and those materials used in this paper. For example, the revival of tradition in India for the purpose of claiming its political independence which obviously isn’t a trouble for today’s China; also the extended family economy system which is often referred to in the article differs from China’s economy situation as the same kind of economy system has already broken down after the establishment of the PRC. Although with differences both in political and economic area, the author’s viewpoints can help to shed light

⁷³ Gusfield, J. R. (1967) “Tradition and Modernity: Misplaced polarities in the study of social change” in *American journal of sociology*, p 352

⁷⁴ Ibid, p 354

⁷⁵ Ibid, p 354

⁷⁶ Ibid, p 354

⁷⁷ Ibid, p 355

⁷⁸ Ibid, p 357

⁷⁹ Ibid, p 357

on my thesis when analyzing the relations between tradition and modernity in the revival of filial piety in the modern China.

Another important work I will refer to is *The Invention of Tradition* published in 1983, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger introduced the very concept of invented tradition. As for the definition, the authors claims that “‘invented tradition’ is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past”⁸⁰. From the case study of the foot-washing activities, it can be seen that this kind of activities have been repeated countless times by people from all walks of life. Besides the foot-washing events organized in different places throughout the country, students in schools, employees in companies, and even officials in governmental departments have been assigned homework to wash their parents’ feet at home. Also, in the two popular reality shows about filial piety, washing parents’ feet has become a necessity.⁸¹ During to the high repeating rate, washing-foot itself has become a symbol for fulfill filial duties. That can help to answer the question in the following part why parents often move to tears when their feet are washed by their children.

Meanwhile, in the book the authors also stresses the differences between invented tradition and custom and convention. “Custom” is what judges do; “tradition” (in this instance invented tradition) is the wig, robe and other formal paraphernalia and ritualized practices surrounding their substantial action⁸²; convention or routine has no significant ritual or symbolic function as such, though it may acquire it incidentally⁸³; networks of convention and routine are not “invented tradition” since their functions, and therefore their justifications are technical rather than ideological⁸⁴. The authors also points out that we should expect invented tradition to occur more frequently when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which “old” traditions had been designed, producing new ones to which they were not applicable, or when such old traditions and their institutional carriers and

⁸⁰ Hobsbawm, E., & Ranger, T. (Eds.). (2012) *The invention of tradition*, p 1

⁸¹ Those different kinds of activities will be used again and clarified in later sections.

⁸² Ibid, p 2-3

⁸³ Ibid, p 3

⁸⁴ Ibid, p 3

promulgators no longer prove sufficiently adaptable and flexible, or are otherwise eliminated⁸⁵.

Although the significance of discovery of invented tradition by Hobsbawm and Ranger couldn't be overlooked, there are some problems in that theory. Firstly, the division between genuine tradition and invented tradition is ambiguous as a scientific standpoint. The same defect goes to classify genuine ones as the content, accompanied by all the symbolic functions and invented ones only as the external form with technical attributes. Affected by that thesis, most of the researchers believes that the idea of invented tradition contains an inescapable connotation of falsity and contrivance, misunderstandings are prevalent through both academic and non-academic spheres⁸⁶. In addition, the authors emphasizes the political or social reasons for the invention of tradition, while overlooks the intrinsic tendency for tradition to evolve with the development of ages, society, socializing techniques, and so on.

After *The Invention of Tradition*, a significant theoretical thinking about invented tradition appeared, which is the constructivist theory of tradition, developed by Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linnekin in their 1984 article "*Tradition, Genuine or Spurious*".⁸⁷ They develops the ideas that tradition should better be seen as a process with continual re-creation rather than a stable and invariant being. Their thinking could solve the big problem with Hobsbawm and Ranger's theory, yet is accompanied by some other defects. Firstly regarding tradition as relentless changing, for example among some indigenous groups, it would re-introduce some kind of standard of authenticity and undermine the entire theoretical premise of constructivist approach; secondly, under this approach it tends to treat all traditions as contemporaneous and ephemeral, it erased all the historical origins⁸⁸.

⁸⁵ Ibid, p 4-5

⁸⁶ Plant, B. K. (2008) "Secret, Powerful and the Stuff of Legends: Revisiting Theories of Invented Tradition" in *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 28, p 177

⁸⁷ Handler, R., & Linnekin, J. (1984) "Tradition, Genuine or Spurious" in *Journal of American folklore*, p 273-290

⁸⁸ Plant, B. K. (2008) "Secret, Powerful and the Stuff of Legends: Revisiting Theories of Invented Tradition" in *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 28, p 184

For Plant (2008), it is of great significance that scholars reconsider how they approach and conceptualize traditions in specific cultural and historical settings; and at the same time, analyses of traditions as operationalized symbols constitutive of cultural meanings would provide a new perspective for assessing traditions. In my paper, I will draw references from the works of those scholars mentioned above with a peculiar standpoint focusing on the case study of the foot-washing events in this paper.

As is presented above, it is too naïve to confine tradition within the scope of “true” or “false”. So firstly I need to formulate what “true” means in this research. However, in this section I employ the word “truth” does not mean to set a precise criterion to define tradition but to describe people’s perception on this “tradition” matter. That means, in our daily life when people believe some rituals or practices are traditional, then they give their own approval for those being “true” traditions. That is what “true” signifies exactly in this paper. As for foot-washing, under the brainwashing from mass media, like the endless playing of the public service advertisement which is to be used as the material, Chinese people have already acknowledged that washing parents’ feet is a traditional way to express filial intentions, and neglected the fact that this kind of activity has never appeared in ancient tales or historical records when concerning filial piety. Nevertheless, Chinese believe it is “true” tradition.

Aside from the works above, I’d also like to refer to *Tradition as truth and communication: a cognitive description of traditional discourse* (Boyer, P., 1990). In this book the author firstly points out some common mistakes or problems about the studies of tradition within the field of sociology. The first one is the definition of tradition given by Shils, representing the general and fundamental understanding of tradition, which is that tradition “includes all that a society of a given time possesses and which already existed when its present possessors came upon it”⁸⁹. Boyer thinks that understood in that way, the category is useless for the academic study of tradition⁹⁰. Secondly, Boyer notices that the common conception of tradition relies on a hypothesis that the traditional interaction is structured by underlying conceptions and

⁸⁹ Shils, E. (1981) *Tradition*, p 12

⁹⁰ Boyer, P. (1990) *Tradition as truth and communication: a cognitive description of traditional discourse* (No. 68), p viii

world-views⁹¹. “World views” explained in Boyer’s words are “utterances, actions and more generally the bits and pieces of behaviour anthropologists observe and record, are in fact held together by some underlying intellectual objects”, which is called “world views”, “cultural models”, “local theories”, “collective representations”, etc.⁹² From Boyer’s point of view, the conception of tradition which is built on a self-evident hypothesis of underlying “world-views”, as well as equalizing repetition in traditional practices with cohesiveness which are prevalent in sociological tradition studies, are not so persuasive and needed to be reevaluated. For this problem, the author gives a solution as treating tradition studies with “event-talk” rather than “theory-talk” attitude, namely, focusing more attention on the actual pertinent communications or practices. And that is to be done in the case study of foot-washing events in the analysis section with all emphasis put on the practice. Thirdly, Boyer also analyzes the problems of the common idea of attributing repetition to people’s conservatism. He thinks that assumption is untenable, as if people can have clear and determinant role in choosing what to remember and what not to. Also, he adds that in religion rituals, people are observed with a larger tendency to be conservative about surface properties rather than those abstract elements⁹³.

Boyer has also given a definition of tradition of his own in the book. He says tradition is a *type of interaction which results in the repetition of certain communicative events*⁹⁴. That means that tradition is first of all a form of interaction, concerning communication and results in repetition⁹⁵. Then, traditions show the characteristics of repetition or reiteration all the time. The last criterion of recognition of traditions is that they are psychologically salient. Utterances of gestures will not be considered traditional if it does not focalize people’s attention more than ordinary discourse or actions⁹⁶. This definition from three levels deepens the understanding of the definition of tradition, which will be used in later part when comparing foot-washing ceremonies respectively in the mainland and Taiwan.

⁹¹ Ibid, p 17

⁹² Ibid, p 3-4

⁹³ Ibid, p 17

⁹⁴ Ibid, p 23

⁹⁵ Ibid

⁹⁶ Ibid, p 2

However valuable as Boyer's research is for my paper, there are some differences which should not be ignored. First of all, Boyer has made it clear that his research does not include written materials, but limits to purely oral communication⁹⁷. While for my materials, although not "scriptures", they are obviously not oral ones but a video, photo and text. In addition, Boyer for the majority part uses the Fang tradition of Gabon, Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea⁹⁸ as his analysing materials, in which the rituals show a clear religious feature while in my case, the invented rituals of filial piety have if not none but very little religion color. They are more like morality or ethics. Besides that, Boyer opposes the idea to use anthropological analytical concepts like "symbols", "cultural models" and "socialization" and claims that they are more like "phlogiston" than "oxygen" when studying tradition⁹⁹. But for what I have learnt about invented tradition, evidently that term conveys inventors' underlying purposes for that act, therefore I will refer to those symbolic or ideological ideas in this research.

To summarize, tradition is a socio-culture practice that assigns temporal meaning¹⁰⁰ which involves social interaction, emphasizes on repetition or reiteration and can be invented or renovated with symbolic or ideological meanings. For this thesis, I will focus on the recently invented filial piety ritual—foot-washing, try to answer why such rituals are invented for expressing filial piety, and more importantly how the official discourses guide people to accept these rituals' authenticity and root symbolic representations of the newly invented rituals of filial piety deep in their minds.

3.2 Methods of Discourse Analysis

Contemporary social science has been widely influenced by "social constructivism" which claims that the world is socially constructed. Many theories of social constructivism

⁹⁷ Ibid, p viii

⁹⁸ Ibid, p 6

⁹⁹ Ibid, p ix

¹⁰⁰ Shoham, H. (2011) "Rethinking Tradition: From Ontological Reality to Assigned Temporal Meaning" in *European Journal of Sociology*, 52(02), p 313

emphasize the role of texts (language, discourse) in the construction of the social world¹⁰¹. And Burr even put that discourse analysis is one of the most widely used approaches of social constructionism.¹⁰²

In this thesis, I will mainly apply critical discourse analysis approach offered by Norman Fairclough. In his book *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research* (2003), he provides general thinkings as well as concrete examples about this method in social study field, which gives much help in analysing my own materials, one piece of public service advertisement, news reports about the Guinness foot-washing event, and an article from the website of governmental mouthpiece. He makes it clear that the focus of his book is to explore how meanings are made and what kind of social effects the meaning-making could bring about through detailed text analysis¹⁰³.

In his opinion, critical discourse analysis is based upon the assumption that language is an irreducible part of social life, dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life, so that social analysis and research always has to take account of language¹⁰⁴. Therefore, his main point of reference on text analysis is Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), a linguistic theory and associated analytical methods particularly associated with Michael Halliday (Halliday 1978, 1994). Despite their different aims, SFL concerns also highly of the relationship between language and other elements and aspects of social and its approach to the linguistic analysis of texts is always oriented to the social character of texts¹⁰⁵.

When analysing discourses, it is important to pay attention to the ways how social events are represented, what is excluded or included, how abstractly or concretely events are represented, and how more specifically the processes and relations, social actors, time and place of events are represented¹⁰⁶. As for the case of the invented tradition in this paper, those elements or

¹⁰¹ Fairclough, N. (2003) *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research*, p 8

¹⁰² Burr, V. (1995) *An Introduction to Social Constructionism*, p 2

¹⁰³ Fairclough, N. (2003) *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research*, p 11

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p 2

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, p 5

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, p 17

measures will help to dig into those materials so as to get a clearer view of how exactly invented traditions are invented through Chinese mass media.

Fairclough also suggests that when studying discourses, it is important to focus on their ways of representing—linguistic features, which can be seen as realizing a discourse, such as features of vocabulary—discourses “world” or “lexicalize” the world in particular ways, semantic and grammatical relationships between words, etc.¹⁰⁷.

Besides, Fairclough notices the excessive playing down of agency from a structuralist and post-structuralist point of view. So the analysis of different agents will also be attended to for my materials. In his opinion, the “author” refers to whoever can be seen as having put the words together and as taking on commitments to truth, obligations, necessity and values by virtue of choices in wording¹⁰⁸.

