

The Educational Philosophical Implication and Contemporary Practical Path of Feng Qi's Theory of Wisdom

Xiong Tian

Hainan Vocational University of Science and Technology, Haikou 571126, Hainan, China

Copyright: © 2026 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.

Abstract: Feng Qi's constructed "theory of wisdom" is grounded in a broad epistemology, innovatively reinterpreting the traditional Chinese philosophical proposition of "transforming knowledge into wisdom." It forms a dialectical development framework that progresses from empirical perception and knowledge accumulation to the generation of life wisdom, thus addressing the dilemma of separation between knowledge and wisdom in the modern context. This theory provides original philosophical resources and practical guidance for education in the new era to move toward high-quality development and transform from knowledge instillation to wisdom generation. Focusing on Feng Qi's theory of wisdom, this paper systematically elaborates the inherent connotation, structural logic, and educational philosophical value of "transforming knowledge into wisdom" by integrating traditional Chinese philosophical wisdom, Marxist view of practice, and contemporary educational theories. The study holds that in educational practice, the theory embodies the organic integration of four aspects: subject construction, internal generation, dynamic development, and practice orientation. Based on the realistic concerns of educational reform in the new era, this paper puts forward implementation ideas from three dimensions: cultural education, school governance, and individual development, including updating utilitarian tendencies, constructing a wisdom-oriented education system, and establishing the life purpose of perfecting oneself and benefiting the world. It aims to provide a solid basis and feasible path for alleviating educational involution, promoting personality perfection and cultivating practical wisdom.

Keywords: Feng Qi; Transforming knowledge into wisdom; Theory of wisdom; High-quality development of education; Practical wisdom

Online publication: August 31, 2026

1. Introduction

In the process of promoting the strategy of building a strong educational country and achieving high-quality development of education, the key lies in shifting the mode of educational development from scale expansion to connotation deepening, and realizing the deep transformation from single knowledge transmission to

wisdom cultivation. Against this background, Feng Qi, based on materialist dialectics, reinterpreted and theoretically reconstructed the traditional Chinese philosophical proposition of “transforming knowledge into wisdom,” and then formed a “theory of wisdom” system with a distinct Chinese stance. This theory not only reveals the internal mechanism of the transformation from knowledge to wisdom, but also establishes the cultivation of a free and complete personality and practical wisdom as the fundamental goal of education. Feng Qi’s discussion on “transforming knowledge into wisdom” connects Marxist practical philosophy, traditional Chinese ideological resources and Western philosophical achievements, effectively eliminating the separation between knowledge and wisdom, object cognition and subject reflection, theoretical learning and moral cultivation. Thus, it provides a new theoretical perspective and practical direction for re-examining the essence of education and responding to the problems of educational utilitarianism and excessive competition in reality. On the basis of systematically sorting out the theoretical connotation and educational philosophical significance of the theory of “transforming knowledge into wisdom,” combined with the context of educational reform in the new era, this paper further explores its practical development in cultural education, school governance and individual development, aiming to provide theoretical support and path guidance for cultivating new-era talents with knowledge literacy, wisdom ability, moral quality and action ability.

2. The core connotation of Feng Qi’s “transforming knowledge into wisdom”

2.1. Terminological origin and theoretical innovation

The traditional philosophical proposition of “transforming knowledge into wisdom” profoundly clarifies the dialectical process of human cognition rising from specific knowledge to universal wisdom and the spiritual realm achieving hierarchical advancement. In traditional Chinese philosophy, especially in the interpretation of modern Neo-Confucianism represented by Xiong Shili, this proposition is mostly incorporated into the perspective of ontology and theory of mind-nature, emphasizing relying on introspection and consciousness of conscience to reach the wisdom realm in harmony with the moral ontology. Mr. Feng Qi, based on Marxist materialist dialectics, carried out a revolutionary reconstruction of this traditional proposition relying on his “broad epistemology.” He understood the development of human cognition as a dynamic dialectical process: from ignorance to knowledge, from mastering the “domain of words and concepts” knowledge in specific fields, and finally rising to the wisdom of the “trans-verbal domain” that grasps the fundamental principles of the universe and life. Feng Qi pointed out that the essence of “transforming knowledge into wisdom” is the transformation from specific knowledge that can be expressed and analyzed to holistic wisdom about human nature and the cosmic way that transcends direct linguistic expression. He particularly emphasized that the value of philosophy lies precisely in being able to speak and grasp this “unspeakable” realm of wisdom in the way of theoretical thinking ^[1].

