

Using Social Innovation to Implement Weixin Shengjiao Doctrine in Lifelong Education

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Abstract: In the past decade, the concept of social innovation has been constantly looked at and examined by scholars, for-profit organizations, non-profit organizations as well as the government, and has been widely explored and applied. Taiwan is facing the problem of an aging population and low birth rate. It is therefore of the essence to be able to maintain harmony and stability in society. This study conducts individual case studies to explore how the new religious group, Weixin Shengjiao applies the concept of social innovation to implement its doctrine through lifelong education, and to help the government create a harmonious society.

The research found that the central tenet of the Weixin Shengjiao is the fusion of I Ching and Feng Shui, with the thoughts of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism in Chinese culture, to pass on and further promote Chinese culture in modern society. In 1994, the founder of Weixin Shengjiao, Grand Master Hun Yuan, created a lifelong education platform known as I Ching University. The university has three major foci, which implements the core essences of the Weixin Shengjiao of moral, life, environmental, filial piety and cultural education. Based on the local humanistic, social and economic features, I Ching University uses practical, current, realistic innovations for widespread distribution, in order to nurture talents and create a harmonious society.

Key words: social innovation, I Ching University, I Ching, Feng shui, lifelong education

1. Introduction

In the past few decades, the concept of social innovation has continuously attracted attention from scholars, for-profit organizations, non-profit organizations or government bodies, and has been widely explored and applied. The emergence of social innovation lies in the use of innovative methods to solve social and economic problems, and potentially affect the well-being and sustainable development of individuals or groups in a positive manner. Over the past 10 years, the world has been facing various challenges, such as typhoons and hurricanes caused by changes in the environment, earthquakes, tsunamis, air pollution, terrorist attacks, nuclear and military threats, wars, religious ideology struggles, hunger, poverty, drug trafficking, virus transmission, state-scale financial crisis, corporate labor disputes, dissemination of fake news, food safety, demographic changes and so on.

Therefore, it is imperative for individual countries to maintain harmony and stability of nation and society. This study takes “social innovation” as a theoretical point of view and explores how to apply the concept of social

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innovation in the emerging international religious group “Weixin Shengjiao” in Taiwan through a case study method, and implement the doctrines of the religion in the way of lifelong learning to achieve the purpose of universal harmony and peace of the world and help the government to create a harmonious society based on the power of the private sector.

2. Social Innovation

Drucker (2002) defines innovation as a tool used by entrepreneurs to exploit a change as an opportunity for a different business or a different service. The Oslo Manual (1997, p. 22) states that “innovation can occur in any sector of the economy, including government services such as health and education.” Social innovation is a process initiated by social actors to respond to a desire, a need, to find a solution or to seize an opportunity of action to change social relations, to transform a frame or propose new cultural orientations to improve the quality and community living conditions (Crises, 2014). O’Byrne et al. (2013, p. 54) defined social innovation as the “successful implementation of activities, such as ideas, practices, or objects, through new collaborations and partnerships, in ways that positively impact society by improving the delivery of public services.” Social innovations encompass “changes in the cultural, normative or regulative structures of the society which enhance its collective power resources and improve its economic and social performance” (Heiskala, 2007, p. 74). Social innovation can be defined as the “development and implement of new ideas (products, services and models) to meet social needs” (Mulgan, Ali, Halkett, & Sanders, 2007, p. 9, cited by Howadlt & Schwarz, 1010, p. 25); be concerned with generation of social value (Cloutier, 2003; Saucier et al., 2006; Phills, Deigmeier & Miller, 2008; Assogba, 2010; Herrera, 2015) for social actors and society; and also “create new social relationships or collaborations” (Murray, Caulier-Grice, & Mulgan, 2009, p. 3).

At present, it can be stated that social innovations are becoming more and more significant for economic growth (Mulgan et al., 2005). This is partly due to the fact that some of the economic growth barriers such as climatic changes or aging of societies, may be overcome only by implementation of social innovations, which reinforce human relations and well-being instead of straining these. Social innovation is innovation in social relation as well as in meeting human need (MacCallim et al., 2012). Moulaert, Martineli, Swyngedouw, and Gonzalez (2005) identify three main dimensions of social innovation: (1) satisfaction of human needs that are not currently satisfied; (2) changes in social relations, especially with regard to governance, that not only enable the satisfaction of needs, but also increase the level of participation, especially of deprived groups in society; (3) increasing the socio-political capability and access to resources required to enhance rights to needs’ fulfillment and participation.