Moreover, under the influences of works from Goatly (1997) and Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Fairclough makes it clear that metaphor is one resource available for producing distinct representations of the world. In his book, Fairclough emphasizes two kinds of metaphors: “lexical metaphor” and “grammatical metaphor” which will also play important roles in the later analysis section. The former one means words which generally represent one part of the world are extended to another; the latter one means processes being represented as “things”, entities through “nominalization”.¹⁰⁹ For example, in the third material—the article from the official mouthpiece—the word “Chinese ethnic peoples” 中华民族 is employed rather than China or PRC 中国. And the word “Chinese ethnic peoples” relates better with the tradition in the article which aims to promote a (invented) tradition.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p 6, 129

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p 12

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p 131

Apart from what is mentioned above, there are some terms provided by Fairclough which should be clarified here to better the researching mechanism in this paper. For the term of text, Fairclough uses it in a broad sense. He includes written and printed texts, transcript of (spoken) conversations and interviews, as well as television programs and webpages, etc.¹¹⁰ A genre is a way of acting and interacting linguistically—for example, interview, lecture and news report are all genres¹¹¹. In addition, intertextuality is also a key term for Fairclough's thinkings. Intertextuality means how texts draw upon, incorporate, recontextualize and dialogue with other texts.¹¹² In the end, Fairclough also brings up Foucault's definition of discourse to help clarify his own thoughts in this aspect. Foucault settles discourse sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements (Foucault, 1984). For this specific term Fairclough does not entirely agree with Foucault, he claims that Foucault's concern is more a matter of discerning the rules which "govern" bodies of texts and utterances than a concern with detailed analysis of texts.¹¹³ Therefore, Fairclough suggests that discourses be seen as ways of representing aspects of the world—the processes, relations and structures of the material world, the "mental world" of thoughts, feelings, beliefs and so forth, and the social world. Meanwhile he adds that discourses not only represent the world as it is (or rather is seen to be), they are projective, imaginaries, representing possible worlds which are different from the actual world, and tied in to projects to change the world in particular directions.¹¹⁴

In the book, Fairclough also discusses some limits about critical discourse analysis. For example, one of the effects of texts for critical discourse analysis is ideological ones—the effects of texts in inculcating and sustaining or changing ideologies (Eagleton 1991, Larrain 1979, Van Dijk 1998). Ideologies are representations of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing, maintaining and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation¹¹⁵. While to assess the causal and ideological effects of texts, one would need to frame textual analysis within, for example, organizational analysis, and link the

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, p 3

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, p 17

¹¹² *Ibid*, p 17

¹¹³ *Ibid*, p 123

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, p 124

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, p 9

“micro” analysis of texts to the “macro” analysis of how power relations work across networks of practices and structures¹¹⁶.

For the second, Fairclough has made clear the distinction between “construction” and “construal”, which is often neglected by social constructivists. The social world can be textually construed (represented, imagined, etc.) in particular ways, while the final effects vary upon many factors—including the way social reality already is, who is constructing it, and so forth¹¹⁷. Meanwhile, Fairclough says there are three analytical elements in the processes of meaning-making: the production of the text, the text itself, and the reception of the texts. And all the meanings should be made through the interplay among the three.¹¹⁸

Text, as elements of social events, can have casual effects in the material world like changing in urban design, and also in people’s knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, values as well as social relations¹¹⁹. Like in the case of this thesis, modern texts on tradition mediated by meaning-making process can also produce changes of people’s understandings of the “old traditions”. Therefore, analysing the texts on traditions can help illuminate the methods of how to invent traditions to suit the modern world, the ruling power’s or the receivers’ needs. It can never be denied. However, when talking about the effects of a certain text, we should be aware of its limits in this particular study case. In this article, it focuses on analysing the text materials and also along with relevant social and cultural context, but leave out the feedbacks of the readers and audience, which surely is of crucial importance for this case study. But due to the length limit of this paper, I will put more energy on one specific area, namely how the foot-washing activity is demonstrated by governmental means in those materials, and do a deeper and detailed exploration than a generalized report.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, p 115-16

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, p 8-9

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, p 10

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, p 8

Chapter 4 Analysis of the Media Coverage of The Foot-washing Activity

For the revival of filial piety, there are diverse mass activities in modern Chinese society, like free dumpling feast for the elderly¹²⁰, free annual medical examinations for the old on the International Day of Families¹²¹, as well as those related to Guinness World Records mentioned in the Chapter Two, like “small filial piety in China” which called on people to write down grateful words for their parents through Chinese communication service—Wechat (weixin), a chess competition titled as “filial piety in Central Plains”, and the Guinness foot-washing event of 2014. Among all those various kinds of activities I choose the foot-washing activity as my specific case study. The reasons are: firstly, among all those events it has the largest number of participants, more than ten thousand; secondly, it did set a Guinness World Record, which can help enhance the impact; thirdly, the form of foot-washing connects most closely with modern filial piety, for almost every student has been assigned the foot-washing homework for their parents (in the following part, it can be seen there are more than one millions essays about pupils doing the foot-washing homework), and in February of the year 2016 even government officials were required to do the same assignment.¹²² Therefore, foot-washing activity is the most representative among all the mass events concerning modern filial piety.

As for the materials to be used in the paper, I have selected them from three different levels and perspectives. Firstly, a piece of the most popular public service advertisement related to filial piety on CCTV (China Central Television), which is believed to firstly connect the relationship between foot-washing and filial piety in Chinese people’s mind. Then news reports about the foot-washing Guinness show from crucial governmental websites, one from

¹²⁰ <http://news.dahe.cn/2016/05-06/106817155.html>

¹²¹ <http://news.163.com/16/0516/11/BN6D5QLJ00014AEE.html>

¹²² <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2016-02-18/doc-ixprqea4655038.shtml>

Xinhuanet Jiangxi Channel, one from Xinhuanet 新华网¹²³, and one from Renminnet 人民网¹²⁴. In most websites reporting the event the articles are copied from the original text on Xinhuanet Jiangxi Channel¹²⁵ (because the event happened in Jiangxi Province and firstly reported by the Xinhuanet Jiangxi Channel), and the reports on Xinhuanet and Renminnet both focus on photos of the activity. Therefore, I will use the original text from Xinhuanet Jiangxi Channel and the photos displayed by Xinhuanet and Renminnet as well for my research. Besides that, the last material is borrowed from *Zhongguowang* 中国网 which is a key national news website governed by China International Publishing Group (CIPG)¹²⁶. This article titled as “Filial Piety and Gratitude Culture” is written in an official style, analysing the close relationship between those two concepts “filial piety” and “gratitude culture” in details, which could well represent the ideological basis and the direction of the advocated new filial piety from the official stand and voice.

The materials I have chosen show different characteristics. In terms of the coverage, popularity and influence among the masses, the ones in the first and second level are the best choices. In respect of the ideas’ stringency, the third official one with no doubt offers the most appropriate sample. These materials will provide a good start for me to look into my topic of the newly revived filial piety’s changes and development in the modern China.

4.1 Origin of the Connection between the Foot-washing Activity and Filial Piety

¹²³ Xinhuanet 新华网, founded in November of 1997, is the key central news website governed by Xinhua News Agency, which is the biggest and most influential media organization in China.

¹²⁴ Renminnet 人民网, founded in January of 1997, the vanguard of key Chinese national news website, a large-scale news-oriented online information exchange platform constructed by one of the world’s top ten newspaper “People’s Daily”, and also one of the largest integrated network media on the internet.

¹²⁵ http://www.jx.xinhuanet.com/news/xczj/2014-09/14/c_1112471121.htm

¹²⁶

<http://baike.baidu.com/link?url=EJ0A394Nyp8d2ihDvQ58jXV1tck10aovWCNleYj9HC0KDFa98z0bPlcsX8T6orkrd4FtXp3nstAAhVDf0m5Zeq>

In 2007, a public service advertisement named as ‘Mom, let me wash your feet’¹²⁷ was launched on CCTV (China Central Television)¹²⁸, by repeating for years it has formed the foundation of the close relationship between the foot-washing practice and filial piety in Chinese people’s mind. Following the release of this advertisement, activities aiming to enhance such a connection has boomed in mainland China, amongst which the one through the education system is the most salient by asking students to write relevant compositions. In Doc88.com (道客巴巴) and Baidu Library (百度文库), the two most famous open online platforms for users to share documents in mainland China, there are 1,775,399 and 181,887 hits respectively under the searching words “foot-washing composition” (洗脚作文). Although no specific number of the audience could be given during the years the advertisement is aired on CCTV, a small survey¹²⁹ has been done and shows that 100% of the interviewees remember this advertisement well.



This advertisement lasts 45 seconds in total. At the beginning of it, there emerges a line “caring for the elders, starting from the heart” 关爱老人、用心开始. Then a mother finishes

¹²⁷ <http://baike.baidu.com/link?url=nxBlwmn0-b73TFHivUpJh2UAFp8rCrqK40JZNoRsh5u9TaT3YxkobJVb4pYwvwSCMFky0f1YY9GqKKG4it3T-q>.

¹²⁸ China Central Television, commonly abbreviated as CCTV, is the predominant state television broadcaster in mainland China, which is accessible to more than one billion viewers.

¹²⁹ The small survey was done in March of 2016, involving ten interviewees. Four of them from provinces of North China, three from provinces of South China, and three from provinces of West China. Meanwhile, among them two were under 20 years’ old, five were between 20 to 45, 3 were over 46 years’ old.

giving her young son a foot bath, asking him to read a storybook by himself before she comes back. Afterwards the mother goes to an adjoining room to wash her mother-in-law's feet, and the scene happens to be witnessed by her son who follows her out. In this room, the mother-in-law says "You have been busy a whole day, have some rest" (忙了一天了, 歇一会吧), and the woman replies "Mother, I am not tired. A hot foot bath is good for your legs" (不累, 妈, 烫烫脚对您的腿有好处). Next is that the mother goes back to her son's room, yet finds no one in the bed. When she turns around, she sees her son staggering out of the bathroom with a full basin of water, saying "mom, let me wash your feet" 妈妈, 洗脚. And the last picture is that the boy washes her mother's feet in his room, while a background male's voice fading in "parents are the best teachers for children" 其实父母是孩子最好的老师 and a line of words "pass on the love" 将爱心传递下去. Another thing which should be paid attention to is that the whole story told in the advertisement is from the mother's eyes, which means the mother's mentation should be given proper attention in the analysis part.

Under the searching words of "washing feet for mother" (*mama xijiao*) 妈妈洗脚¹³⁰ in Baidu Baike ¹³¹, the introduction of this advertisement points out two aspects about the connotations of this advertisement: (1) calling on everyone to fulfill filial duties, and (2) dealing well with the relationship between daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law in families. Therefore, it is certain that the old woman is the young one's mother-in-law. The clarification of their relationship will be used in the analysis part below.

With no doubt, this advertisement intends to encourage every Chinese to carry on the old tradition of filial piety, yet if looking closely there are many modern or western elements used in this advertisement.

Firstly, the background music used throughout the advertisement is *Reeds On The Loch* composed by Duncan Aran & Cy Jack, not traditional or even modern Chinese music.

¹³⁰ http://baike.baidu.com/link?url=nZr_3uEebfwgSKdstKXf2uo2vD3ndtTCrzcbiFK4PSkQl3lXuxK-EuDI664u4kOvoZ9bula9QchVgS3JnTk7K

¹³¹ Baidu baike, the largest online, collaboratively built encyclopedia in mainland China.

Secondly, the storybook the son reads is *The Ugly Duckling* written by Danish poet and author Hans Christian Andersen. In an advertisement which intends to promote traditional Chinese virtue, the producer chose western music and storybook rather than Chinese ones which weakens the color of tradition. Yet, the music and the storybook are not conspicuous elements which can be noticed at first sight in the advertisement, they are melted into the context of the short video. And the result shows that the combination goes quite well.

Besides, what most noticeable is the climax part with the background music apparently growing stronger—the little boy holding a full basin of water saying “mom, let me wash your feet”, rather than the part of the mom washing her mother-in-law’s feet. So in other words, the mother obviously is set as an example for her son to follow. The logic goes like that because the mother washes her mother-in-law’s feet, so her son will wash her feet. This causality can be explained as passing on the love or filial piety as the advertisement itself says in the end, or could be seen as the expectation for repayment from the mother’s perspective—if you are filial to your parents, then you children can be expected to be filial to you. Therefore, it is difficult to draw a claim that one fulfills filial duties is for his/her parents’ sake or for his/her own interest.

