

公德觀念的初步探討 ——歷史源流與理論建構

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摘 要

本文探討「公德」或「公德心」的問題。內容分兩部分，一是追溯公德觀念的歷史，一是以台灣社會公德觀念的核心涵義為依據，對其進行理論重構。公德觀念精確點出了華人公民文化的一個重要特質。明確掌握這個觀念的內涵，並予以理論的說明，將有助於了解此特質，以及發現改善華人公民文化的具體途徑。

公德觀念淵源於明治時代的日本，由梁啟超介紹至中國。日本公德觀念的基本涵義是個人對社會公益和其他成員應有的德義，梁氏闡揚此觀念時，除了保留這一意涵，特別強調個人對國家整體命運的奉獻。公德觀念後來在中國的演變，是褪減梁啟超所凸顯的集體主義意味，轉成較單純的社會倫理觀念。在近幾十年的台灣，公德的主要意指是不作為或消極性的公民行為，也就是說，這個價值不甚涉及政治社會參與，而是要求公民不要破壞公共利益或傷害社會生活中的他人。

在理論建構的部分，本文從公德的不作為性出發，分析消極性與積極性公民行為的差異，以及公德和其他相關價值的關係。本文以為，在公民文化中，公德是一個具有獨立性的問題，需要特定的了解與特定的處理之道。本文也認為，公德包含三個主要要素：尊重、善待陌生人的倫理觀，守法的習慣與精神，公共場合或公共領域的觀念。

一九八〇年代初期——大概是八一年底或八二年初。當時我剛到美國留

The Idea of *Gongde*: History and Conceptual Reconstruction

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the idea of *gongde* (literally translatable as "public morality"), and is divided into two parts. The first part explores the history of the idea, while the second attempts a conceptual reconstruction on the basis of its essential meaning prevailing in contemporary Taiwan. Despite its long presence in Chinese communities, the concept of *gongde* has not received any scholarly scrutiny. My study shows that a precise grasp of this idea and its theoretical implications can contribute to an illuminating understanding of an essential feature of Chinese civic culture. This understanding in turn indicates ways of improving this culture.

The idea of *gongde* originated in Meiji Japan, known as *kōtoku*. Liang Qichao introduced it to his Chinese readers in 1902, and it spread quickly and widely. The basic meaning of *kōtoku* is the moral responsibilities one has toward public interest and other individuals in society. When explaining this idea, Liang Qichao made a change in emphasizing the element of an individual's devotion to the general welfare of his nation. This collectivistic flavor of the idea, however, soon weakened in China, and the concept's meaning remained close to its counterpart in Japan. In modern Taiwan, *gongde* chiefly refers to what I call negative civic behavior, that is, citizens' restraint from damaging public interest and harming other individuals in social life. *Gongde* makes no demands on social and political participation.

Owing to its "negative" nature, *gongde* differs significantly from the Western idea of civic virtue, which focuses on participation and sense of fraternity. *Gongde* points to the Chinese habit of appropriating things public for personal use and a common apathy toward strangers. This paper argues that "negative" and "positive" civic behaviors are divergent in nature. Participation in public affairs and democratization will not automatically lead to an improvement of the *gongde* problem. For this goal, independent efforts are required. This paper also points out three main constituents of *gongde* as a "virtue": a universalistic ethic of personal relationships, law-abiding conduct, and a clear idea of the public sphere.