

Family Ethics and Education

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Up until now, my articles on Unification Thought have drawn largely on the chapter “The Theory of Ethics” from the textbook *New Essentials of Unification Thought*. But the textbook has an Appendix which contains related and very practical ideas which I consider very closely related to the Theory of Ethics. One of these important ideas is the notion of Three Great Subjects and it’s described in this way:

The three great subjects thought is an expression coined by Rev. Sun Myung Moon. The three great subjects refer to parents, teacher, and leader. In other words, the three great subjects mean the three great centers: the parents, who are the center of a family; the teacher, who is the center of a school; and the leader, who is the center of dominion ... (center of dominion refers to ... the central person who is responsible for management or leadership). ... The three great subjects thought emphasizes that these three great subjects should all practice God’s true love.
NEUT, p. 525

Parents — the first of the “Three Great Subjects”

Unification Thought explains that the role of parents has two aspects, which are indicated by the Chinese character for raising children: 養育. The first part of the word (yǎng,) means to “support”, whereas the second part (yù) means to “educate” [i] Our textbook explains that the first is more concerned with material things such as “food, clothing, and shelter” whereas the second is more concerned with internal things such as “manners, ethics, family law, and morality”. In either case, what must always guide the way we raise our children is heart and love. In other words, all our efforts to support materially and to educate internally must always be motivated by, and be an expression of, benevolent love, that is, a love that fervently aspires to bring blessing, fulfillment, success, and joy to the child.

There are two points from the Unification Thought Theory of Education which I feel bear greatly on the attitude of a parent: one is the notion of the child’s unique individuality and the other is the notion of what constitutes “genius”.

The child’s individuality



It is a remarkable position of the Divine Principle that each child is gifted with an absolutely unique individuality for all time:

Every human being possesses a unique individual character. No matter how many billions of people are born on the earth, no two will ever have exactly the same personality. Each person is God’s substantial object partner who manifests a distinctive aspect of God’s dual characteristics. Hence, that person is the only one in the entire universe who can stimulate that distinctive aspect of God’s nature to bring Him joy.” • Exposition of DP, p. 164

Unification Thought does go on to explain this

notion more completely^[ii], but this is not the place to make that digression. The point to be made here is that parents realize that the child they are given is a very unique individual, with a personality, talents, and gifts that they alone have, in just the combination and degree that is unique to them.

The notion of “genius”

A related notion is the one of “genius”. Whereas the common understanding of genius is that it is a one-in-a-million phenomenon, the position of Unification Thought is significantly different:

"Originally everyone has the talent of genius, since human beings were originally created to become beings with creativity, inheriting God's creativity. As a matter of fact, the Chinese characters for “genius” indicate a person with talent which is given by Heaven. Creativity is given to a person at birth as an endowed potential. Therefore, all people have the potential to become a genius once they manifest their creativity one hundred percent. In order to actualize such creativity, however, a proper education is necessary..." • New Essentials of Unification Thought, p. 265

In this quote, a key condition is that “a proper education” is administered. This is comprised of an education of Heart (which cultivates a love of God and of others); an education of Norm (which inculcates standards of conduct that are concrete expressions of Heart); and an education of Dominion (which guides creativity to be expressive of love).^[iii]

Up to this point, I've outlined the Unification Thought position about the responsibility of the First Great Subject, i.e., the parent. But an important position of Unification Thought is that the value of philosophy is in its practice, not just in its theory. So I will step away from theory at this point, because as these ideas became clearer to me over a long period of time (truthfully, decades), my understanding and practice of parenthood has slowly evolved.

(Somewhere) during the course of my study of UT, it dawned on me, first, that my own children are absolutely unique individuals in the course of eternity. That uniqueness is coded into their DNA, which we know is unique to each individual person. And that second, they are fundamentally gifted in ways that may not be initially apparent to myself, my spouse, and certainly to the children themselves. But the gift — or more likely the combination of any number of gifts — is latent inside them, only waiting to be discovered and developed so that they might find their joy and fulfill their destiny.

That awareness then gives a very clear focus to my responsibility as their parent: to embrace with certainty the uniqueness of their character and talent, and to devote everything I can to help them discover and develop what's been put inside them, by inheritance as well as by some other marvelous process known — at this point — only to their Heavenly Parent. Guiding them then became a deliberate process of exposing them to many different experiences, carefully observing their responses, thoughtfully considering the observations of their coaches and teachers, and prayerfully striving to somehow guide the slow but sure process of their self-discovery.

The results of parenting in this manner have strongly affirmed my faith in the importance of understanding and applying the ideas of the Three Great Subjects.

In the next article, I will outline the second of the Three Great Subjects — the Teacher. But in the meantime, I fervently suggest that each parent consider the Unification Thought position on the first of the Three Great Subjects — the Parent — and see if there is something that can perhaps be of immediate value in one's own practice of parenthood. After all, according to the notion of the Three Great Kingships, our children are kings and queens of the future.

[i] www.mdbg.net/chindict/chindict.php?page=worddict&wdrst=1&wdqb=%E9%A4%8A%E8%82%B2

[ii] New Essentials of Unification Thought, p. 162

[iii] New Essentials of Unification Thought, p. 250