

Original Paper

Faith is the Cornerstone of Civilization

Liang Wang¹

¹ Beijing Polytechnic, Beijing, China

Received: April 8, 2023

Accepted: April 23, 2023

Online Published: May 4, 2023

doi:10.22158/sss.v4n2p75

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/sss.v4n2p75>

Abstract

The theoretical construction of cultural self-confidence is not an unsourceable water or rootless wood, but a product based on the history and reality of Chinese traditional culture. This requires us to clarify the history, reality and theoretical logic on which cultural self-confidence relies in our research. Only by understanding these can we truly understand the Chinese culture we want to build and develop, and truly understand the socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era. Faith not only affects the development of the whole society, but also is closely related to the happiness of the people. So what is faith? Do we need faith? What should we believe in? The intrinsic connection between civilization, culture and faith is a concept that every Communist Party member should deeply think about and engrave in their hearts during the period of comprehensively building socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era.

1. The Essence of Faith

1.1 Faith is the Core of Human Spiritual Life

Faith is the core of human spiritual life. It not only reflects human exploration of the meaning and value of its own existence, but also affects human attitudes and behaviors towards various aspects such as society, culture, morality, art, etc. The formation and development of faith is a historical process, which is closely related to factors such as human cognitive level, living environment, social system, etc. Different times and regions have different forms of faith, such as myths, religions, philosophy, science, etc., which are different expressions and pursuits of truth by human beings. Humanity's earliest faith originated from awe of nature. In the primitive society period, humans had just evolved from the animal world into thinking individuals with subjective initiative. However, due to the lack of knowledge about the objective material world and the inability to understand various natural phenomena, they could only use so-called gods to explain various objective material world events that were beyond human power. This blind worship of natural forces due to lack of knowledge is also the embryonic form of religious belief. Therefore, faith is human cognition, adherence and pursuit of a

certain truth. With the development and progress of human society, humanity's understanding of natural phenomena and social phenomena has gradually become deeper and more extensive. In ancient civilizations, humans began to create various mythological stories to explain the origin and laws of natural phenomena and social phenomena. These mythological stories constitute the belief system of different ethnic groups and cultures. For example, in ancient Greek mythology there are many gods representing various aspects of nature and social phenomena, such as Zeus is the god of the sky, Apollo is the god of the sun, Athena is the goddess of wisdom; in ancient Egyptian mythology there are sun god Ra, death god Osiris, life goddess Isis; in ancient Indian mythology there are creator Brahma, sustainer Vishnu, destroyer Shiva. These mythological stories not only reflect human imagination and understanding of natural phenomena and social phenomena but also reflect human thinking on issues such as life, death, morality, aesthetics and value orientation.

1.2 Faith is a Value System and Moral Norm

The rulers of feudal society used people's awe of so-called "gods" to carry out religious propaganda on a large scale within their jurisdiction, educating the people to submit to the rule and willingly accept the exploitation of the ruling class in order to enter the so-called "Western Paradise" after death. In the theoretical system of religious belief, the world is divided into multiple levels. The world of human reality is defined as "the mortal world", where humans suffer and experience various tests given by gods. After death, those who pass the test will be approved by gods to enter the world of divine life and will no longer suffer from poverty, illness, war, natural disasters and other objective factors; those who fail will be relegated to hell and suffer from suffering that is a hundred times heavier than living in "the mortal world". It can be seen that for the ignorant masses of the old society, they must obediently accept the cruel exploitation of the ruling class because this is a test of so-called gods and a test of themselves. Pursuing so-called salvation according to the stages stipulated by so-called gods is no problem if done step by step, but if one is eager to enter the so-called ideal country, it will cause an impact on social stability under religious belief. Throughout human growth and development history, many cult organizations have also taken advantage of this point and instigated their followers to obtain recognition from "gods" through suicide or killing heretics. It can be seen that there are significant hidden dangers in religious beliefs in whether followers can follow doctrine step by step in production and life. Therefore, religious doctrines downplay this issue and point out that one should experience hardships in "the mortal world" until "gods" give an end to one's time in "the mortal world". However, downplaying is only a cover-up and cannot fundamentally eliminate hidden dangers.

