

# People-oriented & De-commercialization

## —Reflections on China's Educational Reform

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**Abstract**—China's educational reform has been carried out for decades. Although some achievements have been made, there are still many problems. Through the analysis of the three paradoxical phenomena of education reform, this paper points out that there are three major misunderstandings in China's education reform. China's education reform is carried out by the state in the education system. The lack of overall and systematic coordination inevitably leads to blockage, difficulty in coordination and implementation. According to the educational concept of Guang Luo, a Taiwanese neo-scholar philosopher, this paper points out that the way out for China's education reform is to return to people-oriented and de-commercialization.

**Keywords**—educational reform; people-oriented; de-commercialization; the educational concept of Guang Luo

### I. INTRODUCTION

Since the reform and opening up, China's education has entered a major cause of reform. According to the research of Professor Yu Xiaobo and others[1], China's education reform has roughly experienced four stages: the start-up period of reform (1978-1992), the exploration period of reform (1992-1999), the deepening period of reform (1999-2010) and the comprehensive reform period (2010-present). It can be said that China's education reform has achieved a lot of good results. However, education has still become a major social issue. The scholar Xiang Xianming thinks that China's education reform is using the wrong method and finding the wrong problem. He pointed out that "whether it is the administrative department of education or the national policy, many situations are in a state of blindness." "China's education reform is often using the wrong method to solve false problems"[2].

### II. THE PHENOMENON OF "CONDOLENCE" IN EDUCATION REFORM

"Education is the cornerstone of national development. ... China is a country with a large population. Education revitalization is directly related to the improvement of national quality and national rejuvenation. Only first-class education can build a first-class country with first-class national strength. Education concerns the prosperity of the nation, the well-being of the people and the future of the country..."[3]Therefore, China attaches great importance to the development of education and is constantly carrying out reforms in the field of education, and has formulated the Outline of the National

Medium and Long Term Education Reform and Development Plan. Although we have achieved certain results, there are highlighted some problems, especially the paradox of "counter-reverse".

#### A. Load Reduction VS Load Increase

People born in the 1980s have a happy childhood. Although the social material conditions are poor, childhood is full of happiness. Learning is a conscious thing, and learning is fun. People born in the 1990s had a painful and happy childhood. Their learning pressure has increased, and "going to college" has become their main goal of learning, but they still have their own time to play. The children born after 2000 years have been living under the pressure of "increasing the starting line". Their external material is rich, but their hearts are poor. And studying, tutoring takes up their after-school time. They have no friends and have lost the ability to communicate.

The burden of children has become a serious social problem, so the government began to take action to propose strategies to reduce the burden of primary and secondary school students. In 2018, the "Notice on the Measures to Reduce the Burden of Primary and Secondary School Students" was issued. On the one hand, it puts forward 12 items, such as the correct orientation of running a school, the balanced arrangement of classes with teachers, the strict control of the total amount of written work, and the resolute control of the number of examinations. On the other hand, it emphasizes the management of off-campus training institutions, and puts forward five measures, such as the strict prohibition of over-standard training, the strict prohibition of linking up with further education and the control of training time. However, in fact, the students are relaxed in class, after-class tutoring crazy, because no parents want their children to lag behind others; teachers talk less in class, after-class classes to make money, because this profit is very rich. Under the pressure of entrance and competition, the burden of students has not been reduced. The so-called burden reduction only takes a form at the public level.

#### B. Emphasis on Humanities and Social Sciences VS Society Needs Talents

After the reform and opening up, the education system has been influenced by commercialization. In order to enroll more students and realize the operation mode of self-financing,

The nation social science fund of youth project (15CZJ008) &the creative talents fund in Heilongjiang Province (UNPYSCT-2015067).

colleges and universities have to adopt "realistic" means, set up more practical courses, and pay little attention to liberal arts or disciplines lacking economic benefits.

Humanities and Social Sciences seem useless, but they are of great use. "On the one hand, modern humanities and social sciences research attaches great importance to practicing the world, enlightening the people through government and serving the country and society. Today, many social benefits and public influence and other parameters and indicators have been introduced in the evaluation system of humanities and social sciences. On the other hand, some humanities and social science achievements that seem to have less close relationship with economic and social development can be transformed to meet people's spiritual needs, enrich people's spiritual life, and become the spiritual power and intellectual support of economic and social development. Many achievements of Humanities and social sciences are transformed in a subtle way to shape people, improve people's humanistic literacy, influence people's behavior and the general trend of society, and then enhance national quality and national soft power" [4].

In 2004 and 2016, Comrade Hu Jintao and General Secretary Xi Jinping respectively put forward suggestions and strategies for the development of philosophy. However, in fact, "training talents for society" is in sharp contrast to the neglect of humanistic society. Although humanities and social sciences have been advocated in theory, in fact, in universities and society, it's as the princess who has been put into the cold palace, often because of the lack of "efficiency" and investment is pitiful, and relevant researchers are not paid attention to. The lack of humanistic construction has to be said to be an important reason for the moral corruption in today's society and for all the money.

