The Aim of Education: Insights from the Movie "Seediq Bale"

Jing Qiu *

Sichuan Normal University, Chengdu, China

* Corresponding Author Email: qiujingcrystal@outlook.com

Abstract. The education of the Seediq people embodies the pursuit of multicultural values, such as the reverence for the unity of man and nature, the spirit of bravery, and collectivism. In contrast, Japanese colonial education aimed at "Japanimation," disregarding the subjectivity of indigenous people and eliminating cultural diversity, which ultimately led to the resistance of the Seediq people. This enlightens us that the purpose of education should be to awaken individual consciousness, respect students' individuality, stimulate national confidence, cultivate cultural awareness, maintain cultural diversity, promote multicultural exchanges, adhere to a people-oriented approach, and foster students' all-round development. Only by practicing these concepts can education become an undertaking of cultural inheritance and human liberation, contributing wisdom and strength to national rejuvenation and human progress.

Keywords: Education, Multiculturalism, All-round development, indigenous music.

1. Introduction

The purpose of education is a fundamental question that has long been debated by philosophers, educators, and policymakers. The core of education is to transmit knowledge, skills, values, and culture, ensuring the continuation and progress of human civilization. However, the specific goals and priorities of education vary with time, culture, and society. The film "Seediq Bale" vividly recreates the profound conflict between the Seediq people and the colonizers in educational philosophy and practice under Japanese colonial rule in the 1930s, triggering reflections on the eternal question of the purpose of education. The education of the Seediq people embodies the pursuit of multicultural values, such as the reverence for the unity of man and nature, the spirit of bravery, and collectivism. In contrast, Japanese colonial education aimed at "Japanimation," disregarding the subjectivity of indigenous people and eliminating cultural diversity, which ultimately led to the resistance of the Seediq people. This enlightens us that education should awaken individual consciousness, respect students' individuality, stimulate national confidence, cultivate cultural awareness, maintain cultural diversity, promote multicultural exchanges, adhere to a people-oriented approach, and foster students' all-round development. Only by practicing these concepts can education become an undertaking of cultural inheritance and human liberation, contributing wisdom and strength to national rejuvenation and human progress.

The film "Seediq Bale" is based on the tragic story of the Seediq people, an indigenous tribe in central Taiwan, under Japanese colonial rule in the 1930s. It vividly portrays the profound conflict between the Seediq people and the colonizers in educational philosophy and practice. Faced with the cultural hegemony and assimilationist education of the Japanese colonizers, the Seediq leader Mona Rudao exclaimed, "If civilization means bowing down, then let them see the pride of the savages." This resounding statement expresses the Seediq people's determination to defend their cultural dignity. The two drastically different educational concepts presented in the film have prompted me to reflect deeply on the eternal question of the purpose of education.

2. The Diverse Educational Goals of the Seediq People

The Seediq people are an indigenous tribe in the central mountainous region of Taiwan. Before Japanese colonial rule, they lived a natural village life in harmony with nature. The Seediq people have unique and rich cultural traditions, with music playing an important role. The Seediq people have almost no written language, and music carries the historical memory, way of life, ethics, and

aesthetic tastes of the tribe. Through the singing of folk songs, the Seediq people have been able to pass down their spiritual and cultural heritage from generation to generation.

The educational goals of the Seediq people embody a special ecological wisdom and humanistic care. They value harmonious coexistence with nature and believe that all things have a spirit. This sense of reverence is reflected in the enlightenment education of children, such as teaching them to care for animals and plants and to conserve resources. At the same time, the Seediq people espouse the spirit of bravery, and men must go through various trials in the coming-of-age ceremony to become true men. However, this bravery is not for conquest and plunder, but for defending the homeland and protecting the tribe. Moreover, the Seediq people emphasise collective interests and educate young people to fight for the honor of the tribe and to dedicate themselves to the collective good. These educational goals reflect a pursuit of values that is quite different from modern industrial civilization, enlightening us to view the educational traditions of different ethnic groups with a pluralistic and inclusive perspective.

