

Analysis of the Quintessence of Zhu Kezhen's Higher Education Ideas

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Abstract

Zhu Kezhen is China's great modern scientist and educationist. His Ideas of higher education formed during his charge of Zhejiang University, has identified a paradigm for the creation and development of China's modern higher education. The quintessences of his Ideas of higher education consist of the spirit of university, the soul of university, the mission of university, the development of university, functions of university and the management of university. Through the deep analysis of his ideas of higher education, it has important realistic enlightenment for the cultivation of the present university spirit, the reformation of talents training pattern and the building of faculties of university and so on.

Keywords: Zhu Kezhen, *Ideas of Higher Education*, thinking quintessence

Introduction

Zhu Kezhen, also named Shaorong and secondary personal name as Oufang who was China's famous scientist and educator. Once served as president of Zhejiang University for 13 years, he has made Zhejiang University become the "Oriental Cambridge" where the higher education thoughts taking "seeking truth" as the core idea is formed. Therefore, he was also praised as "the most outstanding and most successful university presidents after Cai Yuanpei, a very outstanding university president in old age". Based on these, it has very important practical significance for us to clear the modern university educational philosophy further, create the socialist builders with complete personality, improve the innovative ability of the whole nation according to be back to Mr Zhu's higher education management thought today.

1. University spirits: advocating truth

"Seeking truth", that is, seeking truth from facts. The explanation at that time is derived from wang yangming's "the knowledge of a gentleman aiming to seek for the facts". On Zhejiang university's way westward, after Zhu Kezhen established "seeking truth" as a motto in 1938, he gave a penetrating interpretation of its meaning in speeches or essays. In 1939, in his speech of "spirits of seeking truth and sacrifice", he pointed out that "the so-called truth seeking which is not just limited to read books or in laboratory experiments. The means of seeking truth is interpreted well in '*Doctrine of the Mean*' which refers to 'study extensively, inquire prudently, think carefully, distinguish clearly and practice earnestly'. That is to say, it is not enough only by studying extensively and inquiring prudently, it's necessary to think carefully, create one's own style with unique perspective to judge gain or loss. It can make the gain and loss clearly in mind, and then perform it with force". In 1941, he expounded clearly "methods and ways of seeking truth" in his essay "scientific methods and spirits". He pointed out: "what is the goal of modern science? It is to seek the truth. Scientific method can change anytime and anywhere yet the scientific objective is the spirit of science praying for truth which cannot be changed forever... What attitudes scientists should take as follows: first, obeying reason not blindly or

voicing one's opinion. Second, be modest, not assertive or arrogant; Third, concentrating on everything and seeking truth from facts, rigorous neat without moaning or struggling.”⁽¹⁾ In the opinion of Zhu Kezhen, the spirits of “seeking” is “to be clear about what is right and what is wrong and seek for the truth” which is the spirits of struggling, sacrifice and dedication. Whether it is in the national calamity or in the practice of running the university, the spirit of “seeking truth” is shown everywhere in his life. It is because in his consistent advocacy, lead by example, words and deeds, it will be “seeking truth” as the spirit of a university in Zhejiang University pass on forever. The spirit of “seeking truth” is the core of Zhu Kezhen's ideas of higher education. It is because he consistently advocated, and lead by example, words and deeds, “seeking truth” as the spirit of a university can be passed down in Zhejiang University. Therefore, the spirit of “seeking truth” is the core of Zhu Kezhen’s ideas of higher education.

2. University souls: professors governing academic studies

When Zhu Kezhen first came to Zhejiang, he pointed out that “for the implementation of a school education, the most important elements include professor faculty, books, instruments and equipment, and school buildings among which quantified and qualified professors are the most important”.

In his eyes, “a professor is the soul of a university who decide its good or bad study style. A good study style will be formed naturally and erudite and sincere scholars will be cultivated out gradually if there are many professors in a university who take study as a lifelong career and take cultivating the juniors as supreme responsibility.”⁽²⁾

In zhu’s view, professors are the university soul transmitting knowledge, personality and university spirits. Therefore, he attached great importance to the professor’s hiring, training and use. For example, he has its unique side for hiring talent. First, be fully inclusive and equitable and not to stick to one pattern. All can absorbed no matter what school as long as they have superb knowledge skills and love education career. In Tan jiazhen’s article “recalling president Zhu”, he wrote like that, “Mr Zhu chose talents by one’s talents not by his school, so I have also been hired as a stranger.”⁽³⁾

Second, pay attention to the cultivation of young teachers. Zhu Kezhen pointed out: “to develop a university, the most important is to identify promising young people.”⁽⁴⁾ therefore, on the one hand, he chose the excellent graduates to be teachers, on the one hand, he vigorously developed research, trained graduate, and selected for outstanding young teachers to go abroad for further study.

Third, implement Professor Scholarship. Zhu Kezhen pay much attention to the respect, use and cultivation of Professor: “he insisted on democratic education, gave full play to the role of professor management and always relied on a number of professors with ability and political integrity, enthusiastic about education, authority in teachers and students and abilities to handle affairs. At that time, the main members of the university’s academic institutions, administrative institutions, such as provost, procurator, leaders of colleges, and deans of all departments are selected from famous professors, which cultivated a number of cadres with academic and administrative burdens in Zhejiang University. Zhu Kezhen adhered to the accomplishing of the university academic institutions, even in the university arduous conditions westward and basically under quasi military system, so it is. Despite the differences between academic affairs and administrative affairs in the processing procedures and decision-making mechanism, yet because policymakers are prestigious professor, it reflects the experience of professors’ running university by their governing academic studies. Since the leadership of the Department is the most prestigious professor at that time, each academic unit has formed an academic core.”⁽⁵⁾ This fully reflects the important role of the professor in the university scholarship.

3. The university’s mission: to cultivate talents

The fundamental mission of the university is to foster the talents and what talents should be cultivated is

also an important part of Zhu Kezhen's education thought. In September 28, 1942, he wrote in his diary, "the mission of university has three: one is to cultivate perfect students; the second is to develop excellent experts; the third is to cultivate thinkers." (6) All these show his foresight on cultivating talents.

For cultivating what kind of person, as early as in Zhejiang University freshman admission ceremony in 1936, Zhu pointed out, "the purpose of your coming to this university is not to understand and satisfy a little expertise for making a living in the future, but to act as the pillars for saving society." In his eyes, the cultivation of the talent is not just "to cultivate experts as many as possible such as engineers and doctors, the most important is to cultivate the national leader talents of fairness, sincerity and persistence who can bear burdens, host ethos and transfer the nation fate." (7)

According to Zhu's view, all these mean to pay special attention to university education, attach importance to basic course and strengthen the training of students' thinking and ability by the tutorial system and implementing the generalist education to promote student's comprehensive development. For these, he attached great importance to basic courses, selecting "first class" professor to teach basic course for new students and built system of minor, allowing students to choose inter-disciplinary courses; Moreover, he advocated students to contact society more, choose training courses more, to be more eclectic and cultivated out knowledgeable by-pass of talents for society. At the same time, he pointed out, "coming here to study, all of you should not only focus on the subject itself, but also to train how to properly train your thinking" (8). "The system also has significant shortcomings, namely it specially emphasizes on imparting knowledge and caring less about wisdom; overweighting in teaching way to instill the knowledge have been invented by international scholars, yet cared less for the training of thought" (9) He introduced the tutor system of Harvard University into Zhejiang University undergraduate course education classroom which insists on one teacher guide a number of students, tutor academic counseling for students homework as well as be responsible for the moral and character of student life. Thus, fostering the talent is both the fundamental mission of university and starting point and the foothold of Zhu Kezhen's education thoughts.

