

Outline of Jie Lu's Education Thoughts

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Abstract: As a famous contemporary educator and educational theorist in China, Jie Lu has always been concerned about people and their lives and moral conditions since the 1970s and 1980s. With this as the center, a systematic "human understanding" pedagogy and moral education were constructed. His thoughts reflect the times' distinctive characteristics, and scholars have widely praised his noble research quality and scholarly ideological state. Given this, this paper reviews Jie Lu's moral education thoughts based on the research on Jie Lu's education thoughts and feelings to make a more comprehensive and systematic review of Jie Lu's moral education thoughts.

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MORAL education is a necessary form of moral activity and the foundation of human education. It is an essential means of cultivating moral quality, enhancing the moral realm, regulating social behavior, creating public opinion, improving the social atmosphere, and maintaining and promoting a good social order. In the education system, moral education provides valuable guidance for teachers' education and teaching and students' overall development and plays indisputable importance in talent training. As the founder and leader of China's moral education, Jie Lu has long devoted himself to the research of basic education theory and moral education. Standing at the height of the times, based on China's development, she put forward many original educational theories with Chinese characteristics, formed a unique academic viewpoint and academic system, and was named the most influential person in Jiangsu education in 60 years (2009), 70 educational figures in China's 70 years of education (2019).

On December 25, 2020, Jie Lu, the famous educator and founder of moral education, passed away at home due to illness at 90. After the news came out, many scholars sent articles to mourn. *China Education Daily* published an article stating that "Professor Lu's death is a major loss to China's education" (Miao, 2020). Nanjing Normal University issued an obituary stating that Professor Lu has a noble character, open-mindedness, rigorous scholarship, and profound learning; she has written character pedagogy with life; everyone loves her; she loved her motherland, children, and education all her life, and dedicated her whole life to China's education.

This article comprehensively and profoundly understands Jie Lu's life education theory's content and value by combining his life education theory and then systematically grasping and exploring his emotional education thoughts. It is hoped that the analysis of Professor Lu's view on moral education will inspire moral education development in China.

Pay Attention to the Essence of Education and Establish the Educational Concept of Returning to Human Nature

In the 1980s, there was a big discussion about the nature of education in China. Many views are centered on the superstructure and productivity, either in agreement, in opposition, or the middle. The two groups of different opinions use concepts other than edu-

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cation to define education itself. Professor Lu jumped out of the framework and explained the essence of education from the inherent contradictions and movements between the various education elements itself and creatively proposed that “education is an activity to train people.” In the late 1990s, she used the theory of practice, from a higher perspective, to understand human nature, understand education, and construct an educational theory that returned to human nature.

Although Professor Lu realized that education is an activity to cultivate people in the early 1980s, in the book “*Pedagogy*” compiled by the Department of Education of Nanjing Normal University, published by People's Education Press in 1984, she defined education as an activity that exerts a purposeful, planned, and organized influence on the body and mind of the educated to make them change as expected. This definition later became a classic definition of education. However, the biggest problem with this definition is that the educated is regarded as a passive object, and the education process has become a process in which the educator exerts external influence and the educated passively accepts it. Professor Lu is brave in self-criticism and self-transcendence academically. In 1998, she wrote “*Education: Practical Activities of Human Self-construction*,” from the perspective of practice, from the standpoint that the educated is the subject, reinterpreted her new understanding of education (Lu, 1998).

This new understanding is from the perspective of human autonomy and development. The ideality of education is essentially the process of human development. Jie Lu very clearly put forward, “The question of self-transcendence is essentially a question of how to make one's life more valuable and meaningful” (Lu, 2008a). She believed that “in the past, education was not based on practice. Human beings' development was not regarded as a result of the interaction between subject and object in the education process. Therefore, education has become a process without subjects. The shortcomings of the bio-medicalization of education and the psychological nation of education lie in this.” “Education has gradually become a kind of conscious nature activity. The state of human existence and development has changed from being spontaneous to self-consciousness. This is a great revolution of human beings. The development of subjects with conscious education consciousness is also an important symbol of human modernization” (Lu, 2008b).