According to Fei (1983), there exist different modes for supporting the elderly in eastern and western societies. In the western society, children have no obligation to support their parents, while in China, that kind of obligation is obligatory to every adult child. If put into a formula, the one in the western society is $F1 \rightarrow F2 \rightarrow F3 \rightarrow \dots \rightarrow Fn$, and the one in China is $F1 \leftrightarrow F2 \leftrightarrow F3 \leftrightarrow \dots \leftrightarrow Fn$ (“F” means generation, “ \rightarrow ” means the older generation supports the younger one, “ \leftarrow ” means the younger generation supports the old one.). Based on the formulas, Fei gives the conclusion that the mode in the western society is “relaying mode” (*jieli moshi* 接力模式), and the mode in traditional Chinese society is “repaying mode” (*fankui moshi* 反馈模式).¹³² In this advertisement, the “repaying mode” can be clearly seen when the mother washes her mother-in-law’s feet and when the boy washes his mother’s feet. However, the evident emphasis on the latter one should call attention on the utilitarian mentality. In China

¹³² Fei, Xiaotong. (1983) “Geriatric Support with the Changes in Family Structure” in *Journal of Peking University*, (3)

nowadays, utilitarianism has infiltrated into the parent-child relationship. One always wants or expects something back when he/she does something for others. In a report done in the year of 2010, the average age for people applying the first house loans in Beijing was 27, which was the lowest compared with the age over 30 in other parts and countries throughout the world. And in a survey done by Shanghai housing accumulation fund net in 2009, 62.27% of people purchasing houses has got financial support from their parents¹³³.

Other than that, in the advertisement it presents an extended family, which usually exists in traditional Chinese society of the past but not today's most popular nuclear family. Building such a context in the advertisement can help to better construct the environment for the audience to identify with that kind of value they promote and also more persuasive for people to believe the power to pass on filial virtues to younger generations. Chinese filial piety tends to maintain family continuity, development, unity and stability, so it must emphasize on intergenerational integration while Western culture which views people's freedom and equality as the highest value is bound to emphasize intergenerational fracture. The so-called intergenerational integration is to stress the recognition, consistency, continuity and unity of the older generation and the next generation.¹³⁴

For the acceptance of the advertisement, the form of public service advertisement contribute a great deal. The definition of public service advertisement in Baidu Baike is that "it refers to the advertisement which is made for vital interests of the public and social services rather than profit".¹³⁵ When viewing this advertisement, the audience's anxiety about being brainwashed to become a potential customer are eased. So its attraction and influence are easily exerted on the audience.

¹³³ http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2013-01/22/c_124260954.htm. The original text is: 据光大银行与某地产公司市场研究中心发布的调查显示, 2010年北京首套房贷者的平均年龄仅为27岁, 为全球最低。相比之下, 其他国家和地区的首次购房者平均年龄都在30岁以上。2009年上海住房公积金网的调查显示, 62.27%的年轻人买房时受到父母的资助, 由父母承担首付款的人不在少数。

¹³⁴ Yuan, X., & Wang, Q. (2011). A Tentative Study on Differences and Integration of Sino-Western Filial Piety Culture. *Asian Social Science*, 7(8), p 102

¹³⁵ [http://baike.baidu.com/link?url=18-](http://baike.baidu.com/link?url=18-EGK_9oNLdjr0CzqO1PfvkRSJohsuKX_b3cl21oev15JtOJw8Es0IFjQYgUGqbRDj6QIF15YSWt5NjNQHLY)

[EGK_9oNLdjr0CzqO1PfvkRSJohsuKX_b3cl21oev15JtOJw8Es0IFjQYgUGqbRDj6QIF15YSWt5NjNQHLY](http://baike.baidu.com/link?url=18-EGK_9oNLdjr0CzqO1PfvkRSJohsuKX_b3cl21oev15JtOJw8Es0IFjQYgUGqbRDj6QIF15YSWt5NjNQHLY). The original text is: 公益广告是指不以盈利为目的而为社会公众利益和社会风尚服务的广告。

Moreover, in this advertisement, it is easy to notice that the mother attend to her child's need first, and then her mother-in-law. If in a traditional society, such kind of act is usually criticized or even forbidden, because the strict hierarchy requires that the old should always come first than the young. While in the case of contemporary China, like in the advertisement, the order of the younger coming before the old is generally accepted, even for the old themselves. The elderly intend to spare their children the burden of taking care of them, and meanwhile are ready to offer any kind of help they can to relieve the children's living pressure, for instance, they will do house chores or pick up grandchildren from schools if needed.¹³⁶ And that kind of acts are now too commonly seen in modern Chinese society. This kind of behavior and mentality can be analysed with Max Weber's concept of "ethic of responsibility", which will be elaborated in the next section when analysing the Guinness foot-washing event.

Also, for the family environment presented in the advertisement, it somehow is in an extreme situation for a woman. As implied from the mother-in-law's word "You have been busy a whole day, have some rest", the woman has work in the daytime and needs to tend to the old and young after work at night. No adult male has ever made appearance in it, so the woman herself is the only one expected to fulfill the duty of filial piety and presented as the filial exemplar in her family. However in ancient China, the situation differs. As in the imperial China, although filial piety was put on the shoulder of both sons and daughters-in-law, the filial deeds did by males were the most often mentioned and remembered. For example, the exemplary characters in the book "Twenty-four Tales of Filial Piety" are all men, most of them in high social class, emperors, scholars or scientists, etc. The reason for such a difference is that in imperial China, filial piety connected closely with one's career (especially political career) and social reputation¹³⁷, so males as the superior gender at that time enjoyed the advantage to be presented as the filial children in a family. Whereas in modern Chinese society, people prefer economic profit than some invisible and "worthless" morality, so fulfilling the responsibility is deemed to be more like a part of the house chores, which normally goes to women in a family.

¹³⁶ Yang Shanhua & He Changmei (2004). Ethic of Responsibility and family support for the elderly of urban residents—a case study of "Survey of the Elderly in Beijing". *Journal of Peking University (Humanities and Social Sciences)* (1), p 80

¹³⁷ Xiaolian 孝廉, established in the Han dynasty, is an examination for appointing officials based on the criterion of "filial piety" and "integrity". And in Ming and Qing dynasty, xiaolian became an honorific way to address scholars who had passed the national examination for choosing officials.

4.2 Analysis of Media Reports of the Foot-washing Guinness World Record

As a matter of fact, the foot-washing event were firstly organized in Taiwan, and is now regularly held every year, also the first Guinness Record for the most people washing their feet was created by Taiwan on May 9th, 2011. Yet among all the news report of the Guinness foot-washing event in mainland on September 13th 2014, Taiwan is never mentioned. That can reflect that although employing the same way—foot-washing to promote filial piety, the CCP has no intention to copy or demonstrate the same values as Taiwan does under such a form.

In this section, the study of the news reports about the foot-washing event happened in the mainland will be the main part, with the original report from Xinhuanet Jiangxi Channel and photos from Xinhuanet and Renminnet. Beside those materials, I will also present relevant information about the foot-washing ceremonies in Taiwan. There are two kinds of typical foot-washing ceremonies in Taiwan. The first one is the one held in the city Yilan 宜兰, which began from the year of 2008 on every Mother's Day, the other is the one held in front of the Presidential Office in Taipei which originated from the year 2013 on every second Sunday of October.

First I would like to analyze the foot-washing event which broke the Guinness Record in mainland China in September of 2014. For the news reports from Xinhuanet Jiangxi Channel (新华网江西频道), Xinhuanet (新华网) and Renminnet (人民网), the commonality is that all three of them emphasize the word “Guinness Records” 吉尼斯纪录 in the news titles. Guinness for Chinese people is, on one hand an international culture phenomenon, and on the other hand a supreme achievement and a proof for the ability for Chinese individuals or participants. So using Guinness, an international criterion, to affirm people's exemplary

participation in practicing a traditional behavior is a way to combine tradition and modernity. As about the foot-washing Guinness World Record activity, there are many ways tradition and modernity having been connected together.

Firstly, about all the reports of that foot-washing activity on September of 2014, “Guinness Records” (jinisi 吉尼斯) is the word never left in the titles. For example, “the Guinness World Records of the most people washing their feet was set”¹³⁸ from Renminnet, “Ten thousand of people in Yichun washed feet at the same time, setting the Guinness World Record” from Xinhuanet¹³⁹, “The challenge to wash feet for filial piety, ten thousand of people washed feet in Yichun, setting the Guinness World Record” from Xinhuanet Jiangxi Channel¹⁴⁰, etc. Obviously, the word “Guinness” appears in every title, while the word “filial piety” only appears 1/3 of the three titles.

As a matter of fact, Guinness has truly become a popular word in various mass activities in the mainland. Like the Guinness World Record of “the longest Tai Chi marathon” in March of 2006, the Guinness World Record of “largest Gu’zheng performance” of 2007, the Guinness World Record of “the longest marathon playing Mahjong” in December of 2012, the Guinness World Record of “the most people eating breakfast in bed” in August of 2015, the Guinness World Record of “largest prenatal yoga class” in October of 2015, the Guinness World Record of “the largest Wing Chun display” in January of 2015, the Guinness World Record of “the largest square dance” in November of 2015, and so on¹⁴¹. Based on all those materials, “the most people washing feet” record is much more like another mass activity to break a Guinness Record rather than an event to carry specific or important cultural meanings. Guinness itself represents a global and modern culture, while in the case of the foot-washing event, it is just utilized to push a show onto a bigger stage.

¹³⁸ “最多人洗脚”吉尼斯世界纪录诞生——人民网

¹³⁹ 江西宜春现万人同时洗脚 创吉尼斯世界纪录——新华网

¹⁴⁰ 孝心洗脚挑战，宜春“万人同时洗脚”创吉尼斯纪录——新华网江西频道

¹⁴¹ <http://news.163.com/15/1027/09/B6U1ND9600011229.html> “中国‘人海式’吉尼斯纪录：最多人同时洗脚吹蜡烛”

The idea of this event was raised by the local government and organized and invested by companies. Only the first five cultural festivals “The Moon Culture Festival”¹⁴² were totally invested by the government. The foot-washing activity was only one small part for the celebration of the Moon Culture Festival in 2014. It was held in a holiday village and the water used in the event to wash people’s feet was the product from this village, which intended to gain profit from tourism and tourists. And the mayor of Jiangxi Province once said the purpose of The Moon Culture Festival was to develop tourism of Yichun. Therefore, it is clear that the reason to organize the foot-washing activity is not purely for promoting filial piety but much more for economic interests.

In the text, it mentioned that “children washed their parents’ feet, daughters-in-law washed their mothers-in-law’s feet, grandchildren washed their grandparents (grandparents to father’s side)” (儿女们给父母洗脚、儿媳给婆婆洗脚，孙子孙女给爷爷奶奶洗脚), while mentioned nothing about the sons-in-law or grandparents on mothers’ side. This kind of unfair emphasis is also typical in the imperial China and the old tradition continues in this respect. Moreover, only 3,000 pairs of the participants, less than half of all, had parent-child relations, and the rest huge part of the participants are totally strangers, like students who were gathered in school and led to the site to wash strangers’ feet. Filial piety, in ancient Chinese society, is practiced within their own families, and meant for children to fulfill toward their own parents. Those who are involved in this should have blood relationship at least. Yet in the modern mass activity of filial piety, blood connection seems to be the last thing one should concern. That is a big change when the traditional filial piety turns into the newly promoted one which fits the modern society well.

Also, as I have mentioned many times in the previous sections, there have appeared many different forms for mass activities to express filial piety among modern Chinese people. Except the foot-washing event, the most influential should be the kowtow performance. However, if comparing those two, it is not difficult to notice the differences in acceptance and mass comments between them. While foot-washing performance wins tears from young or

¹⁴² The Moon Culture Festival 月亮文化节, is a festival hosted by the city Yichun. It started from the year 2007 and held annually with different festival themes for every year.

old parents, kowtow is condemned as deformed inheritance from the feudalism. Just as the aforementioned materials in the background section, Confucianism was totally rejected as a crucial tool serving the feudalism, filial piety as its core value was of course struck down at the same time. Series of actions against the feudal remnants for filial piety were encouraged to an unprecedented degree, for example, reporting anti-revolution thoughts or speeches of your closest relatives (reporting your own parents became very popular for its extremity). That led to the collapse of the basis of people's social relations and familial morality. And now, kowtow performance just takes the role to be criticized as "feudal remnants" 封建残余 to carry the meaning of filial piety. While washing parents' feet, which was not a popular way to show filial characteristics in feudal periods, escapes the fate of been condemned and be highly appreciated. As Qian (2007) claims, the "national studies craze" is not limited to administrative orders from the government, it has already become a tide pushed voluntarily by the masses. Therefore many activities held by common people or organizations lack in powerful and efficient guidance from the officials¹⁴³, which ended up bringing improper means to promote traditional filial piety. And because of the deficiency of official guidance, the means to express traditional values will not be stable, which makes them difficult to become a strict and fixed ritual.

