

# The Metaphor of Flower: The Application of Symbolic Meanings of Chinese Flowers in Moral Education

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**Abstract:** Flowers, as the splendid treasures of nature, carry profound symbolic meanings behind them, closely linked to the long history and culture of the Chinese nation. Each type of flower, with its unique shape and inherent temperament, serves as an important medium for expressing emotions and aspirations in artistic creation. This paper aims to explore the practical application of the symbolic meanings of Chinese flowers in the field of moral education, with the hope of inspiring students' admiration and pursuit of virtue through the implied meanings of flowers, prompting them to consciously practice noble moral qualities in their daily lives.

**Keywords:** Chinese flowers; Symbolic implications; Moral education

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The symbolic meanings behind the diverse Chinese flowers and the goals and directions of moral education share close and common features. By exploring the symbolic significance of flowers and showcasing their metaphorical meanings within moral education, educators can cultivate students' values and facilitate the development of their personal moralities and emotions. This article delves into the methods of integrating the symbolic meanings of Chinese flowers into moral education, with the hope that students can draw inspiration from the beauty and wisdom of flowers to achieve robust growth.

## 1. The Integrating Point of Symbolic Meanings of Chinese Flowers in Moral Education

### (1) Moral cultivation

In ancient Chinese poetry, the plum blossom is highly praised for its ability to bloom alone in severe cold, symbolizing the noble quality of unwavering perseverance. This quality perfectly aligns with the spirit of indomitable resilience emphasized in moral education when facing difficulties and challenges. Every student encounters setbacks in daily life and academic pursuits, such as academic stress and interpersonal relationships. By explaining the symbolic meaning of the plum blossom, we can encourage and inspire students not to easily give up when confronted with these challenges, but to forge ahead with determination and perseverance. Compared to the plum blossom, the orchid boasts a unique elegant posture and fragrance, symbolizing the modest quality of a gentleman. Each student has their own unique interpersonal relationships, and maintaining a modest and courteous attitude in social interactions is also an important virtue. By appreciating the beauty of the orchid and understanding its symbolic meaning, students learn humility and respect for others, which in turn fosters good interpersonal relationships.

### (2) Emotional education

The peony, known as the flower of national beauty, symbolizes prosperity and flourishing. Introducing the

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symbolic meaning of the peony in moral education helps to inspire students' patriotism, helps them establish a high level of national self-confidence, and promotes their sense of social responsibility. This, in turn, motivates students to have higher drive in their subsequent learning process and to be willing to continuously strive and make continued efforts for the prosperity of the country and the rejuvenation of the nation. Meanwhile, the carnation is regarded as the flower of gratitude. In moral education, the symbolic meaning of the carnation can also be used to cultivate students' sense of gratitude. By encouraging students to observe carefully how their parents cherish and care for them in daily life, they can learn to be grateful for parents' love, teachers' guidance, and classmates' guidance. This fosters an appreciation for everything and everyone around them, enabling students to always be grateful.

### **(3) Aesthetic education**

The various types and forms of flowers provide people with different visual enjoyments. In moral education, cultivating students' aesthetic ability through appreciating the beauty of flowers can encourage them to take a moment to pause and appreciate the nature and environment in their daily lives. This helps them understand the characteristics and wonders of nature, fostering a sense of awe and deep love for it. Additionally, in the process of artistic creation, many artists choose flowers as their subject matter, resulting in a large number of excellent works themed around flowers, including paintings and poems. Incorporating artworks themed around flowers into the process of moral education and guiding students to appreciate them can enhance their personal aesthetic and artistic accomplishments. This promotes their understanding and appreciation of artistic charm and, consequently, elevates their aesthetic standards, enriching their artistic creativity.

## **2. The Practical Application of the Symbolic Meanings of Chinese Flowers in Moral Education**

### **(1) Presentation in teaching in classrooms**

The symbolic meanings of Chinese flowers are prominently featured in Chinese classes. Many ancient poems contain verses about flowers, such as "I particularly love the lotus that emerges from the mud unstained, washed clean but not seductive," which fully represents the noble qualities of the lotus. This is greatly helpful for students to deeply explore the symbolic meanings behind flowers and the authors' emotional pursuits and personal virtues, promoting students' aesthetic interests and strengthening their moral perceptions. In composition teaching, the theme of flowers can be used to ask students to describe their favorite flowers, elaborate on their symbolic meanings, and propose the inspiration these flowers have given them. By writing, students can gain a deeper understanding of the symbolic meanings of flowers, and this exercise can also hone their expressive abilities and logical thinking.

