

The Truth, Good, and Beauty of the Craftsman Spirit in the New Era

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The construction and development of the *craftsman spirit in the new era* needs to be based on the essence of the *Craftsman spirit in the new era*. The thinking on the essence of the craftsman spirit in the new era is carried out from three dimensions: from the perspective of epistemology, the craftsman spirit in the new era is the intention of human beings to master the unknown. The embodiment of the original desire; from the perspective of ethics, the *craftsman spirit of the new era* is the extension of good; from the perspective of aesthetics, the craftsman spirit of the new era is the pursuit of beauty. Thinking about the essence of *craftsman spirit in the new era* provides goals, content, carriers, and means for the construction and development of *craftsman spirit in the new era*.

Keywords: craftsman spirit, truth, goodness, beauty

Introduction

Craftsmen generally refer to people who master skills. The craftsman spirit is extended to refer to the spiritual symbol abstracted from the labor form of the craftsman group. The craftsman spirit of the new era has the characteristics of dedication, leanness, concentration, and innovation (Zhuang, 2017). The interpretation of the characteristics of the craftsman spirit in the new era also shows the expectations of human beings for the future development of industrial technology, as well as their desire for the comprehensive and free development of human beings.

Among the existing studies, the research on the spirit of craftsmen in the new era mostly focuses on the exploration of the historical dimension. On the one hand, through the historical reasons for the emergence and development of the craftsman spirit in Japan and Germany, it explores the method of building and developing the craftsman spirit in the new era (Zhuang, 2016). On the other hand, it looks for clues of craftsman spirit from traditional culture, explores the historical inheritance of craftsman spirit, and provides theoretical basis and strength for the construction of craftsman spirit in the new era. In addition, in response to the revival needs of the craftsman spirit in the new era, the main research direction of the existing research is to explore the driving force behind the revival of the craftsman spirit in the new era, focusing on analyzing the changes in social needs and the comparison of the craftsman spirit in the new era with the traditional craftsman spirit, in order to grasp the deep logic of the phenomenon of the revival of craftsman spirit in the new era (Zhang, 2017).

It is obviously necessary to study the craftsman spirit in the new era from the historical dimension, but it is not enough. In order to find the craftsman spirit of the new era, it is necessary to have an in-depth discussion on

the essence. Only by grasping the essence of the craftsman spirit in the new era can we find the strength that conforms to the times, but also beyond the times, and provide constant power and theoretical basis for the construction and development of the craftsman spirit of the new era.

Craftsman Spirit in Pursuit of truth

The labor activity of craftsmen is a kind of skilled behavior, inevitably in the dilemma of "the goal of skilled behavior is achieved by following a set of rules, but the people who follow the rules don't understand the rules"(Polanyi, 2017, p. 58). As the main body of labor activities, craftsmen focus on the process itself, but the rules to be followed in this process are outside of focus awareness (Polanyi, 2017, p. 65). For example, a medieval blacksmith did not understand modern metallurgical metallography, and did not have a mathematical understanding of the objective laws to follow in the movement of swinging a forging hammer, but this did not prevent him from creating high-quality weapons. The objective law does play a role in this labor process, but the subject of labor does not pay attention to it. In this process, the objective law is actually a kind of reverse clamping relationship for the craftsman's labor activities. A craftsman may have boundless creativity when he works, but in the end, he still needs to follow the objective law and pursue the unity of himself and the objective law. Because the object of understanding is not in the focus awareness of the craftsman, the craftsman can only indirectly perceive that it is working. This indirect awareness means a lack of mastery to the craftsman, and this lack of mastery will cause the craftsman's anxiety, which is also a way of existence of the opposition between the artisan's labor activities and knowledge.

With the rapid progress of technology and the change of production mode brought about by the industrial revolution, the craftsmen in the new era are very different from those in ancient times. Modern industrial workers have generally experienced standard basic education. Compared with ancient craftsmen, they have already mastered a certain amount of mathematical and physical knowledge before putting into production. This difference also leads to a completely different way of using knowledge between ancient craftsmen and modern industrial workers. For craftsmen in the new era, the contradiction between labor activities and knowledge mainly lies in the difference between the whole and the individual. Because of the contemporary division of labor, the focus of the labor subject is generally not the whole of a project, which creates a cognitive difference and hinders labor activities. "... The worst architect was better than bees from the beginning. He had built the beehive in his mind before he built it with the beeswax" (Marx, 2004). And this obstruction destroys the beehive in the brain of labor. Therefore, it is difficult for the labor subject to grasp a complete object, but only a part of it. This incomplete grasp is very easy to cause a "confusion". In the face of the objective difference between the whole and the part, this confusion is very difficult to be resolved, which also causes anxiety among participants. However, the anxiety of the new era is no longer generated from the opposition between workers and knowledge, but the opposition between knowledge and goals.