3. The Weixin Shengjiao Doctrines

The source of the study in the doctrines of Weixin Shengjiao is mainly based on the Tiande Scriptures of Guiguzi enlightened by Grand Master Hun Yuan in the 99 Dharma meeting in 2003, a Zen version of interpretation for the “Chapter of Great Harmony in the Operation of Etiquette” in “Book of Rites” enlightened in 2007, the “True Scripture of the Mysteries” of Bodhisattva Wang Chan Lao Zu enlightened in the 99 Dharma meeting in 2013, “Perfect Scripture for Calming the Mind” of Weixin Shengjiao enlightened in the Thousand years of Prays for Peace and Praise of Heaven Dharma meeting in 2014, and the “Praise of the Almighty Bodhisattva Wang Chan Lao Zu” in the Nation Protection, Disaster Relief, and Peace Pray Dharma meeting in 2017.

What is a doctrine? According to the “Revised Mandarin Dictionary” by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of China, a doctrine is defined as “the meaning, reason and purpose of a religion”. Grand Master Hun Yuan points out that “The heart of Weixin Shengjiao is the heart of heaven. All doctrines in the secular world all originated from the heart. All the Dharma doctrines of the saints are created by the heart of heaven and expressed to the world by words. The doctrines of Weixin Shengjiao is inclusive of all the mantras of the saints and the universe: the foundation is founded by the heavens and the earth, and the teachings and doctrines are established by the saints; the ancient saints and sages stand on the earth and live beneath the sky, consulting and measuring the sky and the earth to observe the orbits of the sun, moon, and stars, such that they comprehend that everything in the universe is contributing their duty for harmony and maintaining the relationship among people. The rise and fall of human beings and things in the universe all sprout from the heart”.

Grand Master Hun Yuan further indicates that “Weixin Shengjiao implements the path of compassion on behalf of the heaven. Every magi and sage of idealism should cultivate the paths for the country, pray for the people, study the holy doctrines for the greater harmony of the peoples, and to turn the holy Dharma wheel together for world peace”. Therefore, on the main gate of Weixin Holy Hall of the Hsien-Fo Temple at Mt. Chan Chi, Grand Master Hun Yuan wrote the following couplet in ink “Weixin is the foundation to cultivate principles of self for the country so as to facilitate the people and heaven; Shengjiao as the words of truth to pray for the people in order to realize peace”. It can be seen that the core doctrines of Weixin Shengjiao are “cultivation of principles the self for the country, prays for the people, and realization of world peace”.

This study summarized the enlightenments of Grand Master Hun Yuan, and discovered that the doctrines of Weixin Shengjiao are based on the I Ching — The Book of Changes and Feng Shui of the Chinese culture, integrating Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. In addition, this study finds that with the core of “cultivation of principles of self for the country and prays for the people”, we have developed five major Dharma teachings, such as the Dharma teaching of filial piety and for tracing the ancestral roots, the Dharma teaching of peace of mind, the Dharma teaching of altruism, the Dharma teaching of disaster relief, and the Dharma teaching of the “Chapter of Great Harmony in the Operation of Etiquette” in “Book of Rites”. With the substantive purposes of “cultivating talents, cultivating morality, cultivating noble aspiration, and realizing world peace”, the ultimate goal is to achieve true peace in the world.

What is the cultivation of self for the nation and praying for the people? The so-called “cultivation of self” in the “Xiang Jun” chapter under the “Nine Songs” section of “Songs of Chu” in Qu Yuan is: “Beauty as delicate as can be, shall be cultivated”. “Cultivation” has the meaning of conservation and practice. According to the “On Five Levels” section in “Anthology” written by Lu Chi: “cultivating principles of self and bringing comfort to the common people...” there is a sense of study and research in cultivation. The “Five Fish Moths” chapter in “Han Fei Zi” states: “cultivate the literature and learn speeches today”. The term “cultivate” as a noun refers to a person with virtues. The “principles” refers to a common code of conduct. In the section “Ta-ya” of “The book of Odes and Hymns”, it is stated that “the path of Chou is as hard as a whetstone, and as straight as an arrow” The “path” here refers to the “road”, which can be extended to mean reasons, laws, principles, and other connotations. The country following the right path and implementing etiquette and righteousness to govern the world in a grand manner is the so-called path. Thus, the “Principle” is “Etiquette and Righteousness”. The so-called “pray” means praying for the blessings of Heaven. In the chapter “Order of Month” of the “Book of Rites”, it is said: “Let the people all contribute their power to support the royal heaven, the gods, the great mountains and rivers, and worship the spirits of the ancestral temple of a ruling house, in order to pray for blessings for the people.”

