

The Influence of Zhang Tailei's Family Values on Contemporary Social Atmosphere

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Abstract

This paper takes the family values of Zhang Tailei, one of the "Three Outstanding Figures" in Changzhou City, Jiangsu Province, as a starting point to horizontally study the positive impact of these family values and vertically connect them to General Secretary Xi Jinping's important instructions on fostering good family values. The aim is to elucidate the importance of excellent family values and promote their influence on the present era. Based on historical materials related to Zhang Tailei, this article conducts a series of discussions and arguments, interspersed with quotations from General Secretary Xi Jinping's speeches on family values, to illustrate the nature, content, and impact of good family values.

Keywords

Zhang Tailei's Spirit; Family Values; Inheritance.

1. The Significance of Zhang Tailei and General Secretary Xi Jinping's Emphasis on the Spirit of "Family Values"

As an ancient saying goes, "The foundation of the country lies in the world, and the foundation of the country lies in the family." The Chinese nation has always attached great importance to the inheritance and construction of family values. The concepts of "country" and "family" are closely intertwined, as the family is a part of the nation and the existence of a nation relies on the existence of families. For thousands of years, the patriotic sentiment of the Chinese people has been deeply rooted in their sense of family and nation. The distinctive family values culture in China is one of the reasons why the Chinese nation has thrived throughout history. From Sima Guang's work "Exhortation to Thrift and Sound Health" to Mo Yan's father's simple advice to his son, "Stand tall," the stories of exemplary family values from ancient times to the present repeatedly demonstrate that good family education and excellent family values have the power to influence people's values and shape the social atmosphere in subtle ways, thereby driving social development.

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, General Secretary Xi Jinping has attached great importance to the issue of family values among leading cadres. He has made multiple important statements regarding family, education, and the construction of family values. Family values are closely linked to the Party's work style and political environment. When family values are upright, the Party's work style is pure, and the political environment is clean. General Secretary Xi has earnestly urged, "We must attach importance to the construction of family civilization and make every effort to turn millions of families into important foundations for national development, ethnic progress, and social harmony, becoming places where people's dreams take flight."

Coinciding with the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Communist Youth League of China, we have come to understand Mr. Zhang Tailei, one of the founders of the Youth League, and his exemplary family values. Therefore, we have decided to conduct research on Mr. Zhang Tailei and his family, and conduct on-site inspections of his former residence. Starting from the

spirit of Zhang Tailei, we aim to explore the inheritance of Zhang Tailei's family values and their influence on contemporary social atmosphere, as well as to carry forward the red gene and promote the spirit of Zhang Tailei.

2. The Remarkable Life of Mr. Zhang Tailei

In an interview, Mr. Zhang Tailei's grandson, Feng Hailong, once said, "Zhang Tailei was born in Changzhou, Jiangsu Province. His ancestors were a well-known family of officials and merchants, and his father was a scholar. Therefore, he received a good traditional education in Chinese studies from an early age." Zhang Tailei's family had a long history in Changzhou, with deep scholarly roots, humility, kindness, and a diligent pursuit of knowledge. Their family values nurtured a large number of talented individuals within their clan, and by the time it reached Zhang Tailei's grandfather's generation, they had transitioned from commerce to officialdom. Zhang Tailei grew up in an environment of excellent family values, where he faced adversity and thrived, ultimately becoming a "thunderbolt that shattered the old world" and leaving behind immortal contributions to the Chinese revolutionary cause.

As the first central committee member and politburo member of the Communist Party of China to sacrifice his life on the frontline of battle, Zhang Tailei gave his precious life in the pursuit of revolutionary paths. As one of the important early leaders of the Communist Party of China, Zhang Tailei was not only one of the founders of the Communist Youth League of China and an outstanding leader in the youth movement but also a key leader of the Guangzhou Uprising. Mr. Li Dazhao once praised Zhang Tailei as someone who "possessed knowledge of both the Chinese and Western worlds and outstanding talents." It was with this exceptional courage and wisdom that he led and initiated the Guangzhou Uprising, becoming an integral part of the Chinese revolutionary liberation army and a spark of revolution, inspiring more young people with aspirations to join the Communist Party and dedicate themselves to the revolution. However, this young revolutionary, with extraordinary talents and a clear political mind, unfortunately fell victim to a fatal bullet during the leadership of the Guangzhou Uprising, at the young age of 29. Zhang Tailei's life shone in Guangdong, but came to an abrupt end in the revolutionary battle there. This proletarian martyr remained true to his oath, made in his youth, to "become a thunderbolt that shatters the old world," up until his last moment.