2.2. The dialectical relationship between knowledge and wisdom

Feng Qi deeply revealed the dialectical relationship of unity of opposites between knowledge and wisdom, which constitutes the logical premise of transforming knowledge into wisdom. Knowledge is the rational, conceptual, and systematic representation of the objective world by human beings, belonging to the domain of words and concepts, with the characteristics of stativity, analyticity, and instrumentality, pointing to the interpretation and explanation of the world. Wisdom is the holistic and integrated grasp of the universe and life, concerning value rationality and practical orientation, with the characteristics of dynamism,

comprehensiveness, and practicality, pointing to the transformation of the world and the guidance of life. The difference between wisdom and knowledge lies precisely in that it can touch the things of the “trans-verbal domain” in a concrete way^[2]. The dialectical relationship between the two is embodied as follows: knowledge is the foundation and carrier of wisdom generation; wisdom takes knowledge as material, and wisdom divorced from knowledge degenerates into empty fantasy; while talking about wisdom without knowledge has no cultural root.

2.3. The realization mechanism of transforming knowledge into wisdom

Mr. Feng Qi systematically put forward three progressive paths of “transforming knowledge into wisdom,” which together constitute the internal mechanism of cognitive improvement and realm sublimation. The three support each other and centrally embody the dialectical unity of rationality and irrationality, logic and intuition in cognitive activities.

First, moral consciousness. This is the value premise and personality foundation of wisdom internalization. Feng Qi believed that wisdom generation is not only a cognitive process, but also a moral cultivation process. The subject achieves moral consciousness through continuous reflection and practical tempering, promotes the deep integration of reason, emotion, and will, and externalizes wisdom into an inherently stable personality trait, that is, “transforming theory into virtue,” providing support for the free and all-round development of individuals.

Second, dialectical thinking. This is the core method to realize a cognitive leap. Knowledge is analytical, one-sided, and abstract, while wisdom pursues the overall and concrete grasp of the universe and life. With dialectical thinking to integrate and sublimate abstract categories, coordinate the opposites of finite and infinite, abstract and concrete, relative and absolute, thinking can gradually touch the fundamental principles that are difficult to be fully expressed in language, opening a path to the wisdom of the “trans-verbal domain.”

Third, rational intuition. This is the key link in wisdom generation. Rational intuition is not mysterious insight or irrational intuition, but an advanced cognitive ability formed by long-term knowledge accumulation, moral cultivation, and dialectical thinking. This mechanism highlights the subjectivity and creativity of cognition, providing a solid philosophical basis for contemporary education to get rid of knowledge instillation and turn to wisdom enlightenment and personality shaping.

3. The four dimensions and internal logic of transforming knowledge into wisdom in the educational field

Feng Qi’s theory of transforming knowledge into wisdom is reflected in the educational field, forming a structural relationship of integration and symbiosis of four dimensions: subjectivity, internality, flexibility, and practicality, constituting a complete framework for wisdom generation.

3.1. Subjectivity dimension: The ontological foundation of wisdom generation

The realization of “transforming knowledge into wisdom” fundamentally relies on the awakening and establishment of individual subjectivity. Feng Qi’s theory of wisdom points out that wisdom is not objective knowledge divorced from the subject, and its generation is the process of value manifestation and essential

confirmation of human beings as cognitive and practical subjects. Therefore, subject consciousness is the ontological foundation of wisdom generation, relating to the awakening of self-awareness, the release of internal potential, and the return to free nature. In contemporary education, the dominance of technological rationality and utilitarian tendencies often reduce education to one-way knowledge instillation and skill training, shaping students into “one-sided people” who passively cater to external standards, greatly suppressing their creative potential, critical thinking, and independent consciousness. The educational paradigm guided by “transforming knowledge into wisdom” is a powerful correction to such “alienation of human beings.” It relocates the core goal of education to cultivating complete individuals with independent personality, sound mind and critical ability, transcending the instrumental education model and truly returning to the original aspiration of people-oriented education. Feng Qi pointed out that wisdom is inherently related to the free development of human nature, and the fundamental value of education lies in awakening subject consciousness. Human perceptual cognition should increasingly become “conscious observation”^[3]. This means that education should not stop at letting students passively perceive and memorize, but stimulate their consciousness and initiative as cognitive subjects, so that they can simultaneously complete value shaping, personality development, and personality improvement in the active pursuit of knowledge and meaning construction, and finally provide a solid subjective foundation for “transforming knowledge into wisdom.”