At the beginning of the text from the Xinhuanet Jiangxi Channel, it uses a line "Filial piety ranks first among all the good deeds, filial piety is the basis for all the acts" 百善孝为先, 百行孝为本 which is displayed in one pattern of old Chinese poems. This kind of traditionally formed line tries to get the readers into the traditional environment as soon as possible. The lines constructed in old ways to some extent provides legitimacy for the foot-washing event. Also, in the text it mentioned that some children came from faraway to attend the event for their parents who were already visiting the holiday village¹⁴⁴. As generally known, although being filial can not directly lead one into a governmental position as in the Han dynasty, to be filial today is still one of the ways to promote one's social identification and reputation. So when the tempo of people in modern society has quickened a lot, they tend to ask for efficiency. If he/she wants to get social recognition through filial practices, obviously it is

¹⁴³ Qian, Shu. (2007) "Strengthening the Research and Guidance of the Continuous and Healthy Development of the National Studies Craze" in *Theoretical Horizon*, (1), p 29

¹⁴⁴ The original text is: 还有不少已经在这里疗养或度假的游客, 他们的儿女得知要举行这样一个活动, 特意从外地赶来, 在这个特别的日子里为父母尽孝道.

more efficient to wash their parents' feet on limited public occasions than do it privately at home every day. Together with the stage and host set in the middle of the activity site, the swarming visitors amongst those participants, the billboard held by the woman as the photos following show, the performing color is so much clearly presented.





In mainland China, washing parents' feet is a way to propagate filial virtues and ingrain hierarchical roles into children's minds. For example, the promotion system introduced by the CCP in 2006 in Jinchang City is based on traditional Chinese values of filial piety, and it put up the old idea that only a filial son is a good official. Officials' personal matters are examined to evaluate their abilities as officials, like whether they show proper filial devotion to parents, whether they take care of their spouses and children, and whether they have good relations with their neighbors.

The practice of foot-washing itself ignores the dignity of the younger generation. It is more about obedience than demonstrating a filial attitude. Lowering one's head and kneeling to wash others' feet from appearance is to show one degrade himself/herself in front of the others. Unlike people sending flowers or writing cards, there is clear hierarchy differences between those whose feet get washed and who wash those feet.

Also, we learn from the materials that many parents are moved when their children help wash their feet, some even have tears in their eyes, which can also be found in the reality show “Amazing Filial Child”¹⁴⁵. It has become quite common that a parent is seen crying when his/her child washes his/her feet. In the work of Emile Durkheim (1965), he argues that the “effervescence” of the emotions produced in rituals was a way of unifying a collectivity or group.¹⁴⁶ While, in the case of this paper, in order to dig into the causes of this, a concept of “ethic of responsibility” can be introduced into this paper. Originally this concept appeared in a speech by Max Weber at Munich University.¹⁴⁷ He said:

We must be clear about the fact that all ethically oriented conduct may be guided by one of two fundamentally differing and irreconcilably opposed maxims: conduct can be oriented to an ‘ethic of ultimate ends’ or to an ‘ethic of responsibility.’ This is not to say that an ethic of ultimate ends is identical with irresponsibility, or that an ethic of responsibility is identical with unprincipled opportunism. Naturally nobody says that. However, there is an abysmal contrast between conduct that follows the maxim of an ethic of ultimate ends—that is, in religious terms, ‘The Christian does rightly and leaves the results with the Lord’—and conduct that follows the maxim of an ethic of responsibility, in which case one has to give an account of the foreseeable results of one’s action.

About the representations of people who hold these two different ethics, Max Weber added:

You may demonstrate to a convinced syndicalist, believing in an ethic of ultimate ends, that his action will result in increasing the opportunities of reaction, in increasing the oppression of his class, and obstructing its ascent—and you will not make the slightest impression upon him. If an action of good intent leads to bad results, then, in the actor’s eyes, not he but the world, or the stupidity of other men, or God’s will who made them thus, is responsible for the evil. However, a man who believes in an ethic of responsibility takes account of precisely the average deficiencies of people; as Fichte has correctly said, he does not even have the right to presuppose their goodness and perfection. He does not feel in a position to burden others with the results of his own actions so far as he was able to foresee them; he will say: these results are ascribed to

¹⁴⁵ See note 59. The 6th episode aired on February 27th of 2016. In the episode, a father’s tear welled in his eyes when his celebrity daughter washed his feet.

¹⁴⁶ Emile Durkheim (1965) *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*

¹⁴⁷ Published as “Plitik als Beruf,” *Gesammelte Politische Schriften* (Muenchen, 1921), pp. 396-450. Originally a speech at Munich University, 1918, published in 1919 by Duncker & Humblodt, Munich. Translated and edited by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, pp. 77-128, New York: Oxford University Press, 1946.

my action. The believer in an ethic of ultimate ends feels ‘responsible’ only for seeing to it that the flame of pure intentions is not quenched: for example, the flame of protesting against the injustice of the social order. To rekindle the flame every anew is the purpose of his quite irrational deeds, judged in view of their possible success. They are acts that can and shall have only exemplary value.

This concept of “ethic of responsibility’ is found quite useful to be applied to the current filial situation in mainland China.¹⁴⁸ According to the situation in China, Yang and He (2004) have given some new meanings to this concept. Firstly, it is associated with the traditional culture, a result made by the cultural elements left in people’s minds; secondly, it owns a moral component; thirdly, “ethic of responsibility” is accepted and pursued by most of the social members.¹⁴⁹ In modern China, this “ethic of responsibility” is almost held by all the parents. When referring to the relationship between elderly parents and adult children, the elderly tend to stress on their duty and responsibility towards their children, yet show generous forgiveness when their children do not fulfill the filial piety well. Like they try to support themselves financially and mentally, sometimes even busy themselves relieving the burdens on their children’s shoulders, sacrificing their free time to take care of their grandchildren for example. Under such circumstances, it is not difficult to understand those parents’ tears when their feet are washed by their children. Because on normal days they expect too little from their children, any of the children’s acts for them, little as washing their feet, could easily touch their hearts and bring tears to their eyes.

In the following part, I will use materials about foot-washing ceremony in Taiwan to compare with the ones in mainland China, in order to get a more comprehensive perspective for the study in this paper.

Firstly, about the similarities, the foot-washing events in Taiwan and mainland China both show more or less financial needs from such a performance, yet for the mainland it is put on

¹⁴⁸ Yang Shanhua & He Changmei (2004) “Ethic of Responsibility and Family Support for the Elderly of Urban Residents—a Case Study of “Survey of the Elderly in Beijing”” in *Journal of Peking University (Humanities and Social Sciences)* (1), p 71-84

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, p 73. The original text in Chinese is: 第一，它与传统文化相联系，含有观念沉积的意味；第二，它亦有道德的成分；第三，它具有普适性，即这种“责任伦理”是为社会的大多数成员接受并奉行的。

the top of its list, but for Taiwan like Yilan, the culture meaning of such an activity is what it pursues most. Besides, for the activities in Taiwan and mainland China, women were always put as the main subject to get their feet washed and also to wash others' feet. This contrasting attitude reflected the conflict between modernity and tradition. Women's right are better protected in modern world and meanwhile as a tradition women are always the ones to deal with domestic work, taking care of the old and the young for example. Moreover, both of the scopes of practicing filial piety have been expanded. For Taiwan, filial piety now is often connected with respect for teachers, while in mainland China, filial piety has now been expanded to all the old and the young, quite an expansive one. If further, the notion of filial piety can be directed to equate with loyalty toward one's nation and country in China.

For foot-washing in Taiwan, it shows a lot of differences than in the mainland. Regarding both the events happened in Yilan or before the Presidential Office, the officials both played a more important role than that in the mainland. In Taiwan, the foot-washing events are organized by the government, and governmental officials always attend such events, either local ones or central ones. Also, the events held in Taiwan are either in free parks or in front of the Presidential Office, rather than a holiday village which accommodates only tourists who have paid the price. Unlike the Guinness foot-washing event, no direct economic elements are involved into the event.

Such activities have been held in Taiwan since the year 2008 and 2013 respectively to the current year and can be expected to carry on to the future, yet the one in mainland was just a one-time show. Yilan in Taiwan intends to set filial piety as its representative logo and use the repetitive performance to enhance such an impression. But the foot-washing show in mainland China was only one of many shows in an annual cultural festival, in other words just a strategy to push the tourism in the certain city. In this respect, filial piety is obviously more emphasized in the show of Taiwan than mainland China.

The next is that events in both places of Taiwan have a fixed time (Mother's Day and the eve of Senior Citizens Day respectively) and continued for several years without break (the one in

Yilan started from the year of 2008, and the one before the Presidential Office in Taipei started from the year of 2013), together with strict steps to do the foot-washing (first bow to their parents, kneel to present them a cup of tea, massage and pound their backs, then kneel on one knee to wash their feet), which made foot-washing as a ritualized collective act to carry the meaning of filial piety. By comparison, the foot-washing event breaking the Guinness Records is just one-time thing, without fixed time. Also, it has no strict procedures as Taiwan does. The foot-washing activity in the mainland is just one of the ways people or the local government tries to organize mass activities, just like the kowtow performance. No doubt that it has already become a symbol for modern filial piety throughout mainland China, yet it still has a long way to be ritualized. The mainland government treats mass activities like a taboo, like the lessons it learnt from the Falungong. Stability is of the most importance for the government, therefore every kind of mass activities is under strict control and restraint. To conclude, comparing with the situation in Taiwan, it will be difficult for the foot-washing event to become a regular activity or ritual in mainland China, and can barely expected to connect clearly with political meanings. As is mentioned above, “people who routinely performed proper rituals were expected to recognize their social and ethical obligations and act on them”¹⁵⁰ For the building of foot-washing ritual, the deeds are better done in Taiwan than in mainland China.

Another difference is that in Taiwan, almost every participants in the foot-washing ceremonies were blood related, while in the Guinness foot-washing event in mainland China, more than half of the participants are totally strangers. In the report of foot-washing in Taiwan, there only mentioned that a young girl washed her classmate’s mother’s feet because the classmate himself was dead of illness. It is to say foot-washing ceremonies in Taiwan are primarily aiming at the contact between parents and children, not so wide extending to strangers. But in mainland China there was no such a limit—parents’ can be other people’s and the ones who accept the service can be very young adults. Moreover, the one held in Yilan of Taiwan often put being filial to parents and respectful for teachers together, while in mainland China often extends the point of being filial to parents to loyal to your country.

¹⁵⁰ Patricia Ebrey (1991) *Confucianism and Family Rituals in Imperial China: A Social History of Writing about Rites*, p 7

And also, from the photos following this paragraph, it is clear that those whose feet were washed were mostly the elderly, yet those in mainland China those whose feet were washed were rather young women. As a matter of fact, they were not the one who needed to be taken care in their prime years. Also, for the city Yilan, it intends to plant the filial piety as a soul spirit for their hometown, like a slogan to represent the culture of the city.





Moreover, a relationship between the foot-washing events in Taiwan and western culture should be noticed. For Yilan, the ceremony was held on Mother's Day every year. According to Wikipedia, Mother's Day is a modern celebration and very important in the western world¹⁵¹. And also, this foot-washing practice originated from Taiwan, where Christianity is widely acknowledged. And in the Christianity culture, foot-washing has existed for thousands of years. Although no direct proof can prove the relationship between the two, it provides an interesting perspective for the future research.

What is the reason for choosing foot-washing as the way to express filial piety in a modern society? There is no evident answers to that question, yet when digging into the social and cultural background, some thoughts can be provided in this respect.

