

Original Paper

An Analysis of Chinese College Students' Volunteerism under the Threshold of Ethics

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Abstract

As socialism with Chinese characteristics enters a new era, the flourishing development of volunteer service has become an important symbol of social civilization and modernization. Starting from the ethical perspective of volunteer service, this paper proposes some thoughts and insights for building a "Chinese model" of college student volunteer service based on a systematic discussion of the ethical connotation, ethical characteristics, ethical functions, ethical values and practical paths of volunteer service, which provides a new logical-theoretical generalization and practical choice paradigm for strengthening the construction of the socialist core value system and advancing the modernization of the national governance system and governance capacity. This will provide a brand-new logical-theoretical generalization and practical choice paradigm for strengthening the construction of the socialist core value system and promoting the modernization of the national governance system and governance capacity.

Keywords

volunteerism, ethical value, ethical attributes, Chinese model

The development of volunteerism in China began with the China Youth Volunteer Action organized by the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League in 1993, which led to the great development of volunteerism in China. With the government's guidance and the role of social public opinion being played continuously, the problems faced by the development of volunteer service in terms of morality, ethics and value evaluation have become more and more prominent. Therefore, it is very necessary to systematically explore the ethical connotation, ethical characteristics, ethical functions, ethical values and practical paths of college students' volunteering from the perspective of ethics, and to put forward a few reflections on the construction of a "Chinese model" of volunteering and its implications.

1. The Ethical Implications of Volunteerism in China

From an ethical point of view, volunteer service refers to the social behavior of taking volunteers as the specific ethical subjects, providing help to others without compensation as the code of conduct, taking the voluntary spirit of “dedication, fraternity, mutual help and progress” as the value concept, and pursuing the satisfaction of the spiritual level and the free and comprehensive development of the individual as the ultimate purpose.

1.1 The Ethical Essence of Volunteerism in China Is to Realize the Harmonious Unity of Self-Interest and Social Interest

Marxism (Note 1) believes that the essence of human being is the sum of all social relations on the basis of sociality; the natural attributes of volunteers, the subject of volunteering, determine that volunteers themselves have independent consciousness and character, and are able to carry out volunteering activities spontaneously and consciously; volunteering is a way of “socializing the existence” of volunteers, the purpose of which is to realize their own free and comprehensive development, i.e., to realize self-interests. Volunteer service is the subject of volunteer service - volunteers “socialized existence” way, its purpose is to achieve their own free and comprehensive development, that is, to achieve self-interest. Therefore, its social attribute determines that volunteers must rely on society to exist, and only through voluntary service activities can they change their social relations, realize their own values and interests, and become “human beings” in the true sense. The inevitable trend of history and social development is the free and comprehensive development of human beings, so the ethical essence of volunteerism is to realize the harmonious unity of self-interest and social interest.

1.2 The Ethical Origins of Volunteerism in China Are Traditional Western Religious Thought, Traditional Chinese Ethical Thought and Marxist Ethical Thought

Volunteerism first originated in the 19th century in western countries, and the spirit and concept of volunteerism have long been embodied and developed in many countries and regions around the world. The charitable thoughts in the traditional western religions advocate active charitable service activities, which are mainly characterized by fraternity, altruism and humanitarianism; the Bible (Note 2) also advocates a “self-sacrificing” spirit, which is the source of western charitable thoughts. The source of China’s ethical thinking on volunteerism is mainly concentrated in the thoughts of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, among which Confucianism advocates “benevolence”, which should be extended from love of family to love of society, emphasizing on loving people, benefiting people, and helping people, while Taoism advocates “doing nothing to rule”, Taoism advocates “doing nothing”, “goodness is like water”, “accumulation of good virtues, good deeds”, emphasizing the harmonious coexistence of man and nature; Buddhism “compassion for the heart”, “wide range of good karmas Buddhism, “compassionate”, “good karma”, “karma” idea is more in line with today’s social volunteerism altruistic moral outlook. Marx once pointed out: “Only by participating in collective activities can an individual obtain the means to make his full development (Note 3)”, that is to say, only

through the practice of human beings can realize their own value in social relations, the harmonious development of human society.