3.1 The Doctrines of Weixin Shengjiao: The Dharma Teaching of Great Filial Piety for Tracing the Roots

This study summarizes the views of Grand Master Hun Yuan on the Dharma teaching of great filial piety for tracing the roots and discovers that, for example, Grand Master Hun Yuan revealed the essence of the “True Scripture of the Mysteries” of Bodhisattva Wang Chan Lao Zu enlightened in the 99 Dharma meeting in 2013 as: “The Shengjiao was founded based on the Dharma teaching of the filial piety for tracing the roots and returning to the hearts for all the spirits. The doctrines of Weixin Shengjiao are to trace the roots”. This study observes that Weixin Shengjiao established the Taiwan Weixin Shengjiao Chinese peoples’ joint ancestor worship association and held the first Chinese nationwide grand ceremonies of joint ancestor worship at the National Taiwan Sports University Sports Center on January 1, 2004. Since then, the association has invited all the decedents of the three Chinese ancestors to join the ancestors worship, and the subsequent events were held on the New Year’s Day in 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017.

Thus, in 2017, Grand Master Hun Yuan revealed the enlightenment in the Praise of the Almighty Bodhisattva Wang Chan Lao Zu” in the Nation Protection, Disaster Relief, and Peace Pray Dharma meeting in 2017 as: “honoring the glory of the Chinese nation in centuries, internationally praising the virtues of the ancestors, remembering our origin even in daily actions, and the joint ancestors worship deserves to be praised”. There were four major ancient civilizations on Earth. The only one that prevailed is the Chinese culture. The reason why the Chinese culture can prevail is the filial piousness of the Chinese peoples. “The entire nation must worship our ancestors, starting from filial piety. We must work hard to promote filial piety. Through the path of grand filial piety, the world will be at peace. The ‘path of grand filial piety’ is the best treasured weapon for world peace”.

3.2 The Weixin Shengjiao Doctrines: The Dharma Teaching of Peace of Mind

This study’s conclusion regarding Grand Master Hun Yuan's views on the laws for peace of mind found that the Zen Master is constantly revealing the desires of the people so that they can reach the realm of peace through various methods. They must start from reflection, repentance, practice, and at the same time, cultivate and practice the heart, the mouth, and the true spirit. Grand Master Hun Yuan encourages the public to practice diligently. He believes that “People at the age of sixties should be diligent in cultivating the self; there will be no great promotion and no greater grievance if people fail to achieve enlightenment”. Cultivation is “the act of correcting the deviant minds and behaviors accumulated in the many life cycles by an individual, and frequently reflecting on their past and present daily life to see whether it aligns with righteousness. If there is a deviation, it is necessary to repent and reflect upon it, and then work hard and earnestly practice in daily life according to the revealed Dharma teaching, so that they can reach to a state of peace of mind and obtain happiness”.

In 2017, Grand Master Hun Yuan also revealed the enlightenment in the “Praise of the Almighty Bodhisattva Wang Chan Lao Zu” in the Nation Protection, Disaster Relief, and Peace Pray Dharma meeting as: “Only the heart is the true doctrine. How can we settle our hearts to have peace of mind? The solution lies in learning I Ching: “Everyone learns the Book of Changes, and you can have peace of mind when you are interacting with people or doing things. You learn from the Book of Changes, and things will go smoothly no matter what you are doing”. Grand Master Hun Yuan pointed out that the public can understand how to achieve peace of mind from the meaning of Baguain the Book of Changes. Grand Master Hun Yuan revealed and enlightens: “What kind of mentality can we find in Weixin Shengjiao? What is our teacher? Qian, Kun, Xun, Dui, Gen, Zhen, Li, and Kan; the streams, the air, daylight, wind, water, and earth are all our teachers”.