3.2. Internality dimension: The epistemological path of wisdom generation

Internality focuses on the internal insight, independent construction, and personal knowledge generation of wisdom, emphasizing that wisdom cannot be obtained by external instillation, but requires the subject’s internalization, integration, and creation of knowledge. Xiong Shili’s “debate between knowledge and wisdom” reveals the internal characteristics of wisdom. Feng Qi further pointed out that wisdom can only be generated through self-tempering, reflection, and construction, and external knowledge can only become practical wisdom when transformed into individual internal insight. In the educational process, students’ reflection, criticism, and meaning construction of knowledge are the core links of transforming knowledge into wisdom. Different from knowledge, wisdom grasps the fundamental principles of the universe and life, and its goal is to pursue thorough understanding, that is, to explore the first cause of all things in the universe and the highest realm of life^[4].

3.3. Flexibility dimension: The methodological characteristics of wisdom application

The flexibility of wisdom is centrally embodied in the ability to flexibly apply, creatively transform, and adaptively solve problems in real scenarios, which is significantly different from the static, solidified, and passively memorized knowledge form. Knowledge focuses on the abstract generalization and systematic interpretation of the objective world, while wisdom is rooted in specific practice and life situations, and can realize the deep integration of rational cognition, emotional experience, will quality, and moral cultivation. The “inert knowledge” criticized by Whitehead is essentially rigid theory lacking the ability of transfer and flexibility, which can only meet the needs of examination and assessment, but cannot effectively cope with complex problems in reality. The educational practice guided by “transforming knowledge into wisdom” focuses on transforming rigid book knowledge into active cognition that can be flexibly applied, and exercising learners’ comprehensive literacy of independent thinking, flexible handling, and efficient solving of practical problems in diverse scenarios.

3.4. Practicality dimension: The axiological orientation of wisdom generation

Practicality is the essential stipulation of wisdom, highlighting the fundamental characteristic of wisdom of “unity of knowledge and action.” Both Aristotle’s practical wisdom and the Confucian view of knowledge and action in China emphasize that practice is the destination of wisdom. Feng Qi advocated that wisdom is embodied in “condensing the way into virtue and manifesting human nature to promote the way,” demonstrating virtue and transforming the world in practice to achieve the unity of essence and function. People know the world on the basis of practice, and use the principles obtained from reality to govern reality. The so-called “principles of reality” here refer to the order of nature ^[5]. The ultimate goal of education is not the memory and repetition of knowledge, but the cultivation of practical wisdom that uses knowledge to solve problems, create value, perfect oneself, and transform the world.

The four dimensions are not isolated and separated, but an integrated and symbiotic relationship with subjectivity as the ontology, internality as the path, flexibility as the application, and practicality as the destination, which together constitute a complete logical system of transforming knowledge into wisdom in education.

4. The educational practice path of transforming knowledge into wisdom in the new era

Based on Feng Qi’s theory of transforming knowledge into wisdom and combined with the needs of high-quality educational development, a practical path is constructed from three levels: educational culture, school system, and individual pursuit to realize systematic transformation from concept to action.

4.1. Cultural education: Abandoning utilitarianism and reshaping the educational outlook of seeking truth and goodness

The transformation of cultural education is the premise of transforming knowledge into wisdom. The core is to break the utilitarian concept of “studying for fame” and establish an educational value orientation centered on learning, truth, and virtue.

Eliminate the utilitarian educational concept. Criticize the utilitarian tradition of “golden house in the book,” abandon the evaluation orientation of only focusing on scores, further education, and diplomas, return to the essence of education “cultivating people,” and take exploring truth, cultivating virtue, and cultivating wisdom as the core goals of education. To cultivate outstanding talents with both ability and integrity and wisdom, we should break the utilitarian view of education that regards reading as a stepping stone to fame and gain in the educational culture, and establish the educational concept that education aims at learning, exploring truth, cultivating virtue, and realizing the greatest good of mankind ^[6].