Only through education can a person become an individual in society, become a proper subject, develop his or her essential power as a subject to the greatest extent, become a real person in the most precise sense, and truly realize the meaning of being a person. Therefore, the most fundamental starting point, standpoint, focus, and ultimate destination of education lie in the development of human subjectivity. According to Professor Lu, this was the “origin” of educational practice and the “origin” of educational research. According to the dual human nature structure of reality and ought, it is essential that education cannot shirk, and it should also be a constant theme of pedagogical research to inspire people to pursue ideal survival and form ideals that conform to human nature.

Based on People and Practice, Build a Moral Education Ideological System That Moves toward Life

“Moral education should be the most attractive.” The fascinating moral education should be oriented to human development and take human life as an eternal subject of concern. Professor Lu criticized the past phenomenon of moral education without people and life, advocated the return of moral education to life, and established a unique and charming life-based moral education system based on life.

As a kind of educational proposition, “Life Moral Education” aims to transcend “knowledge-only,” “pan-political,” and “de-life” moral education and guide individuals to live a moral life. Returning to life has become the leading idea of moral education. Children’s life is the foundation of moral education, and life-based student moral development is advocated (Hu, 2010).

Take People as the Core and Establish the Basic Concept of Moral Education

“Human” is the logical starting point for understanding Professor Lu’s educational and academic thinking. Throughout her work, Jie Lu focused on human issues from multiple aspects and levels. It examined “people” from multiple pairs of categories, such as restriction and liberation, adaptation and transcendence, reality and ideals. Several themes have been proposed successively, such as “the self-constructed person,” “the person with transcendence,” “the person with ideals,” “the person in a relationship,” “the person who returns to life,” “the person who walks into world history.” The regulations and explorations of these “people” reflect people’s diverse images in the educational activities.

Jie Lu inherited and developed the view of human science and believed that practice is the key to unlocking the essence of human nature, and people complete the transition from the actual state to the ought to be through practice. Jie Lu pointed out, “Practice is the way of human existence, practice makes people human, practice is the activity of self-generation and self-creation of human beings, and the fundamental point of practice is the comprehensive and free development of humans themselves” (Lu, 2005). Education needs to bear two responsibilities in pedagogy: teaching students to transform the objective world and teaching students to transform the subjective world. Therefore, Professor Lu believed that education should train people according to two standards. It should shape people according to the actual physical world’s external scale and develop people with the human free mind (Lu, 1997).

Of the two transformations, people need to transform the subjective world. On the one hand, man’s real regulations cannot meet man’s needs in transforming the objective world. On the other hand, the difference between the individual and the class requires people to shorten the gap between themselves and the class through continuous transformation. The transformation of the subjective world refers to the development of

human spirit and consciousness, including developing the relationship with the objective world and developing the internal relationship with the subjective world. It is closely related to the ought-to dimension, and ought-to dimension is the inner motivation of human development.

Based on this, Professor Lu gave a new explanation of moral education.

- Moral Teleology: Make a Person.

“Make a person” was Jie Lu’s provision for moral education. “Moral education is fundamentally the education that “makes people human.” As far as its specific goal is concerned, it is education to achieve human virtue (virtue is human consciousness), and it makes people human” (Lu, 2003). This purpose was consistent with Jie Lu’s determination of the essence of education. She elaborated that people are a relational existence. This relationship’s existence is manifested in two aspects: the relationship between people and nature, and the other is the relationship between people and people, that is, sociality. “People” who are separated from the relational existence does not have the essence of people. Therefore, Jie Lu proposed that educational activities and moral education activities should promote self-transcendence, not the growth and development of self-transcendence based on human survival.

- The Essence of Moral Education: Transcendence.

The theoretical premise for a reasonable grasp of moral education’s essence understands the concept of morality. Regarding the concept of morality, Jie Lu is wholly dissatisfied with the traditional moral concept, trying to break through the normative moral interpretation theory, the moral interpretation theory of epistemology, the moral interpretation theory of instrumentalism, and the moral interpretation theory of extant theory” (Wang et al., 2007).