### C. Pilot VS standardization

On Dec. 10, 2010, the General Office of the State Council issued the Notice on the Pilot Reform of National Education System. Pilot work was firstly carried out in some regions and schools, and then pilot operation was carried out in different provinces, cities, regions and universities, and the implementation is promoted after the operation is successful. This promotion is the unification of standards, that is, standardization. In 2015, China launched a national strategy of "standardization". Its goal is to basically build a national education standard system with international vision, suitable for China's national conditions and covering all levels and types of education by 2020"[5].

Standards are not bad, with standards there is a direction. However, standardization means de-differentiation. The pilot project is a case. There are great differences between the case and the other case. This kind of de-differentiation and the difference form a great contradiction. Although the pilot project is successful, it is not "smooth" to popularize the unified standard, because individual differences are inevitable, even in the same urban area, the level, funds, and resources of the school are different. If implemented according to standardization, many schools will face strong pressure.

## III. THE THREE MAJOR MISUNDERSTANDINGS OF EDUCATION REFORM

From the above three parabolic phenomena, we can find that there are three major misunderstandings in China's education reform.

### A. Educational reform is a national affair

China's education reform is initiated by the state, and it is a top-down reform. Through the formulation of policy plans, and then government-driven implementation, reforms are implemented in colleges and universities.

In the article "Research on the Changes of China's Educational Reform Thoughts in the Background of Comprehensive Education Reform", scholar Yang Jupeng pointed out the four major disadvantages of China's education reform. First, this "top-down" administrative imperative reform emphasizes standardization and neglects specific Diversity, "superior independent planning and arrangement, placing subordinate performers outside of decision-making, resulting in loss of responsibility and enthusiasm of lower levels" and "poor adaptability to rapid social change"[6]30. Second, this "top-down" reform is a "state supremacy" thinking. "State-oriented education reform is a reform concept of national interests and collective interests, which is conducive to education reform and society. Development and national development are closely combined, but it is not conducive to the care of citizens' needs preferences. It is a national mindset that ignores individual needs" [6]31. Third, this "top-down" reform is a "great unity." The reform method cannot take into account the differences between local individuals and produce actual results. Fourth, this "top-down" reform is an "administrative selective reform pilot mode", which is appointed by the administration, not the actual needs of the project itself, and therefore lack of accuracy, plus the advantages of the target individuals, leading to the inappropriateness of promotion.

Education is a matter of national economy and people's livelihood. Our country has always attached importance to education, but this long-term "top-down" education system led by the state has created the concept of "education is a matter of the state, and education reform is also a matter of the state" in the eyes of the people. Although many people are worried about the current situation of education, even "worshipping foreign countries and flattering foreign countries", repeatedly scorned domestic education, but there is no motive force to initiate reform, either be content with the status quo or choose to study abroad, and there is no self-initiated reform consciousness from the field of educators or education.

### B. Educational reform is a matter in the field of Education

China's education reform is focused in the field of education, making education reform a part of national reform, which is the fact and the problem. Until now, the reform are all concentrated in the field of education, not out of the education system.

Educational reform is not only the internal reform of education, but also the external reform of education. Because education is of great significance to the national economy and

people's livelihood, its changes can not only stay in the field of education. In other words, education reform should become a change of social system. "Education reform itself is a rather complex systematic project, its formation is closely related to history, the needs of many stakeholders and so on. There is no perfect system plan, which can make the whole process of promoting the same as the original expectations, and get the final desired results. Often, they end up looking after one thing and losing the other " [7].

Educational reform should be a systematic project, not a problem that can be solved only by reforming a system, educational content and teaching methods. The reason why education reform has become a social problem today is not because the content of education is outdated, nor because of the badness of the education system, but because of problems

in society. Education and other social systems are an organism, closely related to each other. As the basis, if education change, other systems should follow the change. If other systems remain unchanged, education reform will not have any effect or complete failure.

### C. Educational reform is the development and growth of Education

The goal of education reform is to solve the problems in the field of education and promote the improvement of education and the quality of education. However, education reform is not equal to the development and growth of education. It is not advisable to measure the effectiveness of the reform only by numerical value.