Education should not be limited to the mere acquisition of knowledge and skills. It should also be committed to shaping people's character, values, and moral principles. In a globalised world facing pressing moral and social challenges, education plays a crucial role in cultivating responsible, engaged, and compassionate citizens. This includes nurturing qualities such as integrity, empathy, respect for diversity, and a sense of social responsibility. By instilling these values and fostering moral reasoning, education can help students develop a strong moral framework to guide their decisions and actions.

3. The Assimilationist Education Goals of the Japanese Colonizers

In stark contrast, Japanese colonial education aimed at "Japanimation." While using military force to "pacify the savages," the Japanese colonial authorities also launched a comprehensive infiltration and transformation of Seediq culture through educational means. For instance, the Japanese authorities set up "Hōanden" in schools for indigenous people, enshrining photos of Emperor Hirohito and the Empress. Students were compelled to regularly worship at the altar to instill the idea of "absolute loyalty to the emperor." Moreover, the Japanese authorities prohibited indigenous students from using their mother tongue and enforced the teaching of Japanese. They even punished students who spoke their native language, attempting to fundamentally sever the connection between the indigenous people and their traditional culture. Colonial education advocated the modern school system, characterized by standardized curricula and selective examinations, with the aim of eradicating the indigenous culture and indoctrinating Japanese ideology. The Japanese colonial authorities banned the Seediq people from speaking their mother tongue and singing folk songs, and forcibly promoted Japanese language education, severing the connection between the indigenous people and their traditional culture. Under the guise of "enlightenment" and "progress," this educational model essentially served colonial rule, aiming to erase Taiwan's original languages and cultures, mold obedient colonial subjects, suppress cultural diversity, and ultimately provoked fierce resistance from the Seediq people.

In comparison, Japanese colonial education reflected a homogenized and instrumentally rational view of educational purpose. This educational model treated students as passive objects to be indoctrinated, ignoring their individual characteristics and subjectivity, and one-sidedly emphasized examinations, selection, and knowledge cramming while neglecting students' moral cultivation and physical and mental development. With the goal of cultivating subservient subjects for the colonial government, this education ultimately became a tool of political and ideological domination. As historian Chen Xiaochong pointed out, "Japan implemented a 'Japanimation' assimilation policy towards the indigenous people of Taiwan, prohibiting the use of native languages and forcibly promoting Japanese education, thereby severing the indigenous people's connection to their traditional culture." It served the political demands of the colonial regime, deviated from the humanistic care of education, and caused cultural rupture and ethnic confrontation.

4. The purpose of education should be diverse

4.1. Education should awaken individuals' sense of subjectivity

Education must respect the subjectivity of the educated. Mona Rudao's cry reflects a sense of subjectivity that rebels against authoritarianism and oppression. This enlightens us that education must respect the subjectivity of the educated, respect differences, encourage individuality, and empower students, rather than treating them as passive o bjects to be indoctrinated. A survey on creativity among primary and secondary school students in China found that among the 5,000 students surveyed, 85% believed that the exam-oriented education system suppressed their innovative thinking. This indicates that the current exam-oriented education is in urgent need of reform to stimulate students' creative potential.

In the context of education in China, exam-oriented education has long dominated the educational ecosystem. Students are reduced to symbols of scores and enrollment rates, and their individuality and creativity are neglected. This "one-size-fits-all" education model suppresses students' personality development and stifles their curiosity and desire for knowledge. To change this situation, Chinese educators have conducted a series of explorations and reforms. For example, in curriculum design, many schools have set up diversified courses such as art, sports, and labor to provide students with platforms to showcase their talents and explore their interests. In teaching methods, teachers strive to break the traditional "spoon-feeding" model and adopt inquiry-based, cooperative, and experiential teaching methods to stimulate students' active participation and courage to question. In the evaluation system, schools have begun to value process-based evaluation, comprehensively examining students' performance in multiple dimensions such as knowledge, ability, and emotion, rather than relying solely on exam scores.

