

Analysis on the Connotative Development Paths of Higher Education from the Perspective of the Series of Ideological and Political Courses

Ni Cai

Oxbridge College of Kunming University of Science and Technology, Kunming, Yunnan Province, China

Keywords: the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China; higher education; connotation; development.

Abstract: Now in China, the undertaking of constructing socialism with Chinese characteristics is in the key period of entering a new era. Socialist universities with Chinese characteristics should take the ideology of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era as the guide of action. Guiding by the spirit of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, colleges and universities should carry out the fundamental task of moral education, carry forward valuable traditions of China, and run schools on the basis of our national conditions, so as to train qualified builders and reliable successors of the Chinese characteristic socialism. In the new situation, by adhering to the guiding role of the Marxist theory, deepening the reform and strengthening Party self-discipline, schools can reach the unity of thinking, form ideological standards and play the leading role of Marxism ideology.

1. Introduction

Liu Yandong, the Vice Prime Minister of the State Council, attended the 27th meeting of the Consultative Committee for Colleges and Universities Operated Directly under the Ministry of Education, and stressed that to build a strong higher education country, colleges and universities should stick in the right direction, focus on the “four services”, grasp the strategic orientation and historical mission of higher education in the new era, and make the development of higher education closely linked with the realistic goals and future directions of China’s development. Colleges and universities need to focus on improving the talent training ability in an all-round way, strengthen on character and civic virtue cultivation, innovate the training modes, and realize the cultivation of talents in all-round ways and in the whole process. Schools should focus on the needs of national development to optimize the discipline structure, strengthen scientific and technological research, speed up the construction of first-class universities and first-class disciplines, improve the level of higher education in the central and western regions, and promote the connotative development focusing on quality. Schools should base themselves on the times and face the future, carry forward the socialist core values, build a team of teachers with noble ethics and excellent professional skills, and establish good academic atmosphere. Schools should strengthen the leadership of the Party and keep the strong position of training builders and successors of the socialist cause.

According to the spirit of the report of the Nineteenth National Congress, local colleges and universities with distinctive disciplinary characteristics should remember well their mission and responsibility, and adhere to the principle of strengthening moral education and cultivating people. According to the development of national and local economy and society, schools should integrate Jin-ping Xi’s socialist ideology with Chinese characteristics in the new era into school-running practices from the perspectives of personnel training, scientific research, cultural inheritance and innovation, as well as international exchanges and cooperation, so as to promote the connotative development of higher education.

2. The Connotative Development Paths of Higher Education

In the article Comment on Ten Events of Higher Education in China in 2017: “Annual Checking

of Higher Education” Academic Salon published exclusively by China Higher Education Reform and Development Network, the following points of view can be discussed for the connotative development of higher education.

Jie-ning Pan’s point of view goes as following. The model of higher education development in China is a typical example of later developed nations. The continuous reform of higher education has not yet made a revolutionary breakthrough since the reform and opening up. The blueprint for the development of higher education described in the report of the Nineteenth National Congress will be a global revolution, leading us from a big country of higher education to a powerful country of higher education. The excellent outlook on development, as well as the pattern and soul shaped in the report point out the direction for the development of higher education and bring the ideal into reality.

Xiang Li holds that, promoting the connotative development of higher education is the only way to realize the goal of strengthening China’s education. It is expected that China’s higher education will enter the stage of popularization in 2020. We urgently need to focus on the quality of higher education and improve the quality of higher education in an all-round way. Li believes that innovating talent training modes, basing on practical problems and forming our own value standards are basic steps to improve the quality of higher education and take the road of connotative development.

Qingwen Chen’s view point is, the “double first-class initiative” is a measure to achieve the connotative development of Chinese universities. Compared with the 985 and 211 projects, the “double first-class initiative” is different because it advocates to “promote the construction of first-class schools through focusing on the construction of first-class disciplines”. The 985 and 211 projects mainly support the overall development of schools. Discipline is the basis of training talents and serving the society. It is also the foothold of the connotative development of colleges and universities.

Professor Zubin He comments that China’s higher education has entered the stage of popularization since 1990s. Under this background, the meaning of connotative development of higher education has changed. Now schools need to take “quality improvement as the core, and control the scale of quantity”. The connotation development of higher education is opposite to the extensive development. With the declining of annual population and the great development of higher education, the gross enrollment rate of higher education in China has increased steadily from 26.5% in 2010 to 40% in 2015. The figure is expected to reach 50% in 2020; henceforth, China will become a country with popularized higher education. Our country will enter the stage of popularization of higher education in 2030.