Different from ancient craftsmen, modern labor participants acquire knowledge from labor in the form of unity of knowledge and practice, which is the extension and rich embodiment of individual will through grasping the goal in labor activities. This is because the craftsman, as the subject of labor and as a person, has the "original desire" to grasp all perceived things. (Polanyi, 2017) The original intention was to urge the craftsman to grasp the objective laws that he did not grasp, but regretfully, the craftsman finally grasped some unspeakable skills. These skills can help craftsmen to better follow the objective laws, which can be reflected in the specific labor process, that is, to make better products, or to make progress in technology. This process of

acquiring "knowledge" is long and has spread throughout the whole labor activity. Although "original desire" is common to everyone, not everyone can have the fruits of overcoming the trap of experience and tradition to further acquire knowledge and improve skills.

Thinking from the perspective of promoting reform, development and innovation, it is actually the power of seeking knowledge and truth in the craftsman's spirit, which enables the craftsman to transcend the contradiction between labor activities and knowledge, achieve the integration and unity of the two, and finally obtain knowledge that transcends experience and tradition.

The Goodness of the Craftsman Spirit

Whether traditional craftsmen or craftsmen in the new era, they have shown commonness beyond history in three aspects: labor process, value pursuit and technological progress. In other words, the craftsmanship spirit is the extension of good.

Firstly, the labor process of craftsmen is a process of unifying disorder into order. "The virtue of anything is a regular and orderly arrangement. Therefore, it is the emergence of the order suitable for this thing that can make anything good" (Polanyi, 2017, p. 156). The craftsman may not actively work for the purpose of good, but it is undeniable that the craftsman's working life obviously meets Socrates' description of good, that is, the disorderly and accidental materials are transformed into purposeful and orderly products. Undoubtedly, the craftsman's labor process is the pursuit of good and the extension of good.

Secondly, the value of craftsman products is not limited to circulation value. As Plato said, "The best proof of the good moment is happiness. All happiness is caused by the unity of everything and itself, and pain is caused by disunity" (Wang, 2014, p. 444). The process of craftsmen creating products is a process of unifying natural things with their own will. In this process, craftsmen can feel beauty in their own products. This ability to appreciate their own works is exactly the way that craftsmen spirit exists. The labor process represents the good of order, and the craftsman's enjoyment represents the extension of good.

Thirdly, the craftsman spirit of pursuing goodness is also reflected in the craftsman's pursuit of technical progress. Plato believes that the purpose of craftsmen engaged in product manufacturing is not simply to obtain compensation, but also to pursue the perfection and extreme of the work itself. "The art of medicine produces health, and the art of earning money produces reward, as in every other profession—each art doing its part for the benefit of those under its care" (Ficinus, 2014, pp. 1-24). Plato pointed out through such an argument that the labor of artisans is not only rewarded, but also performs their own duties and trains their own skills in order to achieve the ultimate. Generally speaking, we all think that the craftsman's behavior is to be closer to the good, and to improve himself in these ways. At the same time, this kind of altruism will also win the praise of one's own beauty and reputation. This kind of reverse reward makes the craftsman further pursue the beauty of altruism, thus realizing a virtuous circle, which reflects the characteristics of dedication in the craftsman's spirit.

Finally, the craftsman's work is a process of self appreciation. Nature provides craftsmen with means of production and means of subsistence. The former enables craftsmen to produce, while the latter enables them to survive as human beings. The process from the craftsman's production activities to the production of products is called emergence, that is, the craftsman, through his own will and his own labor activities, reveals the products from the cover of nature and makes them his own works. In this process, the craftsman realized the possession of nature, thus enriching the value of the human world. That is to say, in the process of craftsmen producing

products, he created a product - the value of the world of things has increased; At the same time, they also possess the data of nature and show their own will - so the human world also increases in value. The value added of the world of things brings wealth, fame and wealth rewards of means of subsistence; The value added of the human world brings more satisfaction to the individual craftsman and closer to the progress of goodness.