2. Ethical Characteristics of Volunteerism in China

Volunteerism has its origins in the social attributes of human beings, which are specifically manifested in its unpaid, voluntary and social nature. However, its ethical character is formed through the concrete practice of volunteerism, which is mainly reflected in the following aspects:

2.1 Volunteerism Is a Purely Practical Act Consciously Carried out under the Dictates of the Moral Will

From an ethical point of view, volunteerism is essentially governed by moral will and is the concrete practice of moral will. Associated with moral will is moral responsibility (Note 4), moral responsibility is the basic category of ethics, which refers to the assumption of specific moral obligations in specific social relations, and the sense of moral responsibility of the subject of volunteering is generated through the specific practice of volunteering.

2.2 Volunteerism Is a Purely Public-Spirited Behavior Carried out Spontaneously under the Guidance of Moral Values

Volunteerism originates from the social attributes of human beings, and the gratuitousness and spontaneity of volunteerism are externally linked and internally consistent with moral principles. The external linkage is manifested in the fact that the moral value of volunteerism is linked to the value concept of volunteerism, and the internal consistency is manifested in the fact that the value code followed by human beings, as social beings, in carrying out purely public welfare activities is in line with the intrinsic moral basis for the construction of a harmonious society.

2.3 Volunteerism Is a Purely Ethical Act That Is People-Centered and Motivated by a Sense of Duty (Note 5)

Volunteerism is essentially a specific social welfare activity, and should follow the principle of prioritizing social welfare. Volunteerism focuses on “volunteering”, and volunteering is a specific practical process based on the premise of morality that is consciously, voluntarily and spontaneously carried out; to a certain extent, volunteerism is a purely social and ethical behavior.

3. The Ethical Function of Volunteerism in China

3.1 Moral Incentive Function

The moral incentive function of volunteering with distinctive ethical attributes is mainly reflected in the following aspects: firstly, volunteers as the main body of radiation drive the neighboring non-volunteers to join the ranks of volunteers, so that non-volunteers to establish the correct moral values and public welfare; secondly, it is able to improve the moral quality of volunteers and promote the steady construction of social morality so as to build up the orderly order of social morality; thirdly, volunteers in the process of volunteering constantly improve the moral self-confidence and behavioral

ability. Thirdly, the volunteers' moral self-confidence and behavioral ability will be continuously improved in the process of volunteering.

3.2 Practical Education Function

Volunteer service is the process behavior of volunteers, the main body of volunteer service, to carry out specific practice under the domination of moral will. Its practical education function is mainly embodied in: First, through the volunteering service can cultivate the moral quality of volunteers, so that they can realize the moral value and social value in volunteering and other moral practice; Second, through the specific practice of volunteering to strengthen the sense of moral responsibility, Marxism believes that people have the freedom of choice (Note 6) of their own practice, but not absolute freedom, which requires volunteers to play in the volunteer service to play This requires volunteers to have a sense of moral responsibility to distinguish between right and wrong, and to distinguish between gain and loss of interests while performing volunteer service with subjective initiative.

4. Ethical Values of Volunteerism in China

4.1 The Ethical Value of Volunteerism

The labor ethical value of volunteering refers to the specific value or significance of volunteering for social labor development (Note 7). The most important embodiment of the labor ethical value of volunteer service is that volunteer service creates labor value for social development in both material and spiritual levels. The labor value created by volunteering at the material level is mainly the economic value created by volunteering in the field of social production and other areas, which leads to the development of the economy; on the other hand, volunteering in earthquake relief, emergency management and other areas also plays the value of reducing economic losses as a substitute. The labor value created by volunteer service at the spiritual level is mainly reflected in the construction of spiritual civilization, which mainly includes improving the moral quality and scientific and cultural literacy of citizens, establishing an orderly order of social morality, and promoting the construction of socialist spiritual civilization.