4.2. School governance: Shifting from knowledge-oriented to wisdom-oriented education system

Innovate classroom teaching mode: Change the traditional teaching form of one-way instillation, implement an education method combining inquiry learning, situational experience, and self-reflection, conform to the growth laws of rational intuition, dialectical integration, and moral consciousness, and guide students to complete the gradual improvement from superficial knowledge mastery to deep wisdom generation in independent inquiry, reflective insight, and collaborative communication.

Optimize the overall curriculum structure: Break the barriers of single disciplines, strengthen the comprehensive and practical attributes of courses, transform static book content into learning materials close to life and facing real problems, highlight students' independent construction and flexible application of knowledge meaning, and focus on improving practical ability and innovative literacy.

Strengthen teachers' professional growth: Teachers should transform theory into internal virtue and act as guides and companions for students' wisdom growth. Guided by Feng Qi's "transforming theory into method, transforming theory into virtue" ^[7], cultivate teachers with professional knowledge, educational wisdom, and personality charm, making teachers activators of knowledge, enlighteners of wisdom, and demonstrators of virtue, leading students to transform knowledge into wisdom.

4.3. Individual development: Establishing the academic interest of perfecting oneself and benefiting the world

The individual is the ultimate subject of transforming knowledge into wisdom, and needs to realize the fundamental transformation of learning interest and value pursuit.

From passive acceptance to active construction. Abandon the passive learning method, cultivate the abilities of independent learning, critical thinking, and reflective practice, transform external knowledge into internal wisdom, and realize the subjectivity and internality of learning.

From learning for oneself to perfecting oneself and benefiting the world. Transcend narrow personal utilitarianism, establish the ideal pursuit of perfecting oneself and benefiting the world, integrate personal growth with social development and human destiny, contribute to society while perfecting oneself, and realize the unity of individual value and social value.

From knowledge possession to wisdom practice. Abandon the desire for knowledge possession, establish the concept of unity of knowledge and action, apply knowledge, test wisdom, and cultivate virtue in practice. As the conscious subject, the "self" has clear awareness and can understand principles; autonomy of will means that the subject must exert the power of will to implement its own virtue in practice ^[8].

5. Conclusion

Against the background of the new era and the construction of a strong educational country, the contemporary value of transforming knowledge into wisdom has become increasingly prominent. It provides original Chinese wisdom for solving the dilemmas of educational involution, lack of humanity and insufficient practical ability, and a systematic path for cultivating a complete personality, practical wisdom and innovative talents adapting to the future society. In the future, we can further deepen the practical exploration of transforming knowledge into wisdom combined with cutting-edge issues such as digital education, lifelong learning and core literacy cultivation, promote the in-depth integration of Feng Qi's theory of wisdom and modern education, let the light of wisdom illuminate the road of high-quality development of education, and cultivate new-era talents with knowledge, wisdom, virtue and action ability.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Peng C, Lin H, 2026, A Preliminary Exploration of Feng Qi's Philosophy of Language. *Journal of East China Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, 58(02): 23–35 + 172–173.
- [2] Ye L, 2026, On the Poetic Qualities of Feng Qi's Philosophy. *Journal of East China Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, 58(02): 46–57 + 173.
- [3] Wang X, Tian C, 2025, An Innovative Exploration of Marxist Epistemology in “How to Understand the World.” *Journal of Jishou University (Social Sciences Edition)*, 46(04): 119–126.
- [4] Yang G, 2025, From Jin Yuelin to Feng Qi: The Inheritance and Advancement of Philosophical Thought. *Journal of East China Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, 57(05): 1–10 + 234.
- [5] Ruan K, 2026, Facts with Multiple Representations: The Theoretical Challenges and Contemporary Development of Jin Yuelin and Feng Qi's View of Facts. *Journal of East China Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, 58(02): 36–45 + 173.
- [6] Yan M, 2025, Transforming Knowledge into Wisdom: The Dialectical Logic and Action Philosophy of High-Quality Development of Education. *Modern University Education*, 41(04): 10–18.
- [7] Anon., 2016, *Collected Works of Feng Qi: Volume 1 (Revised Edition)*, East China Normal University Press, Shanghai.
- [8] Wang K, Zhu J, 2025, A Chinese Solution to an Epistemological Problem: An Examination of Feng Qi's “Rational Intuition.” *Oriental Forum - Journal of Qingdao University (Social Sciences Edition)*, (04): 56–64.

Publisher's note

Bio-Byword Scientific Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.