Under the backdrop of historical and cultural contexts, the development of flower culture varies across different dynasties, reflecting the unique symbolic meanings of flowers in different social periods. For example, the prevalence of peony flowers during the Tang Dynasty embodied the prosperity of society at that time. By presenting historical stories in teaching, students can understand the admiration and love for flowers in different social backgrounds, promoting the formation of their historical values and cultivating their historical and cultural literacy. Meanwhile, in the process of explaining historical figures, stories involving flowers and the figures can also be appropriately integrated. For instance, Qu Yuan compared himself to fragrant herbs, demonstrating his noble personal character and patriotism, subtly influencing students.

Furthermore, the symbolic meanings of flowers can also be used as an entry point in moral education courses. For instance, when discussing how to deal with setbacks and difficulties, the symbolic example of the plum blossom's perseverance and tenacity can be introduced. When explaining inner cultivation, the symbolic case of the chrysanthemum's indifference to fame and tranquility can be utilized. In ideology and politics classroom

teaching, students can be encouraged to analyze the symbolic meanings of different flowers on their own and understand how to embody the virtuous qualities symbolized by flowers in their daily lives. This approach promotes the formation of students' moral awareness and enhances their understanding of how to apply these symbolic meanings to their personal conduct.

## **(2) Integration into campus culture**

Firstly, it is essential to plant flowers with symbolic meanings on campus, including plum blossoms, lotus flowers, and chrysanthemums, to create a more beautiful and diverse campus landscape. Personalized signs can be set up beside the flowers, introducing the specific names and characteristics of different flowers and describing their symbolic meanings. This allows students to be constantly exposed to flower culture while on campus. Additionally, campus bulletin boards can be used to display pictures of flowers, poems, and stories, promoting the symbolic meanings of flowers and creating a richer campus cultural atmosphere, thereby stimulating students' interest and love for the symbolic culture of flowers.

Secondly, it is important to organize and conduct campus cultural activities with flowers as the theme, such as cultural festivals or art festivals. For example, flower exhibition activities, flower photography contests, and flower painting competitions can be held to encourage students to actively participate in the process, feel the charm of different flowers, and explore their underlying symbolic meanings. This process not only stimulates students' learning interest but also fosters their personal emotions, further enhancing their creativity. Moreover, through teamwork, students gain knowledge and experience.

In addition, a space and venue for flower planting can be set up on campus for students to participate in the planting process themselves, experiencing the difficulties of flower care and cultivation. In this labor process, students gain a deeper understanding of flower-related knowledge and experience the joy of harvest through practical exploration. This is greatly helpful in cultivating students' sense of responsibility and patience.

## **(3) Integration into social practice**

The integration of the symbolic meanings of Chinese flowers into moral education can be achieved by leading students to visit flower exhibitions, including those held in botanical gardens and flower expositions. These visits enable students to appreciate the similarities and differences among various flowers, understand their unique characteristics, learn about flower species, and grasp their symbolic meanings. During these visits, students' horizons are broadened and extended, their understanding of flowers becomes more comprehensive, and their knowledge reserve becomes richer and more complete. Gradually, the symbolic meanings of flowers in teaching penetrate into students' hearts.

Furthermore, flower-themed community service activities can be organized and implemented, such as planting flowers in parks or explaining the care techniques for different flowers in communities and assisting gardeners with pruning, grooming, watering, and other tasks related to flowers. Through these community service activities, students' sense of social responsibility is cultivated, their dedication is enhanced, and flower culture is effectively disseminated within the community, playing a vital role in promoting the harmonious development of society at large.

## **3. Conclusion**

Flowers in nature, with their unique beautiful postures and profound connotations, have become an essential part of moral education. Whether it is the perseverance of plum blossoms, the purity of lotus flowers, or the thin of chrysanthemums, they all play a guiding role in students' growth during the process of moral education. By creating classrooms, building campus culture, and conducting social practices, we provide students with more diversified

learning scenarios, allowing the symbolic meanings implied behind flowers to better integrate into moral education. This encourages students to consciously practice virtuous qualities and noble sentiments, spreading warmth in society.

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