

On a Theory of Leisure in the Field of Spiritual Culture

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In the 20th century, one of the greatest contribution of science and technology to the mankind is that it has freed the human beings from heavy physical labor and given the people full leisure time. With the coming of the digital era, most of the future life and state of living of the mankind will be spent in leisure time. Therefore, leisure has become an important part of the human social activities. What is leisure? What kind of inner links exist between leisure and the quality of the human life? What enlightenment can we gain from leisure which is an implication of cultural spirit? What kind of value of leisure shall we have in the future? All the above questions need our careful consideration.

I. Leisure and leisure culture

Leisure refers to the time the people have after they finish necessary social labor, which is based on reduction of man-hours. Leisure is a form of the state of human life, generally including eliminating physical fatigue and gaining spiritual comfort. With the development of science and technology as well as the social advancement, leisure has provided conditions for the rich spiritual life of the people. It is said that recreation will free the people from labor. On the one side, the hardness of labor will weaken due to longer rest and recovery time; on the other side, recreation should play a role in compensating the pains caused by labor to the people, helping them find back the possibility of the physical and spiritual balance damaged by labor. Leisure reflects the level of productive force of one country as well as the apparatus for measuring social culture. It is the flower watered by spiritual civilization and material civilization of human beings.

Leisure culture is the distillation of leisure in the field of culture, meaning a kind of living state and way of behavior in a process of cultural creation, cultural enjoyment and cultural construction so as to meet many-sided demands of the people. It creates cultural atmosphere, transfer cultural information and build cultural artistic conception through the behavior, thought, feeling and activities of individuals or groups; thus, physical and mental development of the individuals will be achieved in a comprehensive and intact way. The essence of leisure mainly reflect a type of spiritual life of the people. Leisure, with a special implication of cultural spirit, is different from spare time or idle time. Instead it refers to the people's self-development after their necessary labor .

Leisure culture which comes from material civilization is one of the most important parts of human being's culture. With the development of productive force, man has leisure time which separates from labor continuously. Beautiful music and graceful dance were the products of ancient Greek for leisure. Ancient Chinese also wrote poems to describe leisure. Leisure makes

man's spiritual life colorful. Leisure culture which reflects spirit of era as well as human nature is epitome of human being's spiritual culture. It concerns with the level of politics, economy and ethics in certain historical period.

As a special form of culture, leisure effects man's living in many different ways such as reading, traveling, drinking, chatting and making friends in leisure time. It comforts your tired mind and heart.

Wandering in the beautiful countryside, sleeping on the bamboo chair under the tree and so on all make you relax. Therefore, "the deep, great and beautiful spiritual home of human being can found in the wind, cloud, mountains, color and smell of flowers. ([9]p354) Great writer Yutang Ling once said, "leisure life is not just the right of wealthy and successful men, but the products of easy heart which comes from happy sense. To enjoy leisure does not need a lot of money. Sometimes wealthy man does not enjoy leisure life truly while the person who loves thrifty and simple life with kind heart does.([19]p259) Perhaps this is the true essence of leisure culture.

The American sociologist T.Veblen was the founder of leisure study in the view of culture, which started at the end of 19th century. He wrote a book in 1898 to analyze the relations between leisure and consume and thought "The ways of leisure is 'non-material' , but the art or the knowledge for discussion."([15]p36) With the fast development of science and technology, leisure time begins to increase generally, and leisure becomes very important and necessary for the people's many-sided self-development. In 1936, a secretary office which was in charge of sports and entertainment came into being in France. This meant leisure became a task of France government. (In 1981, Leisure Department was organized in France.) After World War II, traveling and other leisure activities sprang up. People began to pursue leisure at their own will. At the same time, various international labor organizations issued declarations on the rights of the laborers in succession, providing full legal guarantee for leisure and mood for enjoyments. In 1970, Leisure Charter was passed which says "Leisure time is the time that man kills at his own will after he finishes his work. It enriches man's life and self-development. The activities based on leisure time have a common characteristics which is a kind of psychology sense and satisfaction." [1] Many western scholars issued systematic theory from the angle of culture civilization and daily life civilization as well.