¹⁵¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mother%27s_Day

As the aforementioned materials in the background section, Confucianism was totally rejected as a crucial tool serving the feudalism, filial piety as its core value was of course struck down at the same time. Series of actions against the feudal remnants for filial piety were encouraged to an unprecedented degree, for example, reporting anti-revolution thoughts or speeches of your closest relatives (reporting your own parents became very popular for its extremity). That led to the collapse of the basis of people's social relations.

Other than that, in the old days, people used to live in large extended families, while now due to the mobility for the young generation, there are more nuclear families, which result in the lack of proximity. Young adults live far in big cities because of large-scale exodus when their old parents are left in villages, or grandparents shoulder the responsibility to care for their grandchildren in order to relieve the burden on their young children's back. So with fewer time to stay together, family members need way much closer to contact with each other. Unlike western culture, hugging and kissing should not be put too much hope for Chinese people to communicate. Washing their parents' feet rather than cooking or doing household chores seems a more plausible choice to draw near their relations.

The Confucian body is not a discrete somatic object. It does not pose a world in terms of a radical or epistemological otherness. The Confucian body is rather a focal point of relationships centered around the primary relationship between parents and child¹⁵². In Confucian doctrine, physical abuse of human's body is forbidden. "Dare not to hurt even your hair and skin you get from your mother and father." "Our bodies...are not our own possession pure and simple; they are sacred gifts from our parents and thus laden with deep ethicoreligious significance" (Tu 1985,118). Such a rule can only be broken in extreme occasions for the purpose of performing filial duties, such as boiling a piece of flesh from his/her body to cure an ill parent.

¹⁵² Blake, C. F. (1994) "Foot-binding in neo-Confucian China and the Appropriation of Female Labor" in *Signs*, 19(3), p 676-712.

When looking at those foot-washing activities, it is not difficult to notice that among those whose feet are washed there are almost only women. And when mentioning women's feet in traditional Chinese society, it is inevitable to think about the foot-binding tradition. As Blake says in his article *Foot-binding in Neo-Confucian China and the Appropriation of Female Labor*, Neo-Confucianism was institutionalized as the dominant discourse from around the tenth century to the end of the nineteenth century, within which period foot-binding was more or less popular¹⁵³. And the author also mentioned that in Neo-Confucian China foot-binding was a voluntary ordeal undertaken by mothers to inform their daughters of how to succeed in a world authored by men. Women bend their feet to represent to process to bend their will to the will of male authority.

Although the Manchu dynasty (1644-1911) had forbidden foot-binding by imperial fiat from the beginning of its reign, it was the modern revolution with its patriotic appeal to “unleash the labor power of women” that finally spelled its end. The practice lingered in the cities for twenty years into the Republican period and held on in remote parts of the countryside until the Great Leap Forward of 1958-60¹⁵⁴. So that is to say, even after the People's Republic of China was established, foot-binding had also played a role in people's daily life for quite some time. Like a slang says, “old lady's footbinding cloth is smelly as it is long.” Foot is generally thought to be the dirtiest body part, and the foot-binding tradition makes women's feet sound even dirtier. So it makes sense that if a child can wash his/her female elders' feet, he/she must be filial.

In traditional Chinese society, women are confined to their own families, a limited space while men are the ones to take care of the outside world. Yet in foot-washing events, women, no matter they wash others' feet or their feet be washed, take the majority part of the show, in other words standing on the front stage. Through thus a positive role in such activities, it challenges the traditional ways to separate social roles for different genders.

¹⁵³ Ibid, p 694.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, p 706.

In the article '*Washing men's feet*': gender, care and migration in Albania during and after communism, the author listed out key features in "traditional" Albania family, which share the same social context of patriarchy, so I borrow here to help understand traditional Chinese society. First, patriarchal hierarchy confers status, privilege and omnipotence to age and male gender. Second, sons are exalted over daughters. Third, unmarried females are first "owned" by their fathers before being passed into the "possession" of the husbands upon marriage. Also women are usually the ones shouldering care duties in a family¹⁵⁵.

"Traditional" intergenerational care within the family made way for state-run collective care during socialism—particularly for children—as women were required to join the labour force and build socialism. Yet, collectivized care was often inadequate¹⁵⁶. Women are expected to continue the care duty and meanwhile their work in the outside world. That's why the majority of those who wash others' feet in the events are women. On the other side, with the modern development, prevalence of education, globalization, prosperity of feminist moments, etc. women's social status are much more improved. In order to follow this modern trend, the people who get their feet washed in those events are also mostly women.

4.3 Analysis of the Article *Filial Piety and Culture of Gratitude*

In mainland China, in official discourse about promoting filial piety, it can be often noticed that the word "gratitude" is often brought up and given noticeable emphasis. Among a great deal of materials, I pick up an article posted on the China.com.cn (*zhongguowang*). The first reason for this choice is that this website is a key national news website governed by China International Publishing Group¹⁵⁷, the articles on which can represent an official and formal voice. The second reason is that the content of this specific article is concise, comprehensive and can offer governmental logic for the correlation between filial piety and the culture of

¹⁵⁵ Vullnetari, J., & King, R. (2016) "'Washing men's feet': gender, care and migration in Albania during and after communism" in *Gender, Place & Culture*, 23(2), p 201.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p 210.

¹⁵⁷ http://baike.baidu.com/link?url=qL5CY_gheKlZH9BswCafM7JvXH3eL5Hd5jU291O3yFqdcqnZ6Rbf7oAGcmF8e3l-PeV8sUDPmtj4oM2CEWC1Z_

gratitude, which is of crucial importance for an in-depth research in this paper. Meanwhile, this article has also been imported and posted on other websites for several times, which from another perspective means the value of this article. For example, in Baidu Baike, the explanation for the culture of filial piety (*xiaodao wenhua*), it copies three part of this article, which consists four parts in total, directly¹⁵⁸.

The four parts of this article are respectively as follows: first is a short introduction section, followed by detailed analysis from three different points view: (1) Filial piety, a core value of Chinese traditional culture 孝道, 我国传统文化的核心价值观; (2) Filial piety, the power of social civilization 孝道文化, 社会文明的力量; (3) Gratitude education, carrying on the culture of filial piety 感恩教育, 传承孝道文化.

In the theoretical framework listed before, “lexical metaphor” is mentioned as a way to help understand the materials. Lexical metaphor means words which generally represent one part of the world being extended to another. In this text, the word “good” 优良 is always used to describe the tradition it tries to persuade the reader to accept. The repetitive word “good” itself have influenced the readers’ free judgement, cutting the tradition into good ones and bad ones. Receiving the implication of modern filial piety being the good tradition, it will increase the likeness of the masses accepting filial duties.

In the introduction part, the author talks about the severe situation of lacking of filial piety in Chinese society which not only affects interpersonal relationship, but also the harmony of families and the entire society. Thence he emphasizes the importance and significance of filial piety and gratitude culture by mixing both of them as basic elements in Chinese traditional virtues. And also in this part filial piety and gratitude have been extended to a large scope like the whole society and the nation, which will be explained in detail in later sections.

¹⁵⁸ http://baike.baidu.com/link?url=drPDw-UbxXOQf-TPk-PhIsAzQa_45CtXIVZEDFnUdsgJWkXn5nx6aEJoRtB43H30ubfAe0whAgKqomVb3RDWta

Wang Lili argues that ageing brings two related issues: senile spirit and rich experience. And different social and cultural patterns have the different evaluations.¹⁵⁹ For ancient China with agrarian economy, experience of the old people is highly valued in the agricultural production, which provided the basis for acceptance and implementation of filial piety among common people. While in modern Chinese society, with the rapid development of technology and various occupations people are involved, experience is no longer something in great need for the young ones. The decrease of the value the old people's experience leads to the increase of disrespect attitude from the society towards them.

Bell (2010) once claims that Confucians are realists in the sense that they take for granted that power relationships and social hierarchies will exist in all large-scale societies. They worry less than Western liberals do about these relationships and hierarchies, particularly when they are based on age and achievement. If a choice must be made between social and economic equality, then Confucians would choose economic equality and make social inequality work to support it.¹⁶⁰ Therefore, from another perspective, it is not difficult to understand the inferior social status for the old people in modern Chinese society.

Then the article moves on to the parts: (1) Filial piety, a core value of Chinese traditional culture. It lists some examples in old Chinese periods when filial piety played a crucially important role and claims it as a good tradition which should be inherit and carried on to enrich ethical spirit and morality for Chinese socialism. Then for the next part: (2) Filial piety, the power of social civilization, it enlarges the sphere to practice filial piety and gratitude, except support parents both in material and spiritual needs, reproduction, consider for other people like for oneself, etc., it blends loyalty and patriotism into the concept of filial piety. For the last part (3) Gratitude education, carrying on the culture of filial piety, it proposes that gratitude education is the best and most suitable way to inherit filial piety in the modern world.

¹⁵⁹ Wang, Lili. (2004) "The study of Comparisons of the Family-supported-age Care System of Orient and Occident" in *Northwest Population Journal*, (6), p 21

¹⁶⁰ Bell, D. A. (2010) "Reconciling socialism and Confucianism?: Reviving Tradition in China" in *Dissent*, 57(1), p 95

In this article, the most obvious feature is that it keeps confusing the notion of filial piety and gratitude, for example saying that both of them are basic elements in traditional Chinese culture. Such a confusion can have bad influence in the real life. In the year 2015, hundreds of employees in a hotpot restaurant knelt before their employers, and the slogan they cried out was “Grateful for parents giving us lives, grateful for the company offering us jobs, grateful for customers visiting our restaurant, grateful for colleagues growing up with us”.

For the filial idea, the Western culture, affected by the Christianity, is lean to surpass the nature; while the Chinese filial piety culture and thought, influenced by the Confucian ideology, are limited to the nature.¹⁶¹ The blood ties between parents and children were always the basis for fulfilling filial obligations between individuals in ancient China. However, in the materials in the analysis part, modern filial activities, no matter in mainland China or Taiwan, includes filial between individuals without any blood connection. With the break of such a precondition, it is more easily to extend filial piety to a larger scope.

Except what mentioned above, blurring the boundary between family and society and using filial piety to help promote nationalism and patriotism inculcation should also be paid attention. When socialism ideals lose control for people’s minds, nationalism and patriotism have been put forward to fill the spiritual vacuum. And now with the trend for the revival of Confucianism, filial piety is employed to help continue the strength of nationalism and patriotism in modern Chinese society so as to maintain the social and ruling stability. As for the value of solidarity is always central to the socialist tradition.¹⁶² Whereas what is worth noticing in traditional Confucianism is that although ties should be extended from the family to the state and ultimately to the whole world, the end does not mean everyone treats everyone else as an equal. The ties should be extended with diminishing intensity, so that strangers will be treated well but without the degree of love shared among family members.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ Yuan, X., & Wang, Q. (2011) “A Tentative Study on Differences and Integration of Sino-Western Filial Piety Culture” in *Asian Social Science*, 7(8), p 97

¹⁶² Bell, D. A. (2010) “Reconciling Socialism and Confucianism?: Reviving Tradition in China” in *Dissent*, 57(1), p 96

¹⁶³ Ibid, p 96

Today, the Chinese government emphasizes “harmony” and family values such as “filial piety.” Such values may still be worth promoting, but they are often used to justify quietude and submission to the powers-that-be.¹⁶⁴ As in Chapter Three Gusfield said “the role of traditional values in the form of segmental loyalties and principles of legitimate authority are of great importance in a nation attempting to draw groups into a national identity. The revival of traditional studies in the first place aims at the inflow of western culture, so employing the traditional culture is a way to build national identity and cultivate nationalism among the masses. That is the first reason that Chinese government intends to revive the Chinese tradition and Confucianism.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, p 92

Chapter 5 Conclusion

Confucianism, once the dominant ideology in the long Chinese imperial history and a taboo for decades after the establishment of People's Republic of China, is now one of the hottest topic among the revival of traditional studies. Since the 1980s a big trend of reviving Chinese traditional culture has been witnessed throughout mainland China, by official and unofficial means at the same time, which without doubt has brought significant influences to the minds and social behaviours of Chinese people and the current political environment to a certain extent. Various phenomena can prove the existence and popularity of that trend. Many Chinese Culture Faculties/Departments (*guoxueyuan*) have been built in universities in the mainland; private schools set up national studies classes to meet the booming market for pupils and entrepreneurs; even the current president Xi Jinping attended The Ceremony of Confucius (*jikong dadian*) in the year 2014 which has never happened. Chinese national studies have been awakened in different respects, clothing, literature, philosophy, morality, or social behaviors and will continue to expand its impact on modern Chinese society.