The report of the Nineteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China put forward the idea of connotative development of higher education. So far, the connotation of higher education has been further developed. It has changed from a state of development to a mode of development. The connotative development of higher education is global and holistic, and it guides us from a strategically advantageous position. In order to achieve the connotative development of higher education, we must take the improvement of higher education quality as the core, the rational control of higher education scale as the premise, the optimization of higher education structure as the basis, the improvement of higher education system and mechanism as the guarantee, and the improvement of higher education efficiency as the key. The connotative development of higher education is the harmonious and unified development of the quality, the structure, the scale, the system and the benefit of higher education. Guided by the spirit of the report of the Nineteenth National Congress, we need to achieve the connotative development of higher education by building first-class disciplines, training first-class talents, cultivating first-class teachers, creating first-class culture and providing first-class services.

3. Key Issues in the Series of Ideological and Political Courses

From December 7 to 8, 2016, the CPC Central Committee held a national conference on the ideological and political work in colleges and universities; the General Secretary Xi delivered an

important speech. At the same time, the CPC Central Committee and the State Council issued the Opinions on Strengthening and Improving the Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities under the New Situation. In 2017, the leading Party Group of the Ministry of Education deliberated and approved the General Program on Work Related to the Teaching Quality of Ideological and Political Theory Course in Colleges and Universities in 2017 (referred to as the General Program). The general requirement is to “tackle tricky problems in thinking, teachers, textbooks, teaching methods and mechanism”. In order to carry out the General Program, we should do a good job of publicity and mobilization to colleges and universities all over the country, and designate 2017 as the “Year of Teaching Quality of the Ideological and Political Theory Course in Colleges and Universities”. Since then, for front-line teachers of the ideological and political course in colleges, the construction of ideological and political theory course system has entered a crucial year of tackling key problems in quality. Under the new situation, how to unify ideas, form ideological criteria and play the guiding role of leading ideology, are ideological issues need to be clarified urgently.

3.1 Interpretation of ideology

Ideology means the ideological concept built on the basis of corresponding economic foundation. It represents the ideology of the ruling class, and can be simply understood as ideological concepts. The Communist Party of China takes Marxism as the guiding ideology, the leading mainstream ideology and ideological criterion of a political party, a stratum and a country, but it does not exclude the pluralism and diversity of cultural development. On the contrary, with the development of social economy, politics, culture and civilization, the social productivity has been further improved and material civilization has been further enriched. With the help of relevant policies such as Guidelines on Strengthening the Construction of Industrial Organizations in the Field of Culture issued by the State Office of the Central Government, the excellent atmosphere has been gradually formed to promote the overall prosperity of cultural undertakings as well as the rapid development of cultural industries, and to inherit excellent cultural traditions.

3.2 How to understand “taking Marxism as the guidance”

As the guiding ideology of the proletariat all over the world, Marxism has two major discoveries: it reveals the objective law of human society development; it creates the theory of surplus value. It consists of Marxist philosophy, Marxist political economics and scientific socialism-future society. As the guiding ideology of the Communist Party of China, how does Marxism embody its strong vitality as well as its scientific, practical and advanced attributes?

Firstly, Marxism is scientific. It reveals the law of human society development and represents the correct development trend of human society. Secondly, it is practical. Marxism proves its correctness by the world anti-fascist war in the World War Two, especially by the victory of China which won the arduous War of Resistance against Japan. The reversal of the battlefields in the Pacific and Southeast Asia accelerated the winning of World War II. The victory of World War II changed the post-war world pattern, and set up the flag of Marxism in the world. It proves that as the guiding ideology of the proletariat, Marxism has strong vitality and tenacity. Finally, according to the Marxist theory, China will remain in the initial stage of socialism for a long time, which is the most fundamental national condition of our country. In the 21st century, in terms of the process of economic development of different countries, the developed countries have completed the original accumulation and reform of industrial revolution by means of plunder or war in the 19th and 20th centuries. For example, the old capitalist countries Britain and France made profits from industrial production through plundering and enclosure movements. Germany and Japan quickly embarked on the road of industrialization through war reparations. The former Soviet Union embarked on the road of socialism after the October Revolution. In order to consolidate national defense and safeguard the independence of the country, the country carried out reform in national economy through new technologies, and gave priority to the development of heavy industry and the implementation of two five-year plans. These measures enabled the Soviet Union to achieve a leap forward in industrialization in a short period of time. However, in the early 20th century, China,