4.2 Social and Ethical Values of Volunteerism

Social ethical value is an important part of the social moral system, which plays a leading role in promoting social and economic development, maintaining social justice and other values. The socio-ethical value of volunteerism refers to the moral significance and influence of volunteerism on society, economy, civilization, politics and other aspects, which is mainly manifested in the following ways: promoting the development of the market economy, promoting the benign operation of the society, constructing a good civic and moral order, and promoting the harmonious development of the society, and so on.

5. Practical Paths to Building Volunteerism among Chinese University Students

5.1 *To Reshape the Ethical Orientation Mechanism of Volunteerism and Improve the Diversified Training Model of Volunteerism*

It is necessary to improve the ethical guidance mechanism of volunteer service on the basis of a deep understanding of the ethical value and ethical function of volunteer service, so as to realize the transformation of volunteer service from emotional and moral sensitization to ethical and functional practice. We should implement long-term volunteer quality training, skill improvement, education on volunteer service concepts and other diversified training modes, and invite experts in volunteer service to conduct volunteer service classes through volunteer symposiums, calendar training and other means, so as to stimulate volunteers to participate in volunteer service positively, proactively and creatively, and to promote the transformation of the cause of volunteer service from quantitative change to qualitative improvement.

5.2 *To Deepen the Leading Mechanism of Volunteerism and Build an Information Management Service Platform for Volunteers*

Under the role of the volunteer service leading mechanism of the Communist Youth League organization, it has given full play to the role of the “volunteer service leading model of the Communist Youth League”, accelerated the construction of the volunteer information management service platform, and made use of the new media platform to improve the construction of the “six-in-one” long-term mechanism of volunteer service, which includes volunteer recruitment, registration, management, training, development, and publicity. Using the new media platform to improve the “six-in-one” volunteer recruitment, registration, management, training, development and publicity “long-term mechanism of volunteer service construction, in order to solve the problems of low level of professionalization of volunteer service, insufficient motivation of volunteers, and low motivation of volunteers. Volunteers can also be incentivized through the volunteer information management service platform by establishing a special reward fund for outstanding volunteers and joining the party on the basis of merit.

5.3 *To Actively Improve the All-Round Development, Protection and Incentive System of Volunteerism*

From the ethical characteristics of volunteerism in China, it is necessary to improve the development and protection system of volunteerism in terms of financial security, legal security, assessment methods and incentives. In terms of financial security, we should actively communicate with the higher authorities to establish special funds for volunteer service to support volunteer activities, and we can also absorb third-party social financial support through crowdfunding, project funding of the league organizations and various public welfare organizations, etc. In terms of legal security, the personal and property safety of volunteers in the process of volunteer service is not effectively safeguarded, so we should actively get in touch with the social volunteers of legal category to In terms of legal protection, the personal and property safety of volunteers in the process of volunteer service is not effectively guaranteed, so we should actively get in touch with legal volunteers in the society and carry out

pre-service training for volunteer activities; and in terms of assessment methods, we should introduce social work assessment indexes into the assessment system of volunteer service.

5.4 A “People-Centered” Volunteering Linkage Mechanism Should Be Established

To establish a new mechanism of “people-oriented” volunteering contact, we should actively establish volunteering contact with all kinds of social volunteering bodies, enterprises and other group organizations, obtain support for special funds for volunteering by establishing volunteering contact with volunteers, enhance the level of professionalization of volunteering by establishing volunteering contact with professional and technical volunteers, and improve the development system of volunteering and promote the development of the cause of volunteering by establishing volunteering contact with volunteers’ families. By establishing volunteer service links with professional and technical volunteers, the professionalization level of volunteer service can be enhanced, and by establishing volunteer service links with volunteer families, the volunteer service development system can be perfected and the development of the volunteer service cause can be boosted.

Notes

Note 1. Liu, S., & Zhang, J. (2015). Youth Volunteerism in Colleges and Universities under the Perspective of Public Welfare Ethics. *Journal of Ezhou University*, 22(01), 93-95.

Note 2. Pang, B., & Li, W. Q. (2015). On the Ethical Characteristics and Ethical Value of Volunteerism. *Yunmeng Journal*, 36(04), 67-73.

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