Take music education as an example. In recent years, the country has been continuously revising and improving China's music curriculum standards. In this context of the country's advocacy for aesthetic education, many schools have set up diverse music clubs such as choirs, orchestras, and folk music societies, encouraging students to participate based on their interests and strengths. In these clubs, students are no longer passive recipients but the masters of music activities. They participate in the selection and arrangement of repertoire, discuss performance techniques, and cooperate to complete performance tasks. In this process, students' sense of subjectivity is manifested, and their individuality is expressed. Some schools have also tried to incorporate improvisation and music creation into the curriculum, encouraging students to express themselves creatively and tell their own stories through music. These reform measures allow students to break free from the shackles of scores and soar freely in the sky of art.

Contemporary education should be an undertaking that liberates people's freedom and potential, providing fertile soil for establishing dignity and expressing individuality for every individual life. This is not only the value pursuit of education in the new era but also the inescapable responsibility of educators. We should take the courage and wisdom of Mona Rudao as an example to promote education to return to the essence of nurturing people and awaken the shining light of subjectivity in the heart of every student.

4.2. Education should stimulate national confidence and cultivate cultural awareness

The "pride of the savage" demonstrates the Seediq people's confidence and awareness of their own ethnic culture. Education should be rooted in the soil of the excellent culture of the nation, guiding students to understand and identify with the cultural traditions of their own nation, and enhancing their sense of national self-esteem and self-confidence. Only the national is the global.

China is a multi-ethnic country, and each ethnic group has its own unique cultural traditions and artistic treasures. However, in the process of modernization, some ethnic cultures face the crisis of losing their voice. The wave of globalization may weaken local cultural identity, and the expansion of mainstream values may also assimilate minority ethnic cultures. In this regard, the Chinese government and education authorities attach great importance to this and have taken a series of

measures to inherit and promote the excellent ethnic culture. In the stage of basic education, the national curriculum standards clearly require the strengthening of education in Chinese excellent traditional culture. Many regions organically integrate the cultural content of their own ethnic groups into subjects such as history, music, and art. For example, Chinese textbooks include many classic literary works of ethnic minorities, music classes sing traditional songs such as folk songs and operas, and art courses guide students to appreciate and imitate ethnic crafts and paintings. Some ethnic regions have also set up courses on their own ethnic languages and scripts to help students master their mother tongue and enhance their cultural identity.

Take music education as an example. The country vigorously promotes ethnic music in schools, guiding young people to perceive the national spirit and draw cultural nourishment from excellent traditional music. Schools in various regions have successively published characteristic school-based textbooks, bringing local music culture that is characteristic of each region but somewhat unfamiliar to students into the classroom. Many schools have also established folk music clubs, where students learn ethnic musical instrument playing techniques in their spare time and experience the charm of ethnic music. Various regions also regularly hold ethnic music competitions and performances to build a platform for ethnic music exchange. Some universities cooperate with intangible cultural heritage inheritors, inviting them to teach in classrooms and pass on endangered ethnic music skills. Imperceptibly, students' cultural confidence is enhanced, and national emotions are gathered.

The national leader of our country pointed out: "The rejuvenation of a nation requires not only strong material strength but also strong spiritual strength." The excellent ethnic culture is the deepest and most lasting strength. As educators, in the process of inheriting and innovating the excellent ethnic culture, we radiate a kind of cultural confidence and contribute valuable strength to cultivating the new people of the times who will shoulder the great task of national rejuvenation.