which was poor, weak and in the semi-colonial and semi-feudal state, was an agricultural society and had low productivity. Under such a historical background, choosing Marxism and taking the socialist road were the only choice of the Chinese people. No matter how the situations at home and abroad change, we could not deviate from the reality that China will remain in the initial stage of socialism for a long time. We must adhere to the socialist road, which is our realistic choice. We obtained achievements in more than 50 years since the founding of the People's Republic. Marxism and the socialist road will still be the choice of our Party and our people in the future.

3.3 How to understand “the comprehensive deepening of reform”

There are no more than two ways to promote historical progress: reform in a moderate way and revolution in a violent way. As the ruling party, the Communist Party of China should avoid the controversy between Ze-dong and Mao Yan-pei Huang in 1945 about the historical periodic law of “the booming prosperity and the quick decline”. Ze-dong Mao has given the answer, “We have found a new way; we can jump out of the periodic law. This new road is democracy. Only when the people are allowed to supervise the government can the government be always precautious; only when everyone is responsible can we keep the government running continuously.” Mao's remarks are full of wisdom. Therefore, today, we need to integrate Marxism with our reality, innovate ourselves from inside to outside, adapt to the law of social development, and adapt to the future development trend of the world. This is the inevitable trend of historical development, and also the historical task shouldered by the Party and the people.

3.4 How to understand “strengthen Party self-discipline”

On July 21, 2021, the Communist Party of China (CPC) will celebrate its 100th anniversary. The party, which currently has 89 million members, has more members than the total population of most European countries. The number of a political party is equal to the population of a country. It is difficult to govern a large political party just like governing a country. As Professor Chen said at the meeting, “it is urgent to strengthen Party self-discipline, since our Party has encountered three difficult situations. First, the political system has to be reformed; second, the problem of polarization has to be solved; third, corruption has to be eliminated.” In reality, the construction of socialism after the founding of New China is to cross the river by feeling the stones. There is no experience to follow. This is also the case of Party building. Nevertheless, at the moment when GDP leaps to the second place in the world, the critical period of realizing the two hundred-year plans, the national rejuvenation and the Chinese dream is followed. How to make the Party possess the motive force of sustainable development, promote the development of socialist modernization and carry out reform in depth, and realize the grand blueprint of the “five-sphere integrated plan”? The most fundamental problem is to solve the problem of Party's construction. Otherwise, reform and development will be water without a source.

4. Conclusion

The author's understanding is that, universities are the main position of humanistic education and national quality education for college students; university classroom is the main channel for improving students' professional ability and cultivating their national literacy. In the process of perfecting the university curriculum structure and management, the setting of ideological and political courses as well as humanistic quality courses should be more scientific and applicable. The ideological and political courses play an irreplaceable role in cultivating students' sense of national responsibility, ideology, political consciousness and scientific belief, since they can establish students' outlooks on life and values as well as the world outlook. In the future, higher education should pay more attention to the cultivation of college students' humanistic connotations, scientific literacy (professional competence), study skills, responsibility and national identities (traditional cultural education). From these points of view, we can evaluate the quality of the connotative development of higher education. Even if these students do not attend first-class universities, they can have the ability of solving problems after graduation. They will be confident and idealistic

about their future life, and be responsible for their families, as well as the development of the society and our country. These college students will be successors of the cause of socialism construction. For colleges and universities, it is also the trend of their connotative development that higher education (institutions of higher learning) should return to rationality and reality in the process of building first-class universities. Schools should keep the principle of people-oriented education, and hold the sense of responsibility in teaching and educating people, carrying out scientific research, serving the society and sharing the destiny of the nation and the country.

References

[1] Liu Y D. Study and Implement the Spirit of the Nineteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China; Start a New Journey to Build China a Power of Higher Education [J]. Xinhua News Agency, http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2017-12/22/content_5249643.htm, 2017-12-22.

[2] He Z B. Comment on Ten Events of Higher Education in China in 2017: “Annual Checking of Higher Education” Academic Salon [J]. China Higher Education Reform and Development Network, <http://www.hie-edu.org/>, 2017, 12, 28.