China has a long history of leisure culture. Before modern times, the leisure culture were mainly reflected among feudal officials and literatus. Many excellent Chinese traditional words, including The Book of Songs, The Songs of Chu, The Poems of Tang, The Ballads of Song, The Yuan Qu and The Trivial Memories of Autumn Light written in the Qing Dynasty, have recorded rich contents of leisure culture. However, the leisure culture was far from most ordinary people at that time; and due to the special background of the Chinese social culture in the past century, China's leisure culture had dropped to be at a low tide.

In contemporary China, Mr. Guangyuan Yu was the first to put forward the theory of leisure culture. In 1983 and 1994, he pointed out that play is one of the basic needs of human beings and people should play with culture, study the science of play and grasp and develop the skills of play. In 1995, Mr. Yu established " Liuhe Leisure Culture Planning Center", beginning the study on leisure cultural theory so as to promote the leisure with taste for all ordinary people.

As a kind of governmental activity and state system, leisure culture merely started in the past decade. Since 1985, the Research Center of Promotion and Development of Science and Technology of China's State Commission for Science and Technology had studied " The Reduction of Man-hours" for more than two years. In February 1987, the center proposed a

report on the preliminary practical research on reduction of man-hours in China. Afterwards, the Chinese Government had made eight-year preparations for the whole people", advocating scientific, civilized and healthy way of life which has shown that China has entered the world process of leisure culture and opened a new era of China's leisure culture.

II. Leisure in the Field of Cultural Spirit

It is necessary to consider the nature of people if we ponder over leisure from the angle of cultural spirit. It is well known that the most basic difference between the people and the other living things is the people have the property of social culture. Frome once pointed out that the essence of life is to be sure of self-existence. "Man's nature does not confine to food and sex for living. It also refers to the emotion such as love, friendship, happiness and hatred etc. What is more, man's character is one part of human nature."([5]p50)

Ancient Greek tried to grasp the characteristics of human being. "Man is a spiritual being. This makes him have a unique status."([17]p57) Human being's history proves that man's state is a spiritual state which gives us necessary theoretic support to study leisure from the angle of cultural spirit. "When we admit unique spirit power is the base of life, the behavior itself strengthening this life reflects the meaning and value of life."([17]p70) What is the essence of cultural spirit? It is conveyed through knowledgeable and graceful behavior. It is concessive process to pursue self-development in inner power. "This inner power comes from one's aesthetics, moral sense and temperament and interest in daily life.([12]) Therefore, leisure is in the field of cultural spirit.

Today, man begins to attach importance to economic capital and cultural capital. What is cultural capital? (I) concrete state ---- the state of mind and body. (II) objective state ---- cultural goods such as book, picture, machine and so on. (III) systematic state ----- it is a objective form which makes cultural capital become primitive property."([9]p193) In Greek, "Schole" means leisure and education. From this aspect we know that leisure has close relationship with education as well as entertainment with the level of education. So leisure is based on education. This is the theoretic and logical basis for us to study leisure from the angle of cultural spirit.

Marthom revealed the essence of human being from the aspect of psychology. He gave man three kinds of power of personality which were: the power of wisdom; the power of morality and the power of will. He said , "Man has a advanced instinct which includes the desire for work value, justice, rationality and good job etc. When man gets basic need, he will pursue the advance such as emotion, dignity, respect, honor and other highest values.([10]p6)

Also, Marx laid stress on the relationship between leisure and man's full-development. He said: "Leisure time itself is property. Man must train man's social personality and make him full-development as special social product. (Because the things is complicated, man must have competence to enjoy leisure. This proves man must be a democratic and civilized.) This is the condition to regard capital as basis of production."([18]) When the necessary work time reduces to the lowest level, leisure time increases, and then man begins to develop himself in art, science and philosophy etc. Thus man's value as social being is reflected fully.