Craftsman Spirit in Pursuit of Beauty

The embodiment of craftsman spirit in pursuit of beauty is closely related to the position of craftsman groups in human society. The craftsman group is a group between the first nature and artificial nature. On the one hand, they obtain raw materials from the nature, such as stone for sculptors, ore for blacksmiths, and wood for carpenters. These raw materials are often unprocessed or rough processed, and still maintain a natural or semi-natural attitude. On the other hand, the labor activities of the craftsmen are the process of using their own skills to process natural objects into man-made objects. The achievements of the craftsmen have transformed the first nature. The labor activities of the craftsmen have constructed a world that belongs to technological products: Artificial nature. Artificial nature is the embodiment of people's purpose, plan, and will (Chen, 1985). It is human beings who have shaped artificial nature. At the same time, human beings themselves are also accepting feedback from artificial nature, and according to these feedbacks, they carry out self-improvement and progress to achieve the unity of human beings and nature. After entering the age of civilization, human beings no longer live directly in the first nature, but have been living in the artificial nature to indirectly experience the first nature. Therefore, the beauty enjoyed by human beings is not limited to the natural beauty belonging to the first nature, but also to the beauty of artificial nature, which includes the beauty of art, the beauty of technology, the beauty of human activities and other different categories. The pursuit of beauty in the craftsman's spirit is naturally within the scope of artificial and natural beauty. It is a composite nature. It has two forms of spiritual beauty and technical beauty: in labor activities, and on the works of artisans. This special nature also determines that the craftsman spirit of pursuing beauty exists in both—that is, the inner and outer parts of the artisan's labor activities.

The beauty of technology is the main way of existence in the physical world for the craftsman spirit that pursues beauty. Different from the common people's pursuit of beauty, craftsmen's aesthetic choices tend to be more purposeful, regular and practical. Specifically in labor activities, it is mainly reflected in the selection of production objectives, the image of products, and the progress and development of tools. This is a kind of practical aesthetics and "beauty attached to material functions" (Xu, 1989). The way for craftsmen to meet aesthetic needs is an active labor activity. It is a labor activity that goes beyond the basic labor to achieve goals and focuses more on meeting their own aesthetic choices. The characteristics of the craftsman spirit in the new era: lean and focused, can also be reflected in such craftsman's labor activities.

The beauty of craftsman's spirit is the main mode of existence of craftsman's spirit in the spiritual world. Hegel attached great importance to the independent and complete unity of content and form, and believed that it was the actual existence in line with the concept of beauty (Hegle, 1979). The labor activities of craftsmen seem to have nothing to do with independence and freedom. From this point of view, the activities of craftsmen seem to have nothing to do with the beauty of art, but in reality, most artworks are also made by craftsmen. It can be seen that the craftsman's labor activities may be far away from beauty, but the craftsman's products actually show beauty. So, what led the craftsman's activities away from beauty back to the way of pursuing beauty? The answer to this question is creation, or innovation. The creation and innovation of craftsmen are

actually a manifestation of their own subjectivity in labor activities under the guidance of the purpose of others. If they abandon their subjectivity and only follow the purposeful activities given by others, the product produced by this activity is not necessarily unbeautiful, but this beauty must be absent, because it does not conform to the “whole of freedom”. What complement this lack is innovation activities, because innovation activities express themselves on the premise of satisfying the purpose of others, which is a compensation for subjectivity that comes from the spiritual level. It is precisely because of the craftsman spirit’s pursuit of beauty, the pursuit of “independent and complete unity” and “whole of freedom” that craftsmen demonstrate innovative ability in labor activities. Similarly, the innovative activities of craftsmen are also the way in which the craftsman spirit exists in the pursuit of beauty.

Conclusion

After discussing the three dimensions of the craftsman spirit in the new era, namely, the pursuit of goodness, beauty and truth, we have a multi-dimensional grasp of the essence of the craftsman spirit in the new era: from the perspective of the dimension of personal skills, the craftsman spirit is the extension of the original desire, which provides a driving force for the craftsman to obtain knowledge from labor activities; From the perspective of technology ethics, craftsmanship spirit provides another technology evaluation standard different from tool rationality, which is conducive to building the direction of technology development in the new situation; From the perspective of the overall development of human beings, the craftsman spirit is a kind of extension of goodness and the internal spiritual power for human beings to pursue perfection. The construction and development of the craftsman spirit in the new era need to take the essence of the craftsman spirit in the new era as the basis, analyze and think about the craftsman spirit in the new era philosophically, and provide the goal, content, carrier and means for carrying forward the craftsman spirit in the new era.

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