TABLE I. THE MAIN GOAL OF EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT[8]

Indicator	unit	Year 2009	Year 2015	Year 2020
Preschool education				
Number of children in the park	Ten thousand people	2658	3400	4000
Pre-school year gross enrollment rate	%	74.0	85.0	95.0
Two years before school, the rate of gross admission	%	65.0	70.0	80.0
Three years before school, the rate of gross admission	%	50.9	60.0	70.0
Nine-year compulsory education				
Students in school	Ten thousand people	15772	16100	16500
Consolidation rate	%	90.8	93.0	95.0
High school education*				
Students in school	Ten thousand people	4624	4500	4700
Gross enrollment rate	%	79.2	87.0	90.0
Vocational education				
Secondary vocational school students	Ten thousand people	2179	2250	2350
Higher vocational education students	Ten thousand people	1280	1390	1480
Higher education**				
Total school size	Ten thousand people	2979	3350	3550
Students in school	Ten thousand people	2826	3080	3300
Among them: graduate students	Ten thousand people	140	170	200
Gross enrollment rate	%	24.2	36.0	40.0
Continuing Education				
Continuing Education for Employees	Million times	16600	29000	35000

Note: \* Number of students with secondary vocational education; \*\* Number of students with higher vocational education.

Looking at the table above, China's education reform has paid attention to two aspects, one is the popularization of education, the other is the enrollment rate (that is, the rate of admission), but what can the popularization and the promotion of the rate of admission explain? It can only be said that the scale of education has expanded, almost eliminating illiteracy, but can it really solve the problem of education? Nowadays, more and more people have "knowledge" and no "culture", but knowledge has become the booster of crime. Morality has not progressed but deteriorated with the development of society. It is impossible to bring about real educational reform by improving the rate of entrance to school and popularizing education.

### IV. TWO SUGGESTIONS ON THE ADJUSTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM

Faced with the current situation of difficult and ineffective educational reform, we should think deeply from two aspects:

First, education should return to people-oriented education. Luo Guang, a scholarly philosopher in Taiwan, pointed out that "the happiness of the people lies in a sound life; a sound life lies in a balance between material life and spiritual life. Spiritual life is the basis of material life "[9] .Human beings, as a special existence, can't be satisfied solely by material. Therefore, spiritual civilization can't be ignored. However, this is neglected by modern society and is the root cause of various social problems in modern times. Therefore, returning to people-oriented is the key to education reform.

The essence of people-oriented is to respect human life and promote the all-round development of people in order to achieve overall harmony. Specifically, there are several levels in the education reform: (1) From the perspective of education content, the balance of liberal arts and sciences is very important, which can make up for the defect of "knowledge without culture". (2) From the perspective of the education system, it should be more humane. There are many rules and regulations in today's education system. These rules are only for administrative convenience, but they are not considered to be "convenient with people." The system should serve people, not people are busy for the system. (3) As far as educational management is concerned, humanized management should be implemented. Humanized management should consider more about personal qualities, work qualities and the reality of life, rather than simply unified standards or quantification. (4) As far as the implementation of the reform is concerned, it also needs to be people-oriented and adjusted according to people's actual needs and circumstances, especially the coordination of various parts should take into account people's actual life.

Second, education reform should de-commercialize. Commercialization is an important feature of modernization, and the field of education also shows the characteristics of commercialization, which is manifested in: (1) commercialization of educational purposes. Education should take teaching and educating people as its own duty, and the aim is to train qualified people. However, modern education is too practical. Education is not a great project to shape the soul, but a means of livelihood. For teachers, teaching is to make money, so that teaching is only a tool for making a living and making money. For scholars, education is not a way to cultivate sentiment and shape the soul, rather than a means of livelihood for a good job and a good life in the future. (2) Commercialization of educational content. Because of the commercialization of educational purposes, it leads to the commercialization of educational content. Specialties needed by the market are crowded out, and specialties not needed by the market are neglected. As a result, emerging specialties continue to emerge in the market, while some old specialties will disappear, and liberal arts will fail and science will revive. (3) Industrialization of educational institutions. Because of the commercialization of educational objectives, on the one hand, colleges and universities start enterprises and run various training courses to make up for the lack of financial funds; on the other hand, schools are not independent entities, but linked with other departments. Because education attaches importance to the rate of admission, there are various training institutions for cultural and art courses; and educational facilities have also achieved social bidding.

Therefore, education reform is not a matter of education itself. Education reform involves many interest groups. The reason why education reform is difficult is the uneven distribution of benefits. If we want to carry out the educational reform and make it effective, we must de-commercialize and

redistribute the interests. For example, in order to reduce the burden of students, it is necessary to coordinate the interests of the government, students and educational institutions. If we do not eliminate the tutoring after the class, if we do not change the system of further studies, it will be empty talk to reduce the burden on students. However, "banning" after-school remedial institutions will stimulate the cheese of remedial institutions and affect government finances such as taxation. Therefore, education reform must be a "benefit" revolution. If "benefit distribution" does not change, reform can only be a form, and the problem will be repeated in various forms of "mutation".

## V. CONCLUSION

In a word, education is based on educating people and should be people-oriented. Under the trend of commercialization, education turns people into robots, cold people and virtue less people. Commercialization has indeed promoted the development of human society, but it has brought people into material degradation in education. Therefore, in order to change people's living conditions and restore the soul-shaping project of education, we must return to the root of human being and de-commercialize so that education would be a purely educational one.

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