3.3 The Weixin Shengjiao Doctrines: The Dharma Teaching of Altruism

This study summarizes the view of Grand Master Hun Yuan on the Dharma teaching of altruism. It finds that Grand Master Hun Yuan frequently reminded people with the revelation of the founding father of the Republic of China, Dr. Sun Yat-sen, that “the purpose of life is to serve others” as well as the importance of altruism, as stated in the “Tiande Scriptures” of Guiguzi: “People of virtue are blessed and protected wholeheartedly”. Grand Master Hun Yuan revealed the enlightenment of the “Tiande Scriptures” of Guiguzi in the 99 Dharma meeting in 2003 that: “For the people of moral, we try to help them; however, for people without morality, we also help him. Why should we help people without morality? Because the person is in trouble, making him confused and do immoral things. Our Dharma teaching provides aids to people regardless of whether they are rich or poor, virtuous or without virtue. Their confusion is because they have shortcomings. We need to help him more to get over this troubled realm and get over the troubles of life and death”.

Grand Master Hun Yuan subsequently revealed the enlightenment of the “True Scripture of the Mysteries” of Bodhisattva Wang Chan Lao Zu in the 99 Dharma meeting in 2013 as: “The Dharma approach of Weixin Shengjiao is based on the ‘benefits’, using the orthodoxy cultural system of the I Ching — The Book of Changes and Feng Shui to let everyone enter the state of peace of mind, peace for the family, peace for career, and people will be able to have peace in the heart after that. Even if you don’t become a Buddha, you can achieve the Buddha in your own hear on the spot, achieving the stability in your family and harmony around you. It is the only way to become a Buddha”.

3.4 The Weixin Shengjiao Doctrines: The Dharma Teaching of Disaster Relief

This study summarizes the views of Grand Master Hun Yuan’s on the Dharma teaching of disaster relief. Weixin Shengjiao is based on the principle of “cultivation of principles of self for the country and prays for the people”. Grand Master Hun Yuan encourages the disciples to chant the Buddhist scriptures and follow the Dharma etiquette to turn the Dharma wheel to eliminate disasters together.

This study observes that Weixin Shengjiao to eliminate disasters through the perspective of resolving injustice and absolving feud. Grand Master Hun Yuan believes that the crux the Chinese people have encountered countless wars lies. In the restlessness of the ancestors and the unresolved injustices in history. The origin can be traced back to injustice suffered by the ancestor Chi You, and the enmity has kept brewing in generation after generation, which leads to 3,762 wars of various sizes among the Chinese peoples. Therefore, Weixin Shengjiao put forward the concept of “resolving injustice and absolving feud”, searching the past, the present and the future in order to solve the national injustices to accomplish the wish of world peace. In addition, Grand Master Hun Yuan believes that “冤” (injustice) can be between people, between people and animals, and between people and nature. And Grand Master Hun Yuan believes that it is necessary to diligently recite the scriptures and Dharma teachings to practice transference to the enmity person so as to resolve injustice and release feud among those that is suffering the injustice.

3.5 The Weixin Shengjiao Doctrines: The Dharma Teaching of Chapter of Great Harmony in the Operation of Etiquette

This study found that Grand Master Hun Yuan began teaching Confucius’s “Chapter of Great Harmony in the Operation of Etiquette” of “Book of Rites” since 2007. Grand Master Hun Yuan provide his revelation and enlightenment on “Chapter of Great Harmony in the Operation of Etiquette” of “Book of Rites” as: “‘Chapter of Great Harmony in the Operation of Etiquette’ of ‘Book of Rites’ is in Confucius’ doctrines, the most excellent

approach for governance of a nation, governance of a family, governance of a career, and governance of insecurity, injustice, and dissatisfaction in our mind”. “At the time of Confucius, the greatness of ‘Chapter of Great Harmony in the Operation of Etiquette’ of ‘Book of Rites’ has already been recognized and has been passed on to the present time. Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the founding father of the Republic of China, then promoted the ‘Chapter of Great Harmony in the Operation of Etiquette’ of ‘Book of Rites’ to the whole world”. “The ‘Chapter of Great Harmony in the Operation of Etiquette’ of ‘Book of Rites’ is a heavenly path to open the Dharma approach for human peace of mind.... This is the truth that the ancient sages have realized. It is a very good scripture for people to practice; it is the true scripture for the nation establishment, world peace, and the future hopes for the Chinese descendents; it offers the broad direction, policies and grand wisdom for state governance; it is the wondrous method for the country’s leader to govern the country; if people can understand the wondrous methods of ‘Chapter of Great Harmony in the Operation of Etiquette’ of ‘Book of Rites’ for governance of the heart, family, society and country, I believe that the world will become peaceful”. “Modern life and social phenomena are inseparable from the word “etiquette”. The “Chapter of Great Harmony in the Operation of Etiquette” in “Book of Rites” is mainly based on etiquette, prioritizing the etiquettes. “Etiquette” is used to run our lives, our destiny and maintaining harmony in our society”. “Therefore, we carry forward the truths of the ‘Chapter of Great Harmony in the Operation of Etiquette’ in ‘Book of Rites’, and the main focus is to establish human dignity of every individual, to establish dignity of society and the dignity of all human beings”.