4.3. Education should respect and safeguard cultural diversity

Multiculturalism is like a vast forest, where different civilizations, ethnicities, and languages are like towering trees, with intertwined roots and intermingling leaves and branches, together forming the green shade of human life. Mona Rudao's words reflect the concept of cultural equality. Each culture has its unique value and is a treasure of human civilization. Education should not view a certain culture as "advanced" and "civilised" while labeling others as "backward" and "savage".

Education should establish the concept of cultural equality and respect the uniqueness and value of each culture. China's education does a good job in this regard. From a young age, teachers guide us to abandon cultural prejudices and view the languages, customs, and arts of different ethnic groups with an open and inclusive attitude. The classroom is a stage for the exchange and collision of multicultural perspectives, where we expand our horizons and enrich our spiritual world in a multicultural vision. For example, music classes can introduce songs from different ethnic groups and countries, allowing students to appreciate diverse musical styles and experience the beauty of cultural differences. Chinese textbooks can select and compile excellent literary works from different countries, allowing students to feel the common human emotions in exotic settings. Organizing "cultural festival" activities, students dress up in the costumes of different ethnic groups, perform characteristic songs and dances, taste exotic delicacies, and develop interest and identity in multiculturalism through participation and experience.

In the field of music education, many schools in contemporary China regard music education as an important carrier for students' comprehensive development. Music education not only imparts professional skills such as playing and singing but also focuses on cultivating temperament, shaping character, and improving comprehensive literacy. For example, choral training not only allows students to master knowledge such as harmony and rhythm but also cultivates a sense of teamwork. Students must listen to other voice parts, control their own volume, and coordinate with others to sing harmonious heavenly voices. In this process, students learn the valuable qualities of respecting others and cooperating with people. Another example is that music appreciation classes guide students to listen to classic works of different periods and styles, improving their aesthetic ability through the

nourishment of beauty. Teachers guide students to analyse the emotions contained in the works, speculate on the creative intentions of the composers, and sublimate their sentiments in dialogue with the classics, creating a haven for the mind and soul. Some schools have also tried to innovate the content of music courses, integrating music with other subjects to develop students' multiple intelligences.

4.4. Adhere to a people-oriented approach and promote all-round development

Among the Seediq people, children learn the music and dance created by their tribesmen from an early age. Tribal elders sing ancient songs, tell stories of their ancestors, and teach their descendants the principles of kindness and bravery. Young men and women dance around bonfires, expressing their praise for love and nature through beautiful dance moves. Music and dance are not only ceremonies for celebrating harvests and driving away evil spirits, but also carry the moral concepts and aesthetic tastes of the tribe. In the process of participating in singing and dancing, the Seediq people internalize noble virtues, cultivate a simple and honest character, and achieve a sound and harmonious personality.

Adhering to a people-oriented approach and promoting students' comprehensive development has become a basic consensus of education reform in countries around the world. For a long time, China's exam-oriented education has overemphasized intellectual education and neglected education in other fields. With the development of the times, China's education in the new era emphasizes establishing a holistic development view, strengthening moral education, physical fitness, aesthetic appreciation, and practical skills training. Only when education in various fields cooperates and develops in coordination can the overall quality of students be improved. As the UNESCO report "Learning to Be" points out, "the fundamental goal of education is the complete development of the individual in physical, intellectual, emotional, and moral aspects."

In the field of music education, under the guidance of contemporary Chinese policies and curriculum standards, many schools regard aesthetic education as an important carrier for students' comprehensive development. Music education, as an important part of aesthetic education, not only teaches professional skills such as playing instruments and singing but also focuses on cultivating sentiment, shaping character, and enhancing comprehensive literacy. For example, chorus training not only allows students to master knowledge such as harmony and rhythm but also cultivates a sense of teamwork. Students must listen to other voice parts, control their own volume, and coordinate with others to sing harmonious and heavenly sounds. In this process, students learn valuable qualities of respecting others and cooperating with people. In addition, music appreciation classes guide students to listen to classic works of different periods and styles, enhancing their aesthetic ability through the influence of beauty. Teachers guide students to analyse the emotions contained in the works and speculate on the composers' creative intentions, sublimating their sentiments and creating a home for their spiritual mind through dialogue with classics.

