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On The Anthropological Significance of Froebel’s “Fest, Feier” in his Educational Thoughts ―Towards the realization of “Life-Unity”―

Abstract

This presentation is aiming to reconsider on anthropological significance of Froebel ‘s “Fest, Feier” (ceremonies and festivals) in his educational thoughts. It is based on the thinking of O.F. Bollnow (1903-1991) who is a German pedagogist of educational philosophy. He refers to “Fest” as a more formal event like a ceremony, whereas “Feier” is akin to a local festival with jolly and informal atmosphere.

The ultimate end of Froebel’s principle and the base of his metaphysical thought is “Life-Unity” wherein all creatures come into being, develop, encounter one another and experience a shared resonance leading to the composition of a multi-layered harmony. Froebel’s “Life-Unity” is thus not static but dynamic. This dynamic symphony of all lives comes into existence and reverberates throughout the universe.

Nevertheless, it is not only a metaphysical concept but also embedded in real experiences. Therefore, he devised a method to allow a child to have several kinds of experiences. For example, he designed Gifts and Occupations, recommended finger plays between mother and child, experiences with nature, singing songs and so on.

On the other hand, Froebel hosted “Fest, Feier” at various locations and soon realised their importance. For example, seasonal events, a birthday party at the kindergarten, a local play festival or Christmas. Froebel pointed out that ceremonies and festivals are essential for character formation of human beings. What aim did Froebel find in “Fest, Feier”? What did Froebel celebrate and pray for? It is likely that the many ceremonies and festivals he organised were imbued with his own underlying philosophical ideas.

The presentation highlights some examples of “Fest, Feier” －a birthday party at a kindergarten, a religious Christmas ceremony and the play festival at Altenstein－　with an exploration of the educational meaning behind them. As a result, “Fest, Feier” bring children and adults together to experience “Life-Unity” through the feelings where they feel the relationship between people, nature and all creatures within the universe. Its realization lies at the core of the child and adult’s education.

List of reference

Friedrich Fröbel’s gesammelte pädagogische Schriften. Hrsg. v. Dr. Wichard Lange. Abt.2 : Pädagogik des Kindergartens. 1966.