

The Cultivation of Global Citizen with High Quality: A Time Mission of Chinese Higher Education

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Abstract: Nowadays with China's gradual entering into the globalized time, the goals and functions of the Chinese higher education should be innovated correspondingly. To cultivate the global citizen with internationalized perspective should become the fundamental dynamics of the present innovation in Chinese higher education. The international world of academy has different understanding to the concept of global citizen, but it also has some consistent opinions. For instance, the global citizen should have a world vision and perspective, and should not only concern the affairs of the local area and one's own nation, but also turn the vision of concentration to the whole globe; should form core values that could be recognized internationally and used in the management of the global affairs; and should also take an active stance in order to change the reality of the world so that the environment of the globe could become better gradually. To cultivate the global citizen with high quality, the following requirements should be paid attention to: (1) the consciousness of global citizen and globalization as well as the competencies of cross-cultural communication should be cultivated in higher education with teachers' cultivation one step ahead; (2) the country should have legislation to strengthen the educational goals of cultivating global citizen in higher education in order to cultivate the students to become the real global citizen with high quality who could make their contributions to the country and the world and who could also offer the intelligence and capacity as a tribute; (3) the core values with global significance in Chinese traditional culture should be refined, and the world populated core values should be analyzed scientifically so that the core

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values in globalized epoch could be formed and established gradually with the communication between the cultures of East and West; (4) the Chinese universities' 'going global' should be greatly pushed so as to make the world understand China and to make China understand the world better and better.

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I. Issues raised

From the 1990s to the 21st century, with the formation of a unified global market and the rapid development of information technology, especially Internet technology, the globalization of international community has experienced a process transforming from quantitative development to qualitative development, and leading to a global age¹. Since its reform and opening up, China has made good use of the opportunity of globalization, constantly absorbing energy from the outside, which brought China to more in-depth reform. Needless to say, globalization has become a strong driving force for the promotion of contemporary Chinese social reforms.

While globalization is an inevitable trend in the development of the modern era, it is indeed a two-edged sword. It has brought prosperity to the community, but at the same time social injustice. In their book *Global Perspective: Understanding Global Issues*, Ann Kelleher and Laura Klein (1999) defined globalization as 'the process during which the ties between social growing interaction can be strengthened so that regional events occurred in this world will result in more and more impact on other distant land and society'.² This definition emphasizes the linkage and impact between different countries, but did not consider how to strengthen such linkage and impact. In fact, in the present process of globalization, only those who have mastered national dominance

¹ Song Qiang, Hu Haibo & Xia Xuexian. "International cooperation in global civil society and globalization era", *Journal of Taiyuan Normal University, Social Science Edition*, Vol.12, No.1, 2013 (11).

² Ann Kelleher, Laura Klein, *Global Perspectives: A Handbook for Understanding Global Issues*, Prentice-Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ 1999, p. 3.

or global rule-making power can enjoy actual benefit, and the globalization failed to make an equal benefit for all countries. In a sense, globalization has the ‘Western’ – ‘Americanization’ and ‘unification’ taste, whereas developing countries are in a ‘marginalized’ position.³ In other words, those who can achieve rapid economic and social development in the wave of globalization are all countries and regions with the power of international discourse and world-class talents.

Clearly, the era of globalization is dominated by knowledge-based economy, knowledge economy needs to train high-quality knowledge-based talents with a global vision, so some concepts of higher education need to be reviewed in order to meet the requirements of globalization. To bring globalization into higher education means the objectives and functions of higher education, etc., will change correspondingly. Nowadays, as Chinese society is increasingly involved in globalization, the agenda of globalization of Chinese higher education must be taken seriously enough. In an evaluation report on international exchange programs, some scholars have pointed out that ‘globalization may be the most important factor in the development of higher education in the whole world’.⁴ After China joined the WTO, the demand for high-quality international talent becomes even stronger, so that cultivating high-quality global citