

An Analysis of Cai Yuanpei's Ideal Education Thought -- Ideal Man, Ideal Country, and Ideal Education

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Abstract: Cai Yuanpei is a well-known educator, revolutionary, and thinker in China. At the same time, he is the first chief Education officer of the Republic of China. In the analysis of Cai Yuanpei's educational thought, this paper reflects his ideal educational view with the ideal society and ideal personality he wants to shape in his educational view, takes his social background as the starting point, and combs and discusses the ideal society, ideal personality and ideal education he wants to shape.

Keywords: Cai Yuanpei; Feudal education; Freedom; Inclusive

1. Cultivate ideal personality

1.1 Political stand

In the era of war, Cai Yuanpei, as the first chief of education, faced the question of what kind of talents the Republic of China needed? In Cai Yuanpei's view, the perfection and development of individual personality is the internal development demand of human beings. "The swan of life is to develop its personality in order to achieve great success." Cai Yuanpei clearly pointed out in the middle school self-cultivation textbook that the ultimate goal of education is to shape people's good character. "How can human nature be completed? Say: developing personality."

In the era of the unstable national political situation at that time, it was unrealistic to bypass politics in talent training. Cai Yuanpei knew that the talents we need to train must only be political talents, which is an inevitable fact. Therefore, in the educational thought of "simultaneous development of five education," there are utilitarian education, namely intellectual education, military, and national education, namely sports, and civic moral education, namely moral education. These three kinds of education, that is, the three in one education of morality, intelligence, and physique, are what he thinks of as an educational model "subordinate to politicians." However, it has to be said that although this is a non-long-term education based on the present and meeting the utilitarianism of the real society, it was a further performance of education at that time and even has a certain reference significance now.

1.2 Humanistic position

What is the humanistic position? Cai Yuanpei believes that the humanistic position needs to promote the perfection of human character from the perspective of human development, so as to form a perfect personality. Therefore, Cai Yuanpei puts forward two other kinds of education, which is called the education of super anecdotal politics. He believes that the education of super anecdotal politics is the other two kinds of education in the "Five Education": on the one hand, world outlook education, which is the ultimate educational goal, and on the other hand, aesthetic education. Cai Yuanpei advocates replacing religious education with aesthetic education. The reason why it is called Chaoyi political education is that the foothold of these two kinds of education is not to serve the social function, but to meet the metaphysical spirit of human beings. That is, world outlook and aesthetic education is an ideological education, which is to improve people's character and promote people's development. In Cai Yuanpei's view, the personality of political position is the basis of personality, while the personality of humanistic position is the transcendence of personality. It contains the best side of personality. The purpose of world outlook education and aesthetic education is to shape this side.

2. Shaping an ideal society

2.1 Actual social background

Cai Yuanpei lived in a very turbulent period. China's social and political situation was very unstable, and the current situation was changeable. Therefore, Cai Gong experienced many changes of different nature in his life, therefore, Cai Yuanpei has faced different schools of thought, from feudalism, and capitalism to Marxism, and tried and experienced the conflict of different social systems. Cai Yuanpei, who was in the period of the Republic of China, knew that there were too many forced choices in China at that time, so he wanted to strive for independence in education.

2.2 Prospect of revolutionary society

Cai Yuanpei's "independent education thought" was actually a helpless resistance in the turbulent social and political situation at that time. Cai Gong knew that without an independent country and an independent society, education could not talk about autonomy,

because “educational independence” strictly belongs to the proposition of historical idealism, but it deeply reflects his desire for national and social independence. We can see from this, that Cai Yuanpei is not only opposing the warlords’ control over education, but also opposing the whole imperialist control over China.

During the turbulent period of the Republic of China, Cai Yuanpei advocated that the social prospect of revolution was a free and compatible society, in which people were free and did not have to be dominated by war and class; Thought was free, and all schools can be inclusive; The country and society are free. We have our own independent sovereignty and the right and ability to control all the property of our country and society. This is the ideal social state reflected in Cai Yuanpei’s educational thought, and it is also the ideal society of all Chinese people during the patriotic revolution at that time.

3. Education in ideals

3.1 Ideal education: an inclusive Philosophy

Cai Yuanpei’s rich philosophical basis of higher education management is the extraction of the value of “ideological freedom and inclusiveness” and absorbed the western culture, achieved the goal of integrating China and the west, and formed his unique philosophical basis of an ideal education. Cai Yuanpei’s proposition of “freedom of thought and inclusiveness” is related to China’s academic thought during the spring and autumn and Warring States periods. As for “freedom of thought,” there is no theory of exclusive respect in the dimension of spiritual freedom. He believes that western universities are excellent because they follow the general principles of freedom of thought. In China, Dai Zhen, Huang Zongxi, and others put forward that “they have gradually freed themselves from the fetters of Neo Confucianism since the Song Dynasty, which is the precursor of free thought.” Similarly, Cai Yuanpei put forward the spiritual basis of “respecting nature” and “developing personality.” “The reason why they combine the principles of all things,” “the reason why they integrate the principles of all things,” and “the reason why they integrate the principles of all things” is that “the principles of all things are different from each other.”