From the 1980s, with the growing popularity of traditional Chinese studies which is called "traditional studies craze", Confucianism has once more been pushed onto the main stage of Chinese society by official or mass means. Among all the Confucian values advocated, filial piety which used to be the key element in Confucian morality takes a much positive role which should not be neglected in contemporary Chinese social studies. Many mass activities have been held in the name of reviving filial piety. Among all those diverse mass events, a close and stable relationship has been built and recognized by the very majority between foot-washing activities and the "new" filial piety.

In the first chapter, I have listed a few questions:

What are the reasons to revive and call for public attention to filial piety in contemporary mainland China?

What are the different connotations between traditional filial piety and the newly promoted filial piety?

What are the strategies the government has employed to spread the new meanings of filial piety to the masses?

How about the political and social influences of the newly promoted filial piety to contemporary China?

In order to answer those questions, emphasis has been put on the mass activities concerning the revival of filial piety in this paper, and with foot-washing activities as the case study. Because such research has never been done from this specific angle, the materials to be analyzed are chosen from video, picture and text, which include various means to present the research topic, and at the same time can provide diverse angles to dig into those activities. After all the detailed and in-depth study in the sections above, I intend to give answers to those questions.

Firstly, the reasons to revive filial piety are multi-faceted. As the aging problem worsens and the huge deficiency or even absence for governmental support in this respect, the revival of filial piety in this paper, is without doubt a strong and quite effective choice to help alleviate the burden on the ruling party's shoulder and transfer that to adult individuals. Among all the ways to advocate people to fulfil filial duties, Confucianism is the best choice for the government. As Confucian thoughts have already influenced Chinese people's minds for thousands of years and had been proved to be a powerful tool to construct people's ethical and behavioral norms through thousands of years' ruling of the imperial dynasties. But Confucianism once was condemned by the CCP and also now it is a modern society in China, in order to achieve the effect the government pursues, the meanings of old filial piety has to be adjusted or changed.

Other than the embarrassing situation the governmental support has met, the living mode has changed a lot in recent years which to some extent hold back the traditional family support for the elderly. In the old days, people used to live in large extended families, and it was convenient for family members to take care of each other. While nowadays due to the large mobility for the young generation, there appear more nuclear families, which results in the lack of proximity between family members. Young adults live far in big cities because of large-scale exodus when their old and frail parents are left in small villages, or grandparents take the responsibility to care for their grandchildren in order to relieve the burden on their young children's back which ends up with unconcerned relationship in families. So with fewer time to stay together, family members need some way closer to contact with each other. Unlike western culture, hugging and kissing should not be considered too much for Chinese people to communicate. Washing their parents' feet rather than cooking or doing household chores seems a more plausible choice to decrease their distance.

In the imperial China, although filial piety was put on the shoulder of both sons and daughters-in-law, the filial deeds did by males were the most mentioned and remembered. Because at that time filial piety connected closely with one's career (especially political career) and social reputation which mattered much for one's social relations, so males as the superior gender at that time enjoyed the advantage to be presented as the filial children in a family. Whereas in modern Chinese society, people prefer economic profit than some invisible and "worthless" morality, so fulfilling the responsibility is deemed to be more like a part of the house chores, which normally goes to women in a family. In modern families, and the women become the ones expected to fulfill the duty of filial piety and presented as the filial exemplar in her family.

Although filial piety does not mean so much in one's social relationship in modern Chinese society, under the influence of the promotion of filial piety, most people—in China, at least—do not want to be viewed as individualistic or selfish. The idea of focusing solely on individual well-being seems too self-centered. To feel good about ourselves, we also need to be good to others. Therefore Confucianism can come in to modern Chinese's life: the tradition is based on the assumption that the good life lies in social relationships, in

responsibility and political commitment. Confucian ethics is the obvious resource to help fill the moral vacuum that often accompanies modernization.¹⁶⁵ The popularity of mass activities to express filial piety in public is a way for Chinese people not to lose “face” (*mianzi*) and sometimes may even help to improve public recognition for one’s social status.

In the revival of filial piety, tradition and modernity connect closely. Sometimes the legitimacy of modernity has to be based on the tradition, and the inheritance of traditional elements has to disguise under the modern cloak. For example, in order to persuade people to carry on filial duties, the phrase “Chinese traditional virtues” (中华民族传统美德) appears almost in every case and normally is put in the first line. So the legitimacy of the newly promoted filial piety relies on the fact that filial piety once was a tradition. Also, in the analysis in the next section, it can be found that the new filial piety promotes many old elements from the traditional filial piety, like the hierarchy between the old and the young. Among all the mass activities connected with filial piety, foot-washing is the one most widely promoted. The posture of foot-washing, the young lowering his/her head to the old, represents the hierarchy. And hierarchy itself goes against modernity and individualism which modern Chinese people have already accepted, but when it is interpreted by the modern word “gratitude” (感恩) and presented in a new way, foot-washing, rather than kowtow like the old times, it can find a way to get into the minds of the masses nowadays.

Li, according to Zhu Xi, is the principle that is in everything and governs the universe, and individual should act in perfect accordance with morality¹⁶⁶. *Li* stresses the intrinsic aspect of ritual. While for the case study in this paper, it could be seen that in those mass foot-washing ceremonies held in mainland China, more efforts are put on external forms and performances, yet little for the cultivation of internal morality. Even for external forms, it lacks the basic seriousness and reverence when comparing with the foot-washing ceremonies organized in Taiwan. In Taiwan it set fixed time and procedures for making the foot-washing a ritual, whilst in mainland China, foot-washing, or other kinds of mass activities concerning filial piety is not guided into a ritual. Because among all the things, stability is of the most

¹⁶⁵ Bell, D. A. (2010) “Reconciling socialism and Confucianism?: Reviving tradition in China” in *Dissent*, 57(1), p 92

¹⁶⁶ From *Zhuzi quanshu* 《朱子全书》 (2003)

importance for the government, therefore every kind of mass activities is under strict control and restraint.

In mainland China, washing parents' feet is a way to propagate filial virtues and ingrain hierarchical roles into children's minds. For example, the promotion system introduced by the CCP in 2006 in Jinchang City is based on traditional Chinese values of filial piety, and it put up the old idea that only a filial son can be a good official. Officials' personal matters are examined to evaluate their abilities as officials, like whether they show proper filial devotion to parents, whether they take care of their spouses and children, and whether they have good relations with their neighbors.

In those mass activities intending to promote traditional cultures, they are actually more like a mass performance. Like in the foot-washing event in 2014 in mainland, those whose feet were washed were rather young women around 20s or 30s. Clearly they were not the ones who should be taken care then. And the stage setting, the host of the event, the swarming visitors flowing among the participants taking photos, all the elements prove that such an event is not developing to be a ritual, but an amusement performance.

For the Guinness element appeared in many mass activities in the mainland, on one side it can be explained as a way for the tradition to connect with the modernity, yet in fact the Guinness World Records is just been utilized to attract more attention and broaden the influence of those mass activities. For the foot-washing activities, the Guinness Record can bring in a lot more tourists, hence to increase economic interest and the local tourism industry.

The practice of foot-washing itself ignores the dignity of the younger generation. It carries the traditional attitude about obedience and submission, although it is a new act. Lowering one's head and kneeling to wash others' feet from appearance is to show one degrade himself/herself in front of the others. Unlike people sending flowers or writing cards, there is clear hierarchy differences between those whose feet get washed and who wash those feet.

Although filial piety in the long history of Chinese culture is not only a concept of caring for parents in one's own family, but also an important social norm in political order¹⁶⁷, the basis of filial obligations is built on the blood relationship between individuals. However, in the case study of this paper, such a basis is no longer preserved, and replaced by a general difference between the old and the young in the mainland. The younger ones should be filial to the older ones. Filial piety is on the way to become a common way to show respect to the old. Following this direction, the filial piety is used to cultivate nationalism and patriotism, because the revival of traditional studies will in the end enhance Chinese people's sense of identity.

In Taiwan, almost every participants in the foot-washing ceremonies were blood related. In the report of foot-washing in Taiwan, there only mentioned that a young girl washed her classmate's mother's feet because the classmate himself was dead of illness. It is to say that foot-washing ceremonies in Taiwan are primarily aiming at the contact between parents and children, not so wide extending to strangers. In recent activities, the one held in Taiwan was extended to teachers, to show respect to those who teach us, while it never goes to the direction of everyone older than him/herself as they do in mainland China.

A relationship between the foot-washing events in Taiwan and western culture should be noticed. For Yilan, the ceremony was held on Mother's Day every year. According to Wikipedia, Mother's Day is a modern celebration and very important in the western world. And also, this foot-washing practice originated from Taiwan, where Christianity is wildly acknowledged. And in the Christianity culture, foot-washing has existed for thousands of years. Although no direct proof can prove the relationship between the two, it provides an interesting perspective for the future research.

¹⁶⁷ Yuan, X., & Wang, Q. (2011) "A Tentative Study on Differences and Integration of Sino-Western Filial Piety Culture" in *Asian Social Science*, 7(8), p 98

The foot-washing activity organized by the local government of Jiangxi Province is more like a way to promote tourism than filial piety. The event was only one small part for the celebration of the Moon Culture Festival in 2014. It was held in a holiday village and the water used in the event to wash people's feet was the product from this village, which intended to gain profit from tourism and tourists. And the mayor of Jiangxi Province once said the purpose of The Moon Culture Festival was to develop tourism of Yichun. Therefore, it is clear that the reason to organize the foot-washing activity is not purely for promoting filial piety but much more for economic interests.

The government thinks mass activities are always some potential troubles for Chinese society. For example, Falun Gong, a Chinese spiritual practice, was crushed by the central government when it had reached a large number of fixed members. And today, also due to the need for doing exercises, old people especially retired women get together on squares and dance in groups. Then on September 6th of 2015, four governmental departments announced to start guiding the square dancing together. All in all, CCP is really sensitive about mass activities and willing to cost anything to maintain the current stability.

According to Fei (1983), two different modes for supporting the elderly exist in eastern and western societies. In the western society, children have no obligation to support their parents, while in China, that kind of obligation is obligatory to every adult child. If put into a formula, the one in the western society is $F1 \rightarrow F2 \rightarrow F3 \rightarrow F_n$, and the one in China is $F1 \leftrightarrow F2 \leftrightarrow F3 \leftrightarrow F_n$ ("F" means generation, " \rightarrow " means the older generation supports the younger one, " \leftarrow " means the younger generation supports the old one.). Based on the formulas, Fei gives the conclusion that the mode in the western society is "relaying mode" (*jieli moshi* 接力模式), and the mode in traditional Chinese society is "repaying mode" (*fankui moshi* 反馈模式). In this advertisement, the "repaying mode" can be clearly seen when the mother washes her mother-in-law's feet and when the boy washes his mother's feet. However, the evident emphasis on the latter one should call attention on the utilitarian mentality. In China nowadays, utilitarianism has infiltrated into the parent-child relationship. One always wants or expects something back when he/she does something for others. In imperial China when it was agricultural economy, children could get experience from their parents, but in modern

society, what once was valuable now is worthless. According to the Chinese law or the tradition, children should still support their old parents, but in this utilitarian society, they intend to ask for more and parents think in the same way and begin to sacrifice more and more.

While, in the case of this paper, another concept which is used in the research is Max Weber's "ethic of responsibility". Based on the situation in China, Yang and He (2004) have given some new meanings to this concept. It is associated with the traditional culture, owns a moral component and it is accepted and pursued by most of the social members. In modern China, this "ethic of responsibility" is almost held by all the parents. When referring to the relationship between elderly parents and adult children, the elderly tend to stress on their duty and responsibility towards their children, yet show generous forgiveness when their children do not fulfill the filial piety well. Like they try to support themselves financially and mentally, sometimes even busy themselves relieving the burdens on their children's shoulders, sacrificing their free time to take care of their grandchildren for example.

In mainland China, with the prevalence mass media, mass popularity has stepped onto the cultural and also political stage. For the future stability of ruling order, willing of the commoners will surely be guided and attached more significance. Like recently, the government has made policies to guide and direct the square dance which gather most of the aged people.