1.3 Faith is the Spiritual Pursuit of Human Beings

As human beings continue to explore the objective world, their understanding of natural phenomena has evolved from the initial awe and worship to imitation and application. This process of exploration and cognition has become the beginning of natural science. It can be seen that humans have cognitive abilities for the objective material world. It is precisely because of this cognitive ability for the objective material world that humans gradually no longer blindly worship objective natural phenomena,

and their understanding of objective natural laws is no longer attributed to the behavior of gods, but rather studied and analyzed with a scientific perspective and methods. Communist belief was born and nurtured in such an objective and scientific soil. It not only treats objective things and natural laws with a scientific perspective but also continuously applies the scientific methods and laws it has mastered to practice to verify the correctness of the truth it has mastered.

During the transformation from feudal society to industrial society, various new social theories emerged, and there was a time when many schools of thought contended with each other. After a certain period of discussion and verification on the issue of truth, capitalism and communism became the mainstream of society as two basic ideologies. However, at its root, capitalism takes the actual benefits that people obtain in production and life as its starting point, promotes the development of productive forces, and improves people's living standards; communism starts from the perspective of the interests of all mankind, promotes productive forces and mutually beneficial production relations, and ultimately realizes common prosperity for all mankind. From the perspective of the development of productive forces and production relations progress, capitalism is a stage that communism has experienced. When productive forces develop to a certain extent, humans no longer need to work for survival needs. Labor becomes an obligation and mission to promote human social development. This requires further improvement in human thinking consciousness and moral standards. Therefore, communism is a more advanced and perfect ideology that is the most correct guide for human social development.

Just like the significant changes in people's lives and thoughts that occurred at the beginning of New China's establishment. In old China, no matter which dynasty it was, it never abolished prostitution as an industry. It was like a person with a tumor who was unwilling to cut it off but always used spiritual pleasure to comfort himself. Avoiding treatment was precisely this situation. After New China was established, our party - a group of action-oriented communists - resolutely banned these ugly industries that were harmful to the country and people. Just like a brave man who dares to face all illnesses and scrape bones to cure poison, he feels relaxed after recovery! It can be seen that communists are true action-oriented people. They recognize the world from an objective perspective and mobilize human initiative to transform and improve unreasonable things as much as possible; they never hope for the afterlife but always focus on this world where we live whether in the past, present or future.

2. Faith is the Foundation of Human Survival

Why do people need faith when they are alive? Essentially, it is to solve the problem of self-value recognition in survival and labor production. Only when a person thinks that his existence and what he does have certain value in the social group, can his subjective initiative be actively mobilized. Human groups are also constantly developing and transforming the real world in this infinite pursuit of the value and meaning of each individual's existence. As early as thousands of years ago, Confucius, a representative figure of Confucianism in China, said that "since ancient times, there has been death, and there is no standing without faith among the people." The meaning of this is that for the people as a

social group, faith is the foundation of a nation. Whether a nation can prosper and rise usually depends on the cohesion of the overall cultural spirit of the nation; while the decline of a nation usually starts with the lack of faith among its people and their scattered minds.

3. Faith is the Source and Driving Force of Civilization

The relationship between faith and civilization is a long-standing and meaningful topic. Faith is the trust and awe of human beings in existence or principles beyond themselves. It can be religious faith or secular faith. Civilization is the development and achievement of human society in material and spiritual aspects. It can be cultural civilization or technological civilization. There are close and complex connections between faith and civilization, which can be analyzed from the following aspects. Firstly, faith is the source and driving force of civilization. Faith can inspire human beings to explore the unknown and pursue the beautiful, thus creating various cultural, artistic, scientific and other achievements. For example, the ancient Egyptians' worship of the sun god promoted the development of astronomy and architecture; the ancient Greeks' belief in reason and beauty gave birth to the brilliance of philosophy and art; the Chinese people's belief in morality and destiny formed unique thoughts and systems. Faith can also provide human beings with motivation and courage, enabling them to persevere in the face of difficulties and challenges, and strive for the progress of civilization. For example, Christians persisted in spreading the gospel under the persecution of the Roman Empire; Muslims maintained the fire of science and culture in the darkness of the Middle Ages; Buddhists promoted communication and integration among ethnic groups in India and China.