3. The Deep-rooted Reasons for Mr. Zhang Tailei's "Family Values" and Their Significant Impact on Descendants

During his short life, Mr. Zhang Tailei left behind only a few written materials, among which is a letter known as Zhang Tailei's Family Letter, currently preserved in the National Museum of China. This letter was written by him in early 1921, on the eve of his first journey to Soviet Russia, addressed to his ailing mother, his wife of two years, and his infant daughter. The letter not only expresses Zhang Tailei's deep concern for his wife, daughter, and elderly mother but also conveys his confidence and vision for the revolutionary development of the party and the country. In the letter, he mentioned, "Our temporary departure now is to plan for our eternal happiness in the future. So, we should not consider it a worrisome matter. Instead, we should all strive during this period to seek our everlasting happiness. What a joyful thing it is!" The "planning for our eternal happiness" that Zhang Tailei mentioned is precisely the original intention and mission of communists to "seek happiness for the people and rejuvenation for the Chinese nation."

When martyr Zhang Tailei sacrificed his life for the revolution, he left behind a son and two daughters. The eldest daughter was 8 years old, the second daughter was 6 years old, and the son was only 4 years old. The son, Zhang Yiyang, was the youngest among the children, born on the winter solstice of the lunar calendar in 1923. With his extensive knowledge, Zhang Tailei

named his son Yiyang, which originates from a phrase in the Book of Changes (Yi Jing) that means "the birth of the first yang during the winter solstice." His nickname was Suitang. The eldest daughter was Zhang Xiping, and the second daughter was Zhang Xilei. Although martyr Zhang Tailei had sacrificed his life during their early childhood, his spirit forever remained as an inspiration, driving his descendants to tirelessly strive for the great cause of the Communist Party of China. As time passed, their understanding of the Communist Party of China deepened, and they gained a better understanding of the righteousness behind their father's dedication to the communist and Chinese revolutionary cause.

Under the education of the Party and the influence of their father, Zhang Xilei, the second daughter, continuously increased her class consciousness and revolutionary awareness, rapidly maturing politically. In December 1938, she gloriously joined the Communist Party of China. Zhang Yiyang subsequently became a proud member of the Party as well. Influenced by their father, they embarked on the great struggle for the victory of the Communist Party of China, becoming indispensable participants in the revolutionary triumph.

In December 1940, the Kuomintang reactionary forces launched an anti-communist wave. Upon hearing this news, Zhang Yiyang expressed his intention to act alongside his troops, urging his second sister to leave first and rest assured. Little did they know that this parting would be their final farewell.

In 1942, after Zhang Yiyang was captured, he engaged in a courageous struggle against the enemy. However, due to weakened health, he contracted recurrent fever under the inhumane torment of the concentration camp. Upon learning that he was Zhang Tailei's son, the enemy resorted to threats and inducements, demanding him to sign a "statement of repentance." Faced with these threats, the gravely ill Zhang Yiyang did not succumb to the enemy's coercion. His resilience stemmed from the countless images of communist comrades sacrificing themselves for the great victory of the revolution, with the influence of his father Zhang Tailei.

4. The Interconnection between Mr. Zhang Tailei and General Secretary Xi Jinping in the Spirit of "Family Tradition"

In a letter to his wife, Mr. Zhang Tailei mentioned, "You must enter school... Education will make you independent... You should study how to educate our children..." This shows that Mr. Zhang was dedicated to the revolution while also emphasizing the importance of family education. General Secretary Xi Jinping has also repeatedly mentioned the "inheritance of family tradition" in his speeches, indicating the significance of family values and rules in the process of individual growth. A good family atmosphere cultivates morally upright Chinese youth, and as each generation passes down these values, just as in Mr. Zhang Tailei's family where a strong literary atmosphere prevailed, it instilled in him a resolute and upright mindset, laying the foundation for his future involvement in the revolution. The teachings of Mr. Zhang Tailei to his own children later led Zhang Yiyang to also devote himself to the revolution as an adult. This demonstrates how a positive cycle can be established and how successive generations of young people have a "foundation" of family education from an early age. As Mencius said, "The root of the world lies in the country, and the root of the country lies in the family." General Secretary Xi Jinping also emphasizes that "the prosperity of the nation and the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation ultimately depend on the happiness and well-being of millions of families and the continuous improvement of the lives of hundreds of millions of people. Only when every family is well can the country and the nation be strong." It can be seen that the emphasis on the importance of family tradition and its promotion and inheritance is deeply rooted in the Chinese nation from ancient times to the present.