If examining closely at the developing history of the PRC, the ruling party CCP has put politics, economy and military security as its primary consideration, yet culture has never been a mentionable issue for its development. But the trend in recent years, bringing up traditional studies, Confucianism in particular, and placing it in the middle of the national stage should be worth investing more academic insights. The obvious reasons for the trend include, the slowdown of the GDP growth rate, the pouring-in of western democratic ideal, the roaring prevalence of mass media, etc. Therefore, to enhance the current ruling order and

maintain domestic social stability, culture could be another perspective or even chance for CCP's power in mainland.

If looking back at traditional Chinese politics, moral to a large extent played a more important role than law. Emperors can rule the country through moral, and different communities can harmonize with each other through moral, within which law only serves as a supplementary element. While the trend to revive Confucianism in recent years can help to demonstrate clearly a tendency for moral-abiding politics instead of law-abiding society. If that comes to be true in mainland China, it means in the future China, arbitrary policies and individual decisions will be the main measure for political ruling in Chinese society.

Bibliography

Bell, D. A. (2010) "Reconciling Socialism and Confucianism?: Reviving Tradition in China" in *Dissent*, 57(1), p 91-99

Blake, C. F. (1994) "Foot-binding in neo-Confucian China and the Appropriation of Female Labor" in *Signs*, 19(3), p 676-712

Boyer, P. (1990) *Tradition as truth and communication: a cognitive description of traditional discourse* (No. 68). Cambridge University Press.

Burr, V. (1995) *An Introduction to Social Constructionism*. London: Sage.

Chen, Jiaming, & Mosher, S. (2011) "The National Studies Craze: The phenomena, the Controversies, and some Reflections" in *China Perspectives*, (1), p 22

Cheung, K. C. K. (2012) "Away from Socialism, towards Chinese Characteristics: Confucianism and the Futures of Chinese Nationalism" in *China Information*, 26(2), p 205-218.

Choi, S. J. (2004) "Development of a New Concept of Filial Piety in Modern Korean Society" in *Geriatrics & Gerontology International*, 4(s1), p 72-73

Deng, Shi. (1906) "Lectures on the National Studies" in *Journals of the Quintessence of Chinese Culture* 《国粹学报》, (19) of the second year.

Eagleton, T. (1991) *Ideology: an introduction* (Vol. 9). London: Verso.

Elias, N., & Kilmister, R. (1991) *The symbol theory* (Vol. 9). SAGE Publications Limited.

Emile Durkheim. (1965) *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. New York: The Free Press.

Fairclough, N. (2003) *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. Psychology Press.

Fairbank, J. K., & Ch'en, T. T. (1968) *The Chinese world order: traditional China's foreign relations* (Vol. 32). Harvard University Press.

- Fei, Xiaotong. (1983) "Geriatric Support with the Changes in Family Structure" in *Journal of Peking University*, (3)
- Gill, B., & Huang, Y. (2006) "Sources and Limits of Chinese 'Soft Power'" in *Survival*, 48(2), p 17-36
- Goatly, A. (1997) *The Language of Metaphors: Literal Metaphorical*. Taylor & Francis US.
- Gusfield, J. R. (1967) "Tradition and Modernity: Misplaced Polarities in the Study of Social Change" in *American journal of sociology*, p 351-362
- Handler, R., & Linnekin, J. (1984) "Tradition, Genuine or Spurious" in *Journal of American folklore*, p 273-290
- Harrison, H. (2000) *The Making of the Republican Citizen: Political Ceremonies and Symbols in China 1911-1929: Political Ceremonies and Symbols in China 1911-1929*. Oxford University Press.
- Hart, R., Bruner, K. F., Fairbank, J. K., & Smith, R. J. (1986) *Entering China's service: Robert Hart's journals, 1854-1863* (Vol. 1). Harvard University Asia Center.
- Hevia, J. L. (1995) *Cherishing men from afar: Qing guest ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793*. Duke University Press.
- H. H. Gerth & C. Wright Mills (Translated and edited). (1946) *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hobsbawm, E., & Ranger, T. (Eds.) (2012) *The invention of tradition*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ikels, C. (Ed.). (2004) *Filial piety: Practice and discourse in contemporary East Asia*. Stanford University Press.
- Kroeber, A. L. (1948) *Anthropology*. New York: Harcourt, Brace.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980) "The metaphorical structure of the human conceptual system" in *Cognitive science*, 4(2), p 195-208
- Li, Zonggui. (2008) "National Studies and Spirit of the Time" in *Academic Research*, (3), p 21-32

- Li, Zhonghua. (2007) "Perspective and Reflection on the National Studies Craze" in *Theoretical Horizon*, (1), p 26-29
- Luo, Chengyan & Yan, Zhen. (2000) "Confucian Culture and Chinese Literature of the 20th Century" in *Literature Review*, (1), p 62-72
- Mu, Guangzong. (2012) "The Predicaments and Solutions of Institutional Support for the Elderly in China" in *Journal of Huazhong Normal University (Humanities and Social Sciences)*, 51(2), p 31-38
- Mu, Guangzong. (2000) "The Reform and Prospect of Traditional Ways to Support the Elderly" in *Journal of Renmin University of China*, (5), p 39-44
- Weber, Max (2002) *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism: and other writings*. Penguin
- Myron Cohen. (1994). 'Being Chinese: The Peripheralization of Traditional Identity', in Tu Wei-ming (ed.), *The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, p 88
- Patricia Ebrey. (1991) *Confucianism and Family Rituals in Imperial China: A Social History of Writing about Rites*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Plant, B. K. (2008) "Secret, Powerful and the Stuff of Legends: Revisiting Theories of Invented Tradition" in *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 28, p 175-194
- Qian, Shu. (2007) "Strengthening the Research and Guidance of the Continuous and Healthy Development of the National Studies Craze" in *Theoretical Horizon*, (1)
- Rosemont, H., & Ames, R. T. (2009) *The Chinese classic of family reverence: A philosophical translation of the Xiaojing*. University of Hawaii Press
- Shen, Hong. (2008) *Xiao Xing Tian Xia*. Beijing: Chinese Workers Press
- Shils, E. (1981) *Tradition*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Shoham, H. (2011) "Rethinking Tradition: From Ontological Reality to Assigned Temporal Meaning" in *European Journal of Sociology*, 52(02), p 313-340
- Lukes, S. (1975) "Political ritual and social integration" *Sociology*

- Tu Wei-Ming. (1985) *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation*. Albany, N. Y.: SUNY Press
- Tu, W. (Ed.). (1994) *The living tree: The changing meaning of being Chinese today*. Stanford University Press
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1998) *Ideology: A multidisciplinary approach*. Sage
- Vullnetari, J., & King, R. (2016) “‘Washing Men's Feet’: Gender, Care and Migration in Albania during and after Communism” in *Gender, Place & Culture*, 23(2), p 198-215
- Wang, Lili. (2004) “The Study of Comparisons of the Family-supported-age Care System of Orient and Occident” in *Northwest Population Journal*, (6), p 20-23
- Weber, M. (2002) *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism: and other writings*. Penguin.
- Westwood, R. (1997) “Harmony and Patriarchy: The Cultural Basis for 'Paternalistic Headship' among the Overseas Chinese” IN *Organization Studies*, 18(3), p 445-480
- Yang, M. C. (1945) *A Chinese Village: Taitou, Shantung Province* (Vol. 61). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Yang Shanhua & He Changmei (2004) “Ethic of Responsibility and Family Support for the Elderly of Urban Residents—a Case Study of “Survey of the Elderly in Beijing”” in *Journal of Peking University (Humanities and Social Sciences)* (1), p 71-84
- Yeh, K. H. (1997) “Changes in the Taiwan people’s concept of filial piety” in *Taiwanese society in 1990s: Taiwan social change survey symposium series II*, p 171-214
- Yuan, X., & Wang, Q. (2011) “A Tentative Study on Differences and Integration of Sino-Western Filial Piety Culture” in *Asian Social Science*, 7(8), pp. 97-106
- Zhao Lin (2009) “Reflections on “National Studies Craze”” in *Social Sciences in China*, Vol. 3
- Zhu Jieren 朱杰人, Yan Zuozhi 严佐之, and Liu Yongxiang 刘永翔 (2003) (eds.) *Zhuzi quanshu 朱子全书*. Shanghai guji, Nanjing: Anhui jiaoyu, 2003

Attachment

I

孝心洗脚挑战 宜春“万人同时洗脚”创吉尼斯纪录

http://www.jx.xinhuanet.com/news/xczj/2014-09/14/c_1112471121.htm

百善孝为先，百行孝为本。13日，“泉月春晖——我给父母洗脚”挑战吉尼斯世界纪录活动在明月山温泉风景名胜区的玉盘广场举行。经世界吉尼斯总部工作人员在活动现场仔细统计与核实，确认参加此次孝心洗脚挑战活动人数共计10289人，创造了“最多人洗脚”世界吉尼斯纪录，并颁发了证书。

当日16时，万人洗脚挑战活动拉开帷幕，以明月山景区温泉风景区玉盘广场为中心，一条条泡脚长龙向四面八方延伸，一个个木盆前，儿女们给父母洗脚、儿媳给婆婆洗脚，孙子孙女给爷爷奶奶洗脚。还有一群群穿着校服的学生，在学校集体组织下，前来为素不相识的长辈们洗脚。还有不少已经在这里疗养或度假的游客，他们的儿女得知要举行这样一个活动，特意从外地赶来，在这个特别的日子里为父母尽孝道。

据活动组委会介绍，此次万人洗脚挑战吉尼斯世界纪录活动是宜春市举行的第八届月亮文化节主题活动之一，吸引了全国各地乃至世界各地游客前来康疗养生和休闲度假。1万余人的洗脚场面，也共同见证了这项独具中国传统文化特色的吉尼斯世界纪录的产生。（殷玉涵 记者陈国菊）

II

孝道与感恩文化

孝与感恩是中华民族传统美德的基本元素，是中国人品德形成的基础。我国孝道文化包括敬养父母、生育后代、推恩及人、忠孝两全、缅怀先祖等，是一个由个体到整体，修身、齐家、治国、平天下的延展攀高的多元文化体系。

人间有三大真情：亲情、友情、爱情。如今，亲情缺认、友情缺位、爱情缺真的现象屡见不鲜。特别是在亲情方面出现的“六亲不认”的不孝与不感恩现象导致的问题已构成社会问题，影响了人际和谐、家庭和谐、社会和谐建设的进程与质量。孝与感恩是中华民族的最基本的传统美德，是中国人传统美德形成的基础，也是政治道德、社会公德、职业道德、家庭美德，个人品德建设的基本元素，也是当今政治文明、经济文明、精神文明建设不可忽视的精神支柱和精神力量。所以，给予我国孝道文化以科学和现代的诠释，对当下公民教育大有裨益。

一、孝道，我国传统文化的核心价值观

孝道是中国传统社会十分重要的道德规范，也是中华民族尊奉的传统美德。在中国传统道德规范中，孝道具有特殊的地位和作用，已经成为中国传统文化的优良传统。

舜是中国古代守孝的第一君主。中国传统文化是以孝敬父母为核心的孝道文化。传说很久以前我国有个君主叫舜。舜出生在一个穷苦家庭，年幼丧母，父亲是瞎子。后来父亲又娶后妻，生一子叫象。从此后母常虐待舜，后来连父亲也讨厌舜。每当父母发狠心要杀死舜时，舜只好逃跑。可当父母生病需要人照顾时，舜又回到他们身边，尽力服侍父母，还处处让着弟弟。舜的孝心感动了天地，当舜在历山的农田耕田时，竟有大象跑来帮他犁田，小鸟飞来替他播种。后来尧帝发现并提拔了舜，让舜协助自己来管理国家大事。舜在尧手下干了28年，做过各种各样的官，都很称职。最后，尧把帝位传给了舜。尧之所以选中舜为帝位继承人，就是因为舜不仅有才干，而且是个