Secondly, faith is the support and guarantee of civilization. Faith can provide human beings with values and moral standards, so that they have a basis and restraint in the development of civilization, avoiding falling into degeneration and destruction. For example, Judaism put forward the Ten Commandments as the basic norms of human behavior; Christianity emphasized loving God and loving people as the highest principle of human life; Confucianism emphasized benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trust as the fundamental principles of human society. Faith can also provide human beings with spiritual sustenance and comfort, so that they have expectations and comfort in the development of civilization, overcoming suffering and fear. For example, Buddhism tells about reincarnation and nirvana as a way to liberation from life and death; Islam promises heaven and hell as a place for reward or punishment for human behavior; Taoism depicts longevity as a realm that humans yearn for.

Thirdly, faith is communication and promotion between civilizations. Faith can promote communication and understanding between different civilizations, allowing them to learn from each other's strengths and influence each other, thus enriching and enhancing their respective civilizations. For example, when Buddhism was spread in India, China, Japan and other places, it absorbed local cultural elements, which in turn influenced local thoughts, arts, systems etc.; when Christianity was spread in Europe, America, Africa etc., it adapted to local social environments which changed local history or politics.

4. Crisis and Challenges of Faith

Faith is the pillar of human spirit, an important part of human culture and the cohesion of human society. Faith can bring people comfort, strength, hope and value. However, in today's world, faith also faces some crises and challenges: (1) The lack or falsity of faith. In modern society, people face various kinds of information, concepts and temptations. Some people may doubt, shake or abandon their original faith, thus losing the guidance and support of their spirit. Some people may be confused by some false faiths such as cults, superstitions and extremism, thus leading to deviation and disaster. (2) The conflict or violence of faith. In a diversified society, different faiths may produce different views, values and behaviors. Some people may exclude, discriminate or attack other faiths because of their own faiths, thus causing social division, opposition and violence. Some people may use faith to achieve their own political, economic or other purposes, thus abusing the power and influence of faith. (3) The alienation or consumption of faith. In a commercialized society, faith may be objectified, commercialized or entertained. Some people may regard faith as a commodity, label or decoration, thus losing the essence and connotation of faith. Some people may regard faith as a consumption, enjoyment or escape, thus ignoring the responsibility and obligation of faith.

5. Adhere to the Communist Belief and Build a Socialist Power in the New Era

Communism was born only more than a hundred years ago. Compared with traditional religions, it is like a newborn baby. Although its genes are perfect, it still needs time to grow up. At the same time, communism urges people to realize their own beautiful wishes through their own efforts in real life. Because this kind of wish can be expected and obtained in reality, it is difficult to inspire individuals to dedicate themselves to religious groups like religious beliefs. Therefore, in the communist belief, individual dedication to group interests is entirely because the believer's ideological realm has reached a certain height, no longer only seeing his own interests, but taking the overall interests of all mankind as the starting point for his actions. This objective requirement of ideological realm also reflects the advanced nature of communist belief from the side. Only with such a thought consciousness that the world is for the public and the world is for the first place as a guide, can human beings make more progress, be more creative and live a happier life. At present, with the continuous improvement of national economic development and comprehensive national strength, some of our comrades in the party are too eager to pursue personal desires, resulting in the loss of faith in communism and forgetting that we communists are pursuing the liberation of all mankind and selfless dedication to the public. As a Communist Party member, we need to keep a clear mind and consciousness at all times, deeply understand that our faith is awe-inspiring to the objective laws of social development and persistently pursue truth in revealing objective development laws. This is our solemn commitment to shoulder great historical responsibilities and our strong will to realize the dream of national rejuvenation of an ancient oriental country! History is like a mirror. Through our hundred years of exploration and struggle, the course of party tempering and glory reveals to us that only by adhering to

the leadership of the Communist Party of China, adhering to ideals and beliefs, keeping pace with the Party at all times and steadily advancing along the socialist road with Chinese characteristics can our great dream be realized.

Fund Project

This article is the result of a general project of Beijing Polytechnic - a general project of social science within the college.