Mr. Zhang Tailei's emphasis on the promotion of family tradition aligns with the concept of family tradition advocated by General Secretary Xi Jinping today. Mr. Zhang's emphasis on

family values is also an important aspect of his spiritual core. Just as in the early turbulent years of the last century, even in busy and dangerous circumstances, he never forgot to cultivate the noble values and revolutionary ideals of his descendants. General Secretary Xi Jinping has mentioned family tradition on multiple occasions, confirming that this positive guidance and inheritance of family culture and spirit serve as a spiritual pillar in today's fast-paced society, supporting people's bottom line and cultivating the most fundamental values of good and evil through family education before entering society for every citizen.

Mr. Zhang Tailei's inheritance of family tradition can also shine in the new era. In this restless era, Mr. Zhang Tailei's steady family tradition, refined through the baptism of war and the shaping of the times, is exactly what this era lacks, like a swaying green branch. Prudence, independent thinking, and far-sightedness are all inherited from the previous generation and are ingrained in his character. Today, we can also demand this of ourselves, incorporating the wisdom and crystallization of our predecessors into our own concepts of family tradition, so that it may blow like a refreshing breeze into the hearts of every succeeding generation.

Combining the promotion of family tradition by Mr. Zhang Tailei with the emphasis on family tradition by General Secretary Xi Jinping can unleash greater strength in today's society. Comrade Xi Jinping emphasizes that "Party committees at all levels should attach importance to the construction of cadres' family tradition... Family tradition and education are the most precious wealth of a family, the best legacy left to future generations. We must promote the construction of family tradition and education throughout society, inspire the patriotism of future generations, and strive to cultivate talents who are useful to the country and society." With Mr. Zhang Tailei's promotion of family tradition as the starting point, the efforts of our predecessors.

5. Conclusion

History is like a garden of flowers under the moonlight, with countless people passing by as time goes on. In the face of history, there have been many scenes and countless passersby. Some people hurriedly passed by without paying attention to the face of history, leaving no trace behind. Others admired the splendor and beauty of history, sighing as they departed, gaining insights and surprises from history. Some people stopped and decided to do something for history, tirelessly working hard to nurture and nourish the flowers of history, leaving a vivid and colorful mark. History recorded their names and preserved their deeds in memory, providing future generations with the opportunity to admire, learn, and appreciate their contributions to history. Despite the countless blooms and witherings of history over time, it still preserves the spirit and thoughts left by people. The luminous and passionate ideas and spirits in history, like a beam of light, run through the river of time, influencing generations after generations.

Today, the revolutionary spirit of Zhang Tailei, composed of his noble ideals and beliefs, his revolutionary stance that awakened people like a thunderbolt, his relentless exploration, and his selfless dedication to seeking happiness for the people, has been passed down from generation to generation for a hundred years. It has traveled through the corridor of time and arrived in the modern era, encountering the new thoughts of today, together creating a new atmosphere for a new era.

From the humble and friendly upbringing of Zhang Tailei, which fostered his excellent education and clear and firm thinking, to the influence of Zhang Tailei's spirit on his descendants, which motivated them to have high intellectual and revolutionary awareness, inheriting their father's indomitable spirit of relentless exploration and selfless dedication, continuing to shine in the cause of communism and the Chinese revolution. And now, in the influence of the family traditions and ideological spirits left by ancestors like Zhang Tailei, a

new "family atmosphere" has been formed that is more suitable for contemporary Chinese socialist characteristics and the lives of modern people. The spirit of Zhang Tailei is deeply imprinted in people's hearts, playing an important role in their lives, cultural heritage, and even the development of the country.

As the saying goes, "The family is the smallest country, and the country is a collection of millions of families." Therefore, the ancient motto of "cultivating oneself, managing one's family, governing the country, and achieving peace in the world" has been carried on by the Chinese nation to this day. In today's society, General Secretary Xi Jinping attaches great importance to the excellent family traditions and culture of the Chinese nation, promoting the traditional family values of the Party while giving them new connotations in the new era. From the strict education, management, and supervision of leaders' children, to their own integrity and self-discipline, and learning from the sublime spirit of the older generation of revolutionaries in terms of family traditions, everyone should establish a good family culture, shaping a sound worldview, outlook on life, and values. President Xi's words also reflect the fact that the development of the people's "small families" and society's "big family" cannot be separated from the construction and inheritance of a good family atmosphere and the spirit of the ancestors.

Family traditions silently influence every individual. It is an invisible force that can drive people forward. It is a trickle of social atmosphere that can promote social progress. It is also a concrete reflection of traditional Chinese virtues in every family. A good family atmosphere is the most precious spiritual wealth of a family. The more chaotic society becomes, the more important it is for every family to pay attention to family tradition construction and learn from the excellent family stories of the older generation. However, a good family atmosphere should not remain limited to verbal.

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