Jie Lu believed that “the essence of moral education is not to enable the educated to understand what people’s behavior is in real life but to enable them to grasp what people’s behavior may be. What is the moral ideal? How can people approach this ideal” (Lu, 1994)? Moral education should be oriented to actual behaviors and actual relationships, and use this as a starting point to transform and advance reality. Moral education is to “shape and train people according to a certain moral ideal that transcends reality, and urge them to pursue an ideal spiritual state and behavior, to achieve the negation of reality” (Lu, 1994). Moral education is to cultivate virtuous people. Such people have ideas, those who choose to live a possible and meaningful life, and those who transcend and move toward world history.

- The Functional View of Moral Education: Development and Personal Enjoyment.

The research on moral education’s function is the focus of Jie Lu’s research on moral education. Her view of moral education’s purpose and essence was derived from her exploration of moral education functions. Regarding the research on the function of moral education, Jie Lu wrote several articles to state his sharp point of view. From a

historical point of view, she studied the evolution of the function of moral education in different times and spaces. She broke the necessary long-established consensus that moral education is equivalent to political and ideological education and conducted remarkable research on the cultural function, economic function, and cognitive development function of moral education. Moreover, make a new exploration of the political function of moral education. In particular, she has made groundbreaking explorations of the natural and individual enjoyment functions of moral education.

Jie Lu believed that in the face of the survival crisis brought by new technology to humanity and the new morality and ethics changes, educators must pay attention to moral education's natural function to cultivate and shape the next generation with perfect ethics. It was a new topic proposed by the times to moral education (Lu, 1994c). The school should enable the educated to "form a new outlook on life and nature," correctly "understand the good and evil in the relationship between man and nature," and reasonably "regulate the interaction between man and nature, and establish a new atmosphere."

Besides, Jie Lu also believed that moral education should also have the enjoyment function and the development function. She believed that moral education should not enable the educated to master and follow a specific ethical code, thereby forming a constrained, dedicating, and sacrificial view of moral education. Instead, it should be a self-initiated search, which is "the individual realizes some of his needs and desires (mainly spiritual), and experiences satisfaction, happiness, and happiness from it, thereby obtaining a spiritual enjoyment" (Lu, 1994d).

Pay Attention to Life and the Times, and Build a New Paradigm of Moral Education towards Life

Jie Lu believed that the lifeworld is the primary way of human existence. It refers to all areas of human life and is logically prior. The lifeworld has practical attributes. People practice in life, and those who live are people in practice. The search for the meaning and value of life is the ultimate concern for human existence and one of the main goals that the school moral education needs to achieve (Lu, 2006).

Morality is derived from life, internalized in life, and the interpretation and purpose system of life. Morality and life are united again. Moral connotations are contained in people's family life, school life, community life, economic life, political life, and cultural life; it is a value coordinate that guides life and a factor that regulates life's integrity. People's grasp of morality and the formation of moral character are also based on the practice of moral life.

This practice cannot be equated with "ideological reformation" or "behavior formation" but urges a person to construct and reconstruct his own life in the overall life investment. For people, this kind of life construction activity is not innate. Moral education comes into play precisely here. The fundamental function of moral education is to teach people how to construct their own life. However, morality is not pre-existing, fixed, and immutable. Morality exists in the process of its formation and development

and is reflected in its historical process. Therefore, to grasp the connotation of moral education, Professor Lu has been keeping abreast of the times' pulse, in line with the reality of social development, and continuously enriching and supplementing the connotation of moral education.

In the 1990s, with the advent of the market economy, Chinese society entered accelerated modernization. Modernization is a double-edged sword. While it improves people's material civilization level, it also sweeps out people's spirit and morality. Modernization has stimulated man's secular biological nature, indulged man's biological nature, and denied all the divinity and sacredness of man. The crisis of modernization made Professor Jie Lu's thinking on moral education more of human nature. She criticized morbid adaptive education, advocated transcending sex education, cultivated ideal people, and rebuilt people's spiritual world.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, Jie Lu has been critical of the moral education crisis in modernization. Based on criticism, she turned to the construction of moral education from human science's perspective and put forward the idea of "life moral education" so that her moral education thought was continuously improved and reached its peak step by step.

From the planned economy to the market economy, from the various industries waiting to be developed when China was founded, to the rapid development in the 21st century, people's subjective consciousness, the concept of efficiency, and equality have become the moral needs of contemporary people. Therefore, it should be enriched into the content of moral education. Jie Lu tried to redefine these moral education themes, thereby transforming the one-sided view of moral education functions, exploring a new way to return to life moral education, and constructing a new paradigm of moral education based on the life, through life, and for life. She perceived new moral needs in the changing times and social development and sought new moral education content.