5. Summary:

Looking at the world and the history of human civilization, education has always played a key role in social development. From ancient schools to modern public education, from private schools and academies in China to the university system in the West, different countries and nations have been exploring education tirelessly. All of this demonstrates the importance of education to the nation and its people.

Education is the foundation of a country and the basis of a strong nation. The level of development of a country largely depends on the level of education of its citizens. Education not only imparts knowledge and skills but also shapes values, determining the way of thinking and spiritual character of a nation. The reason why Chinese civilization has lasted for 5,000 years without interruption is largely due to the excellent tradition of respecting education and valuing learning. At present, the world is undergoing changes unseen in a century. A new round of technological revolution and

industrial transformation is sweeping the globe, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is far-reaching, the international situation is complex and volatile, and instability and uncertainty have increased significantly. Emerging fields such as artificial intelligence, big data, biotechnology, and new materials are in the ascendant, placing new and higher demands on talent cultivation. Global challenges such as climate change, energy security, and major epidemics are emerging one after another, calling for countries to work together to respond and build a community with a shared future for mankind. Facing new situations and challenges, education should bravely take on the responsibilities of the times and cultivate socialist builders and successors who develop comprehensively in terms of morality, intelligence, physique, aesthetics, and labor. On the one hand, we should accelerate the cultivation of high-quality talents adapted to the new technological revolution, especially seizing the high ground of talents in cutting-edge fields of science and technology and enhancing original innovation capabilities. On the other hand, we should cultivate internationalized talents with a global perspective, proficiency in international rules, and expertise in cross-cultural communication to tell China's stories, spread China's voice, and enhance the country's cultural soft power.

The significance of education lies not only in personal gain but also in realizing the organic unity of personal values and national rejuvenation. Through education, individuals can improve themselves, realise their dreams, and embody their own values in serving the country and the people. Through education, a country and a nation can unite their strength and forge ahead toward rejuvenation. Today's students are tomorrow's pillars of the country and future global citizens. Contemporary educators must sort out correct educational concepts and face the true purpose of education.

References

[1] Chen, X. (2005). A Fifty-Year History of Japanese Colonial Rule in Taiwan. Social Sciences Academic Press.

[2] Dai, L. (2015). "Seediq Bale": A Salute to Faith. Communication and Copyright, (12), 73 - 74.

[3] Lai, Y. (2012). Discourse and Identity in Taiwan Cinema in the Early 21st Century: A Case Study of Director Wei Te-Sheng's "Cape No. 7" and "Seediq Bale" [Master's thesis, Chang Jung Christian University].

[4] Cui, R., & Chao, Q. (2006). Individualized Education: Connotation and Analysis. Modern Education Science: Higher Education Research, (4), 3.

[5] Banks, J. A. (2015). Cultural Diversity and Education: Foundations, Curriculum, and Teaching. Routledge.

[6] Gay, G. (2018). Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice. Teachers College Press.

[7] Nieto, S. (2015). The Light in Their Eyes: Creating Multicultural Learning Communities. Teachers College Press.

[8] Sleeter, C. E. (2012). Confronting the Marginalization of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. Urban Education, 47 (3), 562 - 584.

[9] Wesley, S. L. (2005). Role of Arts Participation in Adult Learning about Multicultural Diversity [Doctoral dissertation, Teachers College, Columbia University].

[10] Sterk, D. (2020). Indigenous Cultural Translation: A Thick Description of Seediq Bale. Routledge.

[11] Fu, Y. W. (2015). Breaking Through Colonial Enframing: Landscape and Mindscape in Te-sheng Wei's Seediq Bale. Amerasia Journal, 41 (1), 96 - 117.

[12] https://www.cnki.net.

[13] https://scholar.google.com.