

Traditional Chinese Ethics and Religions Research Project

中國傳統倫理與宗教研究計劃

Background

The traditional Chinese religions of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism form the basis of Chinese ethics, culture and heritage. They contributed to the establishment of norms in interpersonal relationships, guidelines for reward and punishment, and the theory on the relationship between man and nature. However, during the past century, these important traditional ethics and religions have been challenged by the influx of western values, religions and philosophies, and were practically destroyed by the Cultural Revolution.

Recognizing the important values and wisdom in these traditional Chinese ethics and religions, many scholars in Greater China and the world are now exploring the possibilities of adapting these forms of ancient wisdom in modern society to address spiritual emptiness and apathy of the day.

With China rising fast to becoming a world power, a set of its own unique social values should aptly be developed. The possible contribution of traditional Chinese ethics and religions toward spiritual development and establishment of values in modern China has been widely acknowledged by most scholars. However, how to adapt and repackage these two thousand year old teachings so that they can become relevant and acceptable to young people conditioned by consumerism and materialism is a topic that needs much more research and study.

Many research centres in mainland China and Taiwan have been established to address this topic. The University of Hong Kong, being a university of world-class standing, stands in the cross road of East and West. The University's School of Chinese has a long and respectable history in promoting Chinese studies. Therefore, the launching of a project to study traditional Chinese ethics and religions in the University has its urgency. The future project should establish itself as a leader in research and studies of traditional Chinese ethics and religions, and how these ethics and religions can contribute toward the development of culture and social value that have unique Chinese characteristics and, at the same time, acceptable to our youngsters in today modern society.

Mission

The mission of the project is to promote the studies of traditional Chinese ethics and religions so that their core values and other relevant attributes can contribute toward the development of harmony, spirituality and social value in today's society.

Objectives

- Arouse academic and public interest in traditional Chinese ethics and religions and how these traditional wisdoms can contribute toward the reestablishment of spirituality and social value in the society
- Arouse academic and public support to persuade the Education Bureau to add "Traditional Chinese Religions" as a viable religious tradition elective for students to choose in the New Senior Secondary Ethics and Religious Studies curriculum
- Develop a research project to draw up the curriculum and develop the learning and teaching resource package for the possible religious elective "Traditional Chinese Religions" for the subject *New Senior Secondary Ethics and Religious Studies*

- Arouse academic and public interest for research in Traditional Chinese Ethics and Religions and pave the way for establishing a research centre within the University

Major Activities

The major activities of the Project (Sept 2009 – Aug 2012)

Research Project for Secondary Education

- A research project to draw up a curriculum and develop the learning and teaching resource package for the possible new religious elective “Traditional Chinese Religions” for the subject *New Senior Secondary Ethics and Religious Studies*
- Hiring of a teaching consultant with expertise in traditional Chinese ethics and religions to help teach, promote and write the above Curriculum.
- Pilot tests for the Curriculum to be conducted in secondary schools to fine tune the Learning and Teaching Resource Package
- 2 conferences will be held on the 18th month and upon completion of the project respectively to arouse public interest in Traditional Chinese Ethics and Religious Studies, as well as to disseminate the Learning and Teaching Resource Package
- Liaison with the Education Bureau to introduce the Curriculum with request to incorporate the Curriculum into the existing New Senior Secondary Ethics and Religious Studies Curriculum, so that senior secondary students can have the right and opportunity to study traditional Chinese religions as a subject at school and take it for public examination

Promoting Traditional Chinese Ethics and Religious Studies

- Workshops, seminars and training courses on the application of traditional Chinese Ethics and Religious Studies will be conducted for the community to arouse public interest on the subject
- A media campaign will facilitate the promotion of the subject and dissemination of the Curriculum
- A writing competition on the topic “Do traditional Chinese ethics and religions still have a market?” (中國傳統倫理與宗教還有市場嗎?) to promote the subject

May 2009