It is a long history from leisure to leisure culture, and then to having a meaning life. In recent centuries, many thinkers have attached importance to man's self-realization. This provides theoretic basis for us to study leisure in the field of cultural spirit.

III. Man's Self-examination and Criticism from the Perspective of Cultural Spirit

There is no doubt that people will have more and more leisure time in their life with the coming of modern society. However, we have to notice and experience such a fact: alienation of the people in modern time in the process of their "occupation" makes the contradictions between human and nature, person and person, the balance and unbalance of individual inner world become sharper and sharper. In the academic circles, mankind has started to self-examine and criticize from the dimension of cultural spirit. The extrusive symbol is that man has become a man without soul though he has magic power.

Bell once described our society as follows, "The developed science and technology extends human living space, widens fields of human vision, increases human self-realization and strengthens human power to control and use nature. However, the essential issues also follow hard at heel: Although modern knowledge is ever comprehensive, special and precise, modern man feels unprecedented insignificance and helplessness; The separations between the religion and human life, the youth and the old hinder the communication among them. The scientific idea blindly expands and soaks into the field of the humanities and it pays no heed to human value. As a consequence, modern man has rich knowledge but he lacks the intelligence to grasp the significance of life and integrative thought to deal with the complicated situations in modern time. ([3]p140) Therefore, Bell cried out sadly, " Who am I?" The question demonstrates the seriousness of human being. The contradiction between physical products and human soul are becoming increasingly distinct. Human spiritual world was smashed to pieces by the conflicts between occupation and souls. Although our spare time increases day by day, we are even more unknown how to use it well. On one hand, physical products become extremely rich while human spiritual world is empty. The economy becomes more and more developed, but most people feel the happiness, the desired life and living qualities are beyond to reach. "The hiding of the god, the ending of the subject(man)" just are a true portrayal of the contemporary human culture which lost its spirit.

It is found out that there are 89% Americans have experienced heavy psychological depress according to a recent American Harris public opinion poll. The data supplied by the Ministry of Public Health of France shows that the reasons of death that speed ghastly are not Aids, not drug taking, not traffic accidents, but suicide caused by psychological depress. In Germany 10% of the people has psychological problem. The United Nations International Organization for Reform Through Labor tells us in a published report that psychological depress has become one of the most serious health problems. In China, there are 20.3% of 126 thousand college students suffered from psychological depress in accordance with the result of sample investigation made by the State Education Commission of China. In addition, the 1996 investigation report of the state commission for Restructuring Economy of China shows that there are 68.5% of residents felt pressure in their life. On the whole, psychological problem in different degree exist wide spread in the nation.

Why do so many psychological problems occur while human material life is becoming rich? Experts say that the arouse of psychological stress has subjective and objective reasons. From the objective aspect, we can see that the intense competition, the threatening of losing job, the rocking of family, the exposure of information and the increasing of conflicts conform the stress to psychology. From the subjective aspect, we can see modern man's value outlook and ethics have a great change: their urges for wealth are continuously expanding; Their expectation to life is higher and higher; Thought of match and compare is getting more and more stressed. In fact, the essence of the problem lies in the losing of human cultural spirit. It is his own soul that modern

man alienates in the process of occupying wealth. Japanese who compete fiercely call themselves "Economic animals." They feel deeply that their material lives become prosperous but the real human nature is buried. This makes them feel stifled.

Certainly, feeling puzzled does not mean that man isn't thinking deeply. Human has realized in reason that the development of modernization itself is only means and its ultimate aim is to improve human life or develop life quality. A life lacking significance and value is obviously not worth admiring. Therefore it has no lofty character. In this century many thinkers and scholars have shown solicitude for the world of human life.(referring to their spiritual life)

Daily life is the carrier of leisure (it is reciprocal entirety in fact). It is necessary for us to examine our concept of daily life. It's self-evident that daily life is compared with conscious spiritual activity such as science, art, philosophy and with organized social activity such as politics, economy and management. It is a summary of daily ideological activity, social activity and the other activities which take individual's direct conditions ----- natural communities as family, village, street block ----- as elementary condition and aim to sustain individual survival and reproduction. The most elementary activities of human are to obtain means of subsistence and consume activity. Their aims are to meet the needs of food, clothing, shelter and transportation, sex, continuing the individual's body life, and daily idea activities along with the various mentioned activities, but they are not initiative and complex. In this way we divided human society into daily life world and non-daily life world."([2]p333) Obviously, leisure carries the whole duty and obligation of not-daily life world of human being.