3.2 Ideal education: the policy of developing five education simultaneously

Cai Yuanpei put forward the educational policy of “developing five educations simultaneously” from the standpoint of “cultivating a sound personality” in his opinions on the educational policy in 1912. The “five educations” include utilitarian education, civic moral education, military, and national education, world outlook education, and aesthetic education. This is the first complete educational policy with democracy in the educational history of the Republic of China. At that time, there was a scuffle among domestic warlords and joint aggression by foreign powers. In order to defend its rights, China must use force. In Cai Yuanpei’s view, “strong neighbors are forced to communicate with each other and are eager to defend themselves. It is difficult to recover the national power lost over the years without force”. Utilitarian education is equivalent to intellectual education. In order to seek national prosperity and strength, intellectual education must be included in education. Cai Yuanpei asked the students at that time to master advanced scientific and technological knowledge, not the previous four books and five classics, so as to cultivate and develop students’ intellectual education in this way. In Cai Yuanpei’s civic moral education, he actually wants to cultivate social citizens with the nature of capitalist society, which is “freedom, equality and fraternity” revealed by the French Revolution. World outlook education is the ultimate goal of Cai Yuanpei’s “five educations.” He said: “the world has two aspects: one is the phenomenal world, the other is the physical world. Educators stand in the phenomenal world, and those who have something to do with the physical world also.” Aesthetic education is an important way to realize world outlook education. At the same time, he advocated aesthetic education instead of religious education at that time.

3.3 Ideal education: the management of democratic management

“Professor governance” is a university management system sprouting from the University of Paris in the middle ages. This system is very popular in Universities in Germany, and the development of higher education in Germany is obvious to all. Therefore, “Professor governance” has been imitated by many countries, and Cai Yuanpei has also imitated this method, which has become an important measure to reform Peking University. First of all, Cai Yuanpei set up a Council at Peking University, which is the highest legislative and most powerful organ of the University. Various regulations, articles of association, and regulations of the university are formulated and elected by the assessors among the heads of departments and professors and are elected once a year. Secondly, he set up an administrative conference at Peking University to make professors members of the conference. At the same time, he made it the highest administrative organ and ruling organ of the school to manage and master the administrative affairs and power of the school. In addition, Cai Yuanpei has also set up professor associations of various disciplines, which are responsible for organizing and standardizing the teaching activity plans of various disciplines. This is an inheritance of our current discipline group. It not only increases the democracy of decision-making, but also increases the scientificity of decision-making. Cai Yuanpei’s basic idea of higher education administration is to implement Professor governance. This purpose is to establish a democratic education management system and prevent the president’s personal arbitrariness, which also reflects Cai Yuanpei’s democratic management concept. He needs people who really understand education to manage the school. Democratic spirit and professionalism are the two centers of this idea. Such governance can greatly mobilize the enthusiasm and creativity of professors. A vivid picture of democratic school governance emerged. Cai Yuanpei also attaches great importance to the continuity and stability of management. He is committed to improving the democratic decision-making system and organization within the University. He puts forward that “no one can act arbitrarily as president.” His democracy should continue in the university all the time. This thought gives full play to the positive role of de administration, democratization, and scientization of university education management.

4. Enlightenment

Cai Gong’s educational ideal is of great significance to our modern education. In his educational thought, from the educational practice of “simultaneous development of five education” to the reform of Peking University, and finally the “independent educational thought,” reflects his efforts from cultivating an ideal personality to shaping an ideal society. There are many places worthy of our

modern education for reference.

We take Cai Yuanpei's educational ideal as the mainline, reflect the ideal personality we want to cultivate and shape the ideal society, analyze what kind of personality Cai Yuanpei wants to cultivate and what kind of society we want to shape, and finally see that the people Cai Gong wants to cultivate have a complete personality, develop in an all-round way and can realize themselves. What he wants to shape is an independent, free and inclusive society. Now our society is doing well, In modern society, we have absolute autonomy, and our society is relatively free, which is also the ideal society expected by Cai Yuanpei and the people in his era. With regard to the ideal personality, Cai Yuanpei wants to cultivate, today's educational practice is also making continuous efforts. We have changed the past way of exam oriented Education and began to pay attention to the cultivation of students' quality in all aspects. Focusing on the all-around development of students' morality, intelligence, physique, beauty, and labor, Cai Yuanpei has carried on an excellent inheritance of Cai Yuanpei's talent training mode, which also reflects the precious social value of Cai Yuanpei's educational thought. Cai Yuanpei's thought is derived from cultural cosmopolitanism. Through understanding and learning about the western world, his thought has the characteristics of "integrating China and the west." From here, we can see the progressiveness, scientificity, and timeliness of Cai Yuanpei's educational thought. Cai Yuanpei's educational thought has pioneering significance in the history of modern education in China and has had an important impact and Enlightenment on the theoretical development and educational practice of future generations.

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