4. The Case Study: Weixin Shengjiao Lifelong Education

In 1994, the then President of the Republic of China, Mr. Teng-Hui Lee, made a clear policy statement on “lifelong education”: “The concept of lifelong education is to recognize the need for education at every stage of growth in life and to open up a society of learning”. This study finds that Grand Master Hun Yuan, the founder and leader of Weixin Shengjiao, at that time also proposed that “everyone has the basic right to learn” and created “I Ching University” in the same year to inherit and promote Chinese culture in the way of lifelong learning in religious education and encourage people to learn I Ching. Therefore, “I Ching University” is the pioneer of the promotion of lifelong education in the history of education in the Republic of China. It is based on the principle of “cultivating talents, cultivating morality, cultivating noble aspiration, and realizing world peace”.

Nowadays, I Ching University takes the doctrines of Weixin Shengjiao as the source of religious education, and teaches the sacred Dharma doctrines: the Dharma teaching of filial piety for tracing the roots, the Dharma teaching of peace of mind, the Dharma teaching of altruism, the Dharma teaching of disaster relief, and the Dharma teaching of the “Chapter of Great Harmony in the Operation of Etiquette” in “Book of Rites”. The five aspects of lifelong learnings, such as moral education, life education, environmental education, filial piety education and cultural education, are designed to be specifically practiced for the implementation of the Weixin Shengjiao doctrines for accomplishing “cultivation of principles of self for the country, prays for the people” to fulfill the ultimate goal of realizing world peace. Up to now, I Ching University has 42 Learning Hubs in the whole Taiwan, and 33 classrooms in various township communities. In addition, learning classrooms have been established in overseas regions including Hong Kong; Vietnam; Japan; Spain; Los Angeles, New York, U. S., and Toronto, Canada. At the same time, Weixin Shengjiao has established a dedicated Television station, the Wei Xin Television Station, in its philanthropy system, and courses of I Ching University is spread to the world 24/7.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, actual observations and literature analysis was used to discuss the application of social innovation in the emerging religious group in Taiwan, Weixin Shengjiao. The doctrines of Weixin Shengjiao are specifically spread through the model of lifelong education to achieve the purpose of world peace. This study finds that with the core of “cultivation of principles of self for the country and praying for the people”, Weixin Shengjiao has developed five major Dharma teachings, such as the Dharma teaching of filial piety for tracing the roots, the Dharma teaching of peace of mind, the Dharma teaching of altruism, the Dharma teaching of disaster relief, and the Dharma teaching of the “Chapter of Great Harmony in the Operation of Etiquette” in “Book of Rites”.

Weixin Shengjiao founded I Ching University in 1994. This study discovers that using I Ching University as a platform, Weixin Shengjiao specifically practice the five lifelong learnings of moral education, life education, environmental education, filial piety education and cultural for the implementation of the Weixin Shengjiao doctrines. Therefore, this study finds that in the five lifelong learning orientations described above, Weixin Shengjiao use the perspective of social innovation to develop new initiatives, so as to put forth the greatest effort for solemnity, achievement and perfection of all beings. These efforts will enable all sentient beings to gain peace of mind, and thus settle their hearts to arrive at the pure land of the secular world, and the ultimate goal will be to achieve the goal of world peace. This is the very enlightenment of the “Chapter of Great Harmony in the Operation of Etiquette” in “Book of Rites”: “When the grand way prevails, the world community is equally shared by all. The worthy and able are chosen as office holders. Mutual confidence is fostered and good neighborliness cultivated. Therefore, people do not regard only their own parents as parents, nor do they treat only their own children as children. Provisions are made for the aged till their death; adults are given employment, and the young is abled to grow up. Widows and widowers, orphans, the old and childless, as well as the sick and disabled are all well taken care of. Men have their proper roles, women homes. While one hate to see wealth lying about on the ground, one do not necessarily keep it for one’s own use. While one hate not to exert one’s own effort, one do not necessarily devote it for one’s own ends. Thus, evil scheming is suppressed, and robbers, thieves and other lawless elements shall fail to arise. So that outer doors do not have to be shut. This is called “the Age of Great Harmony”.

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