Looking back the philosophy development in the 20th century, we can see many thinkers of different schools coincide to turn their studying angle of view to human "life world".

In the thirties of this century, Husel after observed the cultural crises caused by the social effect of science, pointed out profoundly "This is a crises of philosophy, a crises of man himself". "The root causing this crises was that science world stealthily replaced and forgot the life world in the course of constructing itself. Therefore, we must come back to life world in order to break away from this crisis."([2]p325) Heidegger, the founder of existentialist, after analyzing the overall alienation of the modern daily life, questioned closely "what is the significance of being?"(being is the normal person itself) He thought "Daily common being's world or daily life world is an overall alienated field, not real status quo." Lefever, French philosopher, held up the flag of criticism and pointed out that by now the real man has not come into being, and man is still in alienated inhuman state. This alienation existed in the whole life field such as working, thinking, demanding and communication. He regarded daily life as a gradation between economic basis and superstructure because the daily life had so important basic position. Its alienation inevitably hindered the conforming of the total man and directly obstructed and blinded up the revolution tendency of superstructure and ideology.([2]p327)

Frome condemned man's character of egoism and desire of occupation. He pointed out deeply "Just in spare time, people think they are free, but in fact, it is only conditional release for a Sunday." But in the last analysis, "The life of the human body was decided by whether man could thoroughly change his own soul or not."([12]p12) Therefore he called such a new man who attaches importance to existence, spirit and initiation.

Argnis Heller, a female scholar of Hungary, in her book named Daily Life taking three hidden questions which are the essence of man; basic needs and daily life as the main route, revealed the structure of the daily life of the world today. She pointed out social transforming cannot be achieved only on macro-scale. At any rate, man's self-remolding and attitude alternation are inner

composition of every transform, and man's value must be improved. She thought, "We can see this value intensively in traditional culture. All these questions that how we feed ourselves, what we eat and how to eat, where we live and how to arrange our room, expressed the humanity tendency."([4]p60) The key of this book is that only by improving the cultural spirit of human being and giving freedom to man's various potential abilities, man will obtain happiness.

This self-examination and criticism of human being is a need of man's nature. It is the reflection of man's nature too. We know "the liberation of human is not only in the material scale, the emancipation in economy does not mean the emancipation in culture, the rational freedom is not equal to perceptual happiness. The basic hallmark and realized way of liberation of human is to dispel the psychological and instinct depress by the means of art and culture."([8]p3)

In recent years, a widespread discussion on postmodern cultural idea rose in the west. Lots of philosophers and scholars exposed the inner contradictions between its society and culture, reviewed deeply the current situation of person, had the greatest esteem for reconstructing more rational forms of society and made an appeal to recast healthy cultural character.

At present, all the discussion about scientific spirit and humanity spirit being carried in China and the degree of Chinese government concerning the life quality and living quality ---- show people have already felt the most lofty of cultural spirit because the cultural spirit promises not only to give people a magnificent world, but also the spirit destination.

It is obvious that there is a closely mutual relation between cultural spirit and leisure. So leisure is taken as a post for person's soul. At the same time, it bears the historical responsibility to construct human culture spirit. Therefore it bears the momentous current significance.