The focus on life is not only the content of Professor Lu's research but also her academic research attitude. Professor Lu believed that "everyone continuously generates new moral meaning with the enrichment of his own life experience and the improvement of his self-cultivation. This is a never-ending process of generation." (Lu, 2006). "In our curriculum research, we believe that the process of moral education is life, and moral learning is not knowledge learning in essence, but a life practice." (Lu, 2014). She believed that the height of moral and moral education academic achievement can only be the height of her own life. If moral education is to cultivate generative people and form moral wisdom, enriching people's life experiences and life practice is necessary. Linking the quality of life with academic height is the richness of Professor Lu's academic thoughts and her perception of life experience.

Reconstruct China's Educational Discipline System under the Guidance of Practice View

Iconic representatives mainly accomplish breakthroughs in any field. Jie Lu is undoubtedly a representative figure in the reconstruction of Chinese pedagogy and educational

sociology. From the construction of the discipline system to the development, Professor Lu has always focused on practice and is committed to developing China's education disciplines. She is considered to be "an important founder of the reconstruction of Chinese education disciplines after the reform and opening up, the founder and leader of moral education disciplines, and a leader in the reform of compulsory education moral education curriculum in the new century" (Wu, 2020).

Constructing a Domestic Educational Theoretical Framework in China

"Building one's pedagogy" can be said to be the pursuit throughout Jie Lu's entire academic career. After the "Cultural Revolution," all industries are waiting to be developed, and the education discipline is facing the challenging task of correcting chaos and rebuilding the discipline. At that time, Jie Lu, the director of the Educational Teaching and Research Section of the Department of Education of Nanjing Normal University, was the first to organize the teachers of the entire department to compile a textbook based on the foundation of educational, academic ideological theory and the development of contemporary China and the world, of which had Chinese characteristics and in line with the needs of the times, with a reliable and rich academic theoretical foundation. After years of hard work, the textbook *Pedagogy* was published by People's Education Publishing House in 1984. It was the first pedagogy textbook for professional courses after the reform and opening up and broke through the old concepts on many issues. This textbook was widely used by the education departments of higher regular colleges across the country. It has won the first prize of the Wu Yuzhang Foundation and the first prize of the first national excellent textbook of the National Education Commission. More importantly, it had affected generations of educators.

In 1987, Jie Lu undertook the "Sociology of Education" project of the "Seventh Five-Year Plan" of the National Education Commission's liberal arts textbooks. In 1990, People's Education Press published *Sociology of Education* with her as the chief editor and Kangning Wu as the deputy editor. This was the first college textbook for the State Education Commission's subject after China's founding. It won the first prize of the third national university excellent textbook and made contributions to educational sociology's discipline construction.

Promote the Construction and Development of Moral Education

Facing the distorted moral education situation during the "Cultural Revolution," the moral education principle's discipline construction first needed to start with the necessary theoretical research. Professor Jie Lu and Professor Fengxian Wang of Northeast Normal University undertook the national educational science planning project of "Research on the Basic Theory of Moral Education in the New Era."

The fundamental theoretical research of moral education is to study moral education as a subject, explore the laws of moral education, and change the randomness of moral education in the past. As the final result of this project: “*New Theory on Moral Education*” was published in 1994. “*New Theory on Moral Education*” combs and defines the fundamental issues in moral education, such as the essence of moral education, the function of moral education, the adaptability and transcendence of moral education, and has become a must-read work for generations of moral education theoretical researchers. Among them, Professor Jie Lu's research on moral education's function has expanded the prejudice against moral education. Her views of “the enjoyment function of moral education” and “the transcendence of moral education” have made moral education get rid of politicization and instrumentalization and return to the original point of moral education. Later, this became Professor Jie Lu's basic understanding of moral education, which was reflected in her later publications “*The Origin of Education: Educating People*,” “*Make a Person: The Fundamental Direction of Moral Education*,” and “*People's Understanding of People: The Foundation of Moral Education*,” etc.