4. The development of the university: paying attention to scientific research

University attached great importance to scientific research early in the 19th century and Zhu Kezhen has the unique and profound insights into the importance of scientific research. He thought, "the great development of university lies in research". This is not only the urgent needs of the revitalization of the nation and national but also their own development needs of the universities. He had quoted Zhu Xi's poem "a half acre square pond like a bronze mirror, skylight cloud hovering together. Asking why the spring so clear, as it has the springhead" to explain the important role of scientific research on teaching. Even in extremely difficult circumstances, he strongly advocated the atmosphere of scientific research. In order to provide convenient conditions for scientific research, and create a good atmosphere of scientific research, he tried to add research institutions and gradually set up History and Geography Department of the Arts Institute, Science Research Institute of mathematics, history geography education research laboratory, Engineering Research Institute of chemical engineering, Faculty of science of biology department, Agricultural Research Institute of Agricultural Economics Department, and actively encouraged holding large and medium-sized Memorial scientists report so as to promote the teachers and students' enthusiasm in Zhejiang University for the scientific research. Joseph Needham, a British historian of science in 1944 visited Zhejiang University twice in 1944, and he planned to stay three days yet repeatedly postponed and he left after one week because he found there were too much papers worth reading. He felt very surprised about the thick academic atmosphere, the high level of scientific research and the abundant achievements at Zhejiang University created under extremely difficult conditions and praised it as "Oriental Cambridge". It is shown that paying attention to scientific research is very important for the promotion of the development of the university.

5. University functions: to serve the society

Serving the society is the basic function of the University, which is not only the inevitable requirement of the social development, but also the inevitable trend of the development of the university itself. Zhu Kezhen thought that “our life purpose lies in serving not in enjoyment.”⁽¹⁰⁾ He said to the students, “now the world is a world of competition, if a nation only takes enjoyment for the purpose, it will be lost.”⁽¹¹⁾ Accordingly, whenever in the situations of the freshmen’ admission, seniors’ graduation, new year’s speech, get-together and tea party important occasions of speech, the most he mentioned is to serve the community, strengthen the sense of responsibility and mission and he required students to set up the aspirations for dedicating to the country, serving the people and burden the responsibilities serving the community and improving the society. In Zhu Kezhen’s view, there are two ways for the university to burden the purpose of serving and improving the society: “one is to make those with good training, knowledge and the mind run to the society, serve the society, and to achieve the purpose of improving society; the second is to directly serve for the social politics, economics, culture, education and people’s life by using university teachers and students’ scientific and technology and cultural advantages.” In fact, Zhejiang University always made contributions to the local construction in its migration. For example, in Taihe, Jiangxi, Zhejiang University Teachers and students built waterproof dam, opened Sha village farmland, promoted public education, and established the consumer cooperatives to plant vegetables, which not only provided service actively for local politics, economy, culture, and education, but also made the university come out of the “ivory tower”, and joined into the social life, thus broaden the functions of the colleges and universities and highlights the university social service function.

6. University governance: the democratic management

For university governance, Zhu Kezhen absorbed the management experience of advanced universities, implemented democratic management, and actively created an atmosphere of democratic management. During the 13 years of his service as president of Zhejiang University, vice presidents were not set, the university was in the charge of the provost, dean of students, the procurator, leaders of colleges, and dean of the Department.

On the one hand, he advocated public affairs. Usually university policies, rules and regulations, the budget must be discussed and decided through the academic affairs meetings must be shown to the public through “the national Zhejiang University Journal” and “the national Zhejiang University magazine” and other means. On the other hand, He advocated democratic decision-making. In dealing with all the major things of university, he required to listen to the views from teachers and students widely, gave detailed understanding of the situation to by collecting all kinds of information, then decide by the collective discussion, and also gave timely solution to the difficulties of teachers and students through listening to their voice collected by professor committee, lecturer committee and student autonomy committee. He advocated attaching importance both to education and management. During the Anti-Japanese War, Zhejiang university students actively participated in Anti-Japanese activities, and often conflicted with the authorities with high political enthusiasm. Zhu Kezhen first gave a full understanding of the enthusiasm of the students and did not punish them yet educated and managed them by talking to them that “students’ beliefs for the party and government are completely free, but they should not do political activities”⁽¹²⁾ All the above argument gave a reflection of Zhu Kezhen’s idea of governing university by democratic management.

Referenc

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