Leisure is a field which has close relation with everyone's high quality life. Idealistic leisure perhaps is the best way to cure modern man's psychological disease. However, we haven't paid enough attention to it and we haven't reviewed and criticized the traditional leisure model and the structure of daily life yet. The academic research from the angle of cultural spirit is still quite behind the times. Chun Lin, a scholar of doing this research in America, after experiencing and observing relevant facts in America and Europe, pointed out "The study of leisure is not developed in abroad (Japanese things is not clear). I studied it in philosophical aspect. Such culture discussion on how to spend money and one's time or bored life is certainly flourishing, but it has no relations with the study on leisure. The special background to study leisure in China certainly is the tradition of restraining lust." Doctor Huajie Liu gave me a piece of material downloaded from Internet on Nov.3 1997 whose subject is "Consume culture and leisure" sorted out by the sociology department of London University. I did a preliminary and essential statistics to the 1300 file catalogues and I found the proportion of the articles written from the angle of sociology, philosophy and culture is very small. This proves that it is urgent for us to inquire into leisure in the aspect of cultural spirit.

IV. Constructing a New Concept of Leisure Culture

In the future, a new society based on leisure will come into reality instead of an old society base on employment. We have adequate reason to believe that human being will use his own consciousness to build the leisure concept adapting to the new time. Jadmal, during his later years, still beard in mind constantly that "expecting man to restore the life model of laying equal stress on practice and theory, using correct theory to guide the benefit practice and strive to get rid of war, population explosion and religion crisis. He appealed to use ration as our political standard, to use beauty to mold our wisdom and bravery, our mercy and sorrow, to lead man

gradually to escape instinct and step into an ideal life heaven."([3]p349) His theory maybe is a little abstract. He said, "A new man is the sign of a new society and a new society can prompt the mature of a new man. In fact, a new man is the man who shall throw off any forms of occupation in order to survive, who is very confident and embodies his power of love and his strength of life, who tries to low the lust to the limit, who is aware that self-development and the others are the man's highest goal, who thoroughly gains spirit freedom and self-conscience."([3] p377) Isn't this the source of new concept?

There is no doubt that all the genie thinkers aim at the future. Although sometime their theories are considered as fancy, we still benefit from them and grasp the religion on how to be a man ,and even be infected by their spirit if we pay more attention to them. In the end, a new concept can be brought birth into our soul world.

The global aspiration for peace and development, the declaration of sustainable development, the balance between man and nature, the adjustment of international relation and so on are all the new kinds of cultural spirit and social atmosphere. Under such background, the new leisure concept is rising stealthily.

As we all know respecting nature is equal to respecting man himself. Traveling is scolded as a killer of nature and environment, but it has been defined as an important part of the economic and environmental development in Agenda 21st Century in 1992 which principal is to encourage mutual development of traveling and leisure and make them blend.([14]p146)

In America, satisfying job, comfortable house and luxury car are the concrete contents of American Dream. But today more and more people, especially the middle-class well educated prefer to less doing, less earning and less spending. The life of VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY is growing popular and has become one of ten tendency acceptable life model. Japanese known as "crazy-work" have striven for simple and quiet life and hoped people can live with honesty, love and less lust etc. Korean however, prefer to combine family life with their work harmoniously. The reason is very simple: without active work and harmonious family relationship, people can never achieve their success in their lives. In Paris, "Philosophy coffee house" which could be traced back to 18th century becomes popular again.

China, with a large population, has its own characteristics in establishing new value of leisure. One of the most vital characters of leisure is that family is considered as its main subject. Therefore, strengthening of family culture has become a new conception of leisure. In the countryside, about 85% of the villages and towns have set up various entertainment and leisure places which have reflected the family culture. In cities, people have a new conception of residence which pursues community culture. The community culture, with the people at its center, respects the people's rights and advocates the harmony and integration between people and nature. Meanwhile, the leisure culture has been enriched by the plan of body-building for the whole people, reading club, family politics study, art appreciation and environmental protection organizations mainly consisted of volunteers. The new value of leisure of the mankind is coming into being in various fields.

There is no doubt that the new concept of leisure culture for the new era is based on the social culture structure and man's spiritual quality which are suitable for the development of human nature and provide necessary conditions for man's full development in leisure time. The basic way to establish man's spiritual quality is to change his social concept and make himself free from