Faced with the problems of moral education brought about by the development of the market economy, the publication of “*Sociology of Moral Education*” and “*Contemporary Horizons of Moral Education*” edited by Jie Lu in 1998 has laid a foundation for the discipline of moral education to some extent.

Host and Participate in the Reform of Moral Education Curriculum and Textbook Construction in the New Era

In 2001, China's fundamental education curriculum reform was fully launched. At the age of 71, Jie Lu undertook the research and development of the curriculum standards of “*Ethics and Life*” and “*Ethics and Society*,” making moral education the most attractive education. Jie Lu was trying to find the moral education that belonged to children and built a moral life that belongs to children.

After analyzing the reasons for the unpopularity of moral education courses in elementary and middle schools, the core concept of “return to life” as the curriculum standard was finally established. Return to life and base moral education on children's lives. The goal of children's life is achieved through children's lives, thereby improving children's quality of life and constructing a perfect and happy life. This kind of moral education curriculum overcomes the grand political narrative far away from children, overcomes the empty preaching of adultization and grandeur, and enables children to learn to live a moral life in their lives.

In June 2002, the development of the curriculum standards was completed, and Professor Jie Lu took over the compilation of the textbooks “*Ethics and Life*” and “*Ethics and Society*.” In 2004, about 12 textbooks on “*Ethics and Life*” and “*Ethics and Society*” for elementary schools were officially published. Facts have proved that there were many sets of textbooks at that stage, and the textbook edited by Professor Lu was a widely acclaimed set. At this point, this task should be said to have been completed. However, she still could not rest assured. She asked the children would accept this set

of teaching materials? Would the teachers teach this set of materials? What were the questions in the textbook? Therefore, she started to track the teaching of the new textbook again. Hard work paid off. From 2001 to 2013, the 13-year elementary school morality curriculum reforms were carried out, and fruitful results: “*Children's Moral Life Construction: Primary School Moral Education Curriculum Reform and Practice Research*” was awarded the 2014 First prize the National Basic Education Teaching.

Because of Jie Lu's outstanding work in elementary school moral education curriculum standards, textbook compilation, and research, in May 2012, the Ministry of Education commissioned Jie Lu as the chief editor of the textbook “*Ethics and the Rule of Law*.” That was a more significant project, a bigger challenge, and an immense responsibility. After the start of the writing work, Jie Lu was already over 80 years old. She and the writing team members studied together to discuss and determine the textbook's basic ideas and framework. In the discussion, she was always the person who was mostly prepared. Many questions were outlined and written in text.

In May 2012, the Ministry of Education again commissioned her to serve as the editor-in-chief of the textbook “*Ethics and Rule of Law*” for elementary schools. In September 2019, this textbook was fully put into use. At that time, she was 89 years old, but she was still studying how to help teachers use teaching materials better and made students more rewarding. To this end, she also used her savings to set up the “*Special Research Fund for Primary School Moral Education Courses*” to subsidize elementary school moral education teachers across the country to participate in textbooks and teaching research.

Concluding Remarks

Throughout Professor Lu's academic research, moral education is the core and soul of her academic research. Looking at education and thinking about education with the “eye” of morality are the apparent signs of Jie Lu's educational and academic thinking (Zhu, 2010). Professor Lu has long devoted himself to the research of basic education theory and moral education science. She put forward many original educational theories with Chinese characteristics, formed a unique academic viewpoint and ideological system, and was therefore regarded as an “important founder of the reconstruction of Chinese education disciplines after the reform and opening up, and the founder and Leaders are the leaders in the reform of compulsory education and moral education in the new century.”

Social existence determines social consciousness-the greater the period of rapid economic development, the stronger the concern and demand for morality. With the continuous development of Chinese society, all kinds of thoughts collide with each other, and all kinds of cultures influence each other. There are more uncertainties in people's ideological field, all of which pose new moral education challenges. Professor Lu has been thinking about a series of major social issues all his life and analyzing the relevance of several essential propositions. She has constructed the theoretical edifice of moral education quite thoroughly and quite profoundly responded to moral education's

various practical problems in transforming Chinese society. Whether it is used to guide school moral education practices or contribute to national curriculum policies, Professor Lu's education thoughts and education theories have played a significant role.

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