大孝子。可见，把孝亲敬老视为最崇高的美德，作为选拔官员的标准是自远古就沿袭流传下来的，并时代相袭、贯穿百代。

如周代孝道作为人的基本品德。当时提出的“三德”【至德（道）、敏德（行）、孝德】“三行”（学孝行，以亲父母；学友行，以尊贤良；学顺行，以事师长）。成为社会道德教化的核心内容；春秋时期强化礼教。《左传》中有“六顺”：君义、臣行、父慈、子孝、兄爱、弟敬；孔子继承了商周的伦理思想，创建了独特的以仁为核心的儒家伦理道德体系。他创私学把孝放在教学首位，作为道德的根本。强调“君子务本，本立而道生，孝悌也者，其为仁之本与”；孟子发展孔子思想。以“人性善”论为理论基础，提出仁、义、礼、智（亦即：恻隐之心、羞恶之心、辞让之心、是非之心），孝、悌、忠、信。孟子说：“世俗所谓不孝有五：惰其四肢，不顾父母之养，一不孝也；博弈好欲酒，不顾父母之养，二不孝也；好货财，私妻子，不顾父母之养，三不孝也；从耳目之欲，以父母戮，四不孝也；好勇斗狠，以危父母，五不孝也”；朱熹是后汉儒家思想的集大成者。朱熹在继承儒家传统思想的基础上，吸收、整合了佛道思想，构成了一套系统的、严密的、哲理化的道德教育思想，他提出孝、悌、忠、信、礼、义、廉、耻。他把“父子有亲，君臣有义，夫妇有别，长幼有序，朋友有信”作为“五教之目”。朱熹把学校教育分为小学（8~15岁）、大学（16岁以后）两个阶段，无论小学大学，都以“明人伦”为目的。他主张小学要学习“洒扫、应对、进退之节”，遵守“孝、悌、忠、信”等道德规范。大学要“明明德”，修身、齐家、治国、平天下；20世纪初，以孙中山、章太炎为代表的资产阶级革命派，进一步提出“道德革命”、“家庭革命”口号。孙中山提出了“忠孝、仁爱、含义、和平”等八德目的道德规范，重新解译并赋予其民主主义的新内容。

综上所述，孝道贯百代，上下五千年。孝道已成为了中华民族繁衍生息、百代相传的优良传统与核心价值观。为了维护、形成这个孝道传统，在周朝，每年举行一次大规模的“乡饮酒礼”活动，旨在敬老尊贤。礼法规定，70岁以上的老人有食肉的资格，享受敬神一样的礼遇。春秋战国时，70以上的老人免一子赋役；80岁以上的老人免两子赋役；90岁以上老人，全家免赋役。在中国民俗中，还有隆重的老年仪式礼。在民间60岁的老人可以接受子孙的祝寿；在宫廷中，则有皇帝亲自主持尊老的礼仪。东汉时期，皇帝带头倡导养老敬老之礼。清朝年间还举行过大型的尊老敬老活动——千寿

宴。康熙六十一年（1722）正月初二，在乾清宫宴请 65 岁以上的老人，共有 1020 人。筵席上，老人和康熙平起平坐，皇子皇孙侍立一帝，给老人倒酒。康熙还即兴赋诗，名曰《千叟宴诗》。为保障崇孝风尚因化，历代皇帝采取褒奖孝行、劝民孝行的各种举措。汉文帝时，诏令天下郡守，推举孝廉之士，授以官爵；隋唐开始实行的科举制度中，均专门设立孝廉科名。在整个封建时代，《孝经》是国家规定的教材，开科取士的考评依据。小孩子从入学起便从童蒙教材《三字经》、《弟子规》中诵读“首孝悌，次见闻”。此外，严惩不孝。隋唐后的刑律皆将不孝列入等同谋反不予宽赦的“十大恶”之中。杀父母者历代皆凌迟处死。明律中，凡不顺从父母致使父母生气的事皆视为忤逆，可告于官，要打板子直至判刑。民间流传的“打爹骂娘，天打雷劈”，表明不孝者皆为世人所不齿，天地所不容。

“百善孝为先”，“夫孝，德之本也。”孝道文化是中国传统文化的基本文化，“民用和睦，上下无怨”，又是和谐文化，中国特色文化。作为中国特色社会主义社会理应承继这份道德遗产，发展这份优良传统，丰富中国特色社会主义的伦理精神与道德规范。

二、孝道文化，社会文明的力量

孝，狭义说就是善事父母；广义说，就是孔子说的“始于事亲，中于事君，终于立身”。感恩，狭义说就是感激父母，广义说，就是感激自然，感激社会，感激祖国，感激所有帮过自己的人。孝与感恩是以孝敬父母为本的孝道文化的基本元素。孝是感恩的前提与基础，是人内在的品质，属于魂，感恩是孝的体现，是人外在的品行，属于形。孝与感恩是思想，是态度，是文化，是行为，是素养，是文明。不孝，便不知感恩，不知感恩，便是不孝。孝是人性，孝是根本，孝是至德。

几千年前，孔子曾写出一部被誉为“使人高尚和圣洁”、“传之百世而不衰”的不朽名著《孝经》，千百年来被视作金科玉律，上至帝王将相，下至平民百姓，无不对其推崇备至，产生了人类文明的伟大力量，成为独特的中国孝道文化。

孔子提倡的孝道文化，其内涵可以从如下五方面来理解：

敬养父母。这是对双亲而言。敬养父母双亲是人类的天性。孔子认为：“父子之道，天性也。”意思是说，父母培养教育子女，子女奉养父母，这是人类一种天性。又说：

“孝子之事亲也，居则致其敬，养则致其乐，病则致其忧，丧则致其严，五者备矣，然后能事亲。”这是孝敬父母的天性五种表现：在日常起居生活中以最诚敬的心情任劳任怨地服侍父母；父母生病时以最忧虑的心情照料父母；父母过世时以最哀痛的心情来料理后事；举行祭祀时以最严肃的态度来追思父母。这五方面做到，才称得上是能侍奉双亲的孝子，也才能算是真正体现了人的孝亲的圣洁本性。

中国人讲孝，既重赡养，也重视心理关怀和内心愉悦。在有些人看来，父母到了老年，不能自食其力了，做子女的从经济物质上养活他们，使他们吃穿不愁，也就算报答生育之恩了。孔子不同意这种观点。他说“今之孝者，是谓能养，至于犬马，皆能有养，不敬，何以别乎？”。孔子强调“敬”，认为仅仅“能养”是不够的。所以，孝敬父母应在既养又敬上下工夫。在家不仅应主动承担家务劳动，减轻父母家务负担，而且应从思想上，尊重父母意见和教导，经常把生活、学习、思想情况告诉父母。外出和到家，向父母打招呼。在外地读书或工作，经常写信或电话汇报情况，或经常回家看看，免去父母挂心。

孝敬不等于盲从。孔子在《孝经·谏诤章》说：“父有争子，则身不陷于不义。帮当不义，则子不可以不争于父；臣不可以不争于君。”孔子态度十分鲜明，他反对一味盲从，反对愚忠愚孝。主张做父亲的若有能谏诤的儿子，就不会陷于不义的行为之中，做儿子的若看到父亲有不义的行为，就应该直言相劝；对父母有意义，有礼貌的提出，不应和父母吵架耍态度。为人臣子的若看到君王有不义的行为，就应该进言劝止。这些都体现了孔子的辩证思想和民主思想。

生育后代。这是对后人而言。人类生命是一个链条，民族兴衰关键在后代。生育后代既是生命延续与民族繁衍的需要，也是承继孝道文化的责任与义务。生育后代，提高后代的质量，在当代绝不是个人一家的行为，而是培养社会主义事业接班人和建设者，强我、壮我中华民族之后的需要。

推恩及人。这是对他人而言。孝道分养亲、敬亲、尊亲三个层次外，还强调“推恩”。孟子说过：“古之人所以大过人者，无他焉，善推其所为而已矣。”又说：“老吾老以及人之老，幼吾幼以及人之幼。”其意思就是在人与人相处中，应当推己及人，推恩及人，使孝道得以升华。把孝亲敬老的美德推广到同学、师长及社会每个成员，既尊

敬热爱自己的父母长辈，也兼及他人的父母长辈，使全社会人与人之间都能够互尊互爱，和谐相处。

中华人民共和国成立以后，进一步继承发扬了“孝敬父母”的传统美德，共和国的宪法中不仅将赡养父母列为儿女的义务，而且在公共福利事业中，建立、发展、壮大了社会主义敬老事业，形成了良好的健康的社会道德环境。

忠孝两全。这是对国家而言。孝忠相通，孝始忠结。孔子说：“夫孝，始于事亲，中于事君，终于立身。”曾子说：“孝子善事君。”把对父母的孝心转化为对国家的忠心，把对家的责任感转移对国的责任感，这是儒家孝道观的一大特点。自古忠臣多出于孝子，尽孝与尽忠是相辅相成的，孝与忠有着内在联系和共同本质的“两位一体”。小家与大家本质相通。

毛泽东在战争年代，曾提出忠孝问题，他说我们提倡忠孝不是忠于某一个人，孝于某一个人，为国家尽忠，为民族尽孝就是最大的孝。把“不独亲其亲”、“老吾老”的传统美德，熔炼、提升为革命传统美德。在这种思想道德观念指导下，许多革命烈士通过尽“忠”去实现“孝”，积极投身革命，解放全中华的父老双亲，使其从根本上改善政治、经济地位，实践了“最大的孝”，体现了最大的忠。在改革开放和现代化建设中将孝道文化精神与爱国主义、社会主义紧密结合起来，以报效祖国和人民，不断推进中国特色社会主义伟大事业。这是，广大青少年应具备的广义的“孝与感恩”的崇高品德，是传统美德现代化的需要。

缅怀先祖。这是对亡者而言，就是“无念尔祖，聿修厥德”，意思是始终不忘思念先祖，继承遗志，将他们的功德修养发扬光大。父母在，能够一直孝敬，父母死后，则慎行其身，不给父母带来恶名；同时既擅自珍摄，保全自己，又能立身行道，扬名于后世，以显父母英名，这是始终在尽孝道。

人死后坟头有人填土、年节有人祭奠。这是人们对死者的祭日以及传统节日，如清明节上坟扫墓等祭奠的活动，是生者对死者寄托的哀思与缅怀，也是中国孝道文化的内涵与礼数。可是文革横扫“四旧”把人们的纪念活动传统视为封建迷信而加以批判，严重地破坏了人类孝与感恩的伦理常情和秩序。对革命先烈、对死去的亲人，慎终追

远，缅怀思念，这是中国孝道文化代代相袭、辈辈相传的伟大特色与伟大内涵，是中国人一种永恒的孝道和仁爱的体现。永远不应废止，也不能废止。

总之，在中国传统社会中，儒家历来视孝与感恩为“人伦之公理”，将它作为维护社会伦理关系和政治统治的重要手段，并且把孝与感恩和“忠君”、“爱国”相联系，以“孝”为“修身、齐家、治国、平天下”的出发点，使孝与感恩这种调节亲子关系的道德规范扩展为具有社会普遍意义的行为准则，成为社会教化的基本内容。

三、感恩教育，传承孝道文化

孝与感恩中华民族传统美德。自古就有“谁言寸草心，报得三春晖”、“滴水之恩，当涌泉相报”的经典名句。孝敬父母是子女的伦理规范与道德责任，是做人的修养与觉悟。新的历史条件下，与时俱进地开展感恩教育是对孝道文化最好的继承。

大力提倡亲情教育。感恩是人类社会最朴实的情感表达，是社会道德和社会和谐的基本要求。知父母恩是尊敬父母的前提。提倡诵读如《论语》、《孝经》、《礼记》、《弟子规》等经典，使人们特别是使未成年人从传统文化典籍中汲取思想养分，懂得孝敬和感恩父母。

开展丰富多彩的孝与感恩的教育活动。在学校和社区可开设孝敬课、感恩课，可以采取学科渗透、主题活动等方式。例如，给母亲梳头，给父亲洗脚，到敬老院认亲，给孤寡老人送温暖；评选孝敬父母好孩子；推荐孝亲敬老的好爸爸、好妈妈；为自己父母过生日；运用文艺手段编写传唱孝敬父母的歌曲；中学生可以到社会开展调查总结孝敬父母和不孝敬父母的典型，用身边例子教育自己的活动……通过系列活动让年轻人懂感恩、会感恩、乐感恩。

学校、家庭、社区、单位四结合共同营建弘扬中华民族传统美德良好环境。孝与感恩文化建设，要齐抓共管。学校要结合校园文化开展活动，单位要结合职业道德实际创建有效的运行模式，社区要提高执行能力建立保障机制，各种媒体应当理直气壮的宣传以孝敬父母为核心的孝道文化，使知恩、感恩、报恩形成主体主流的舆论共识，真正把我国建成一个文明和谐的社会。

文章来源：中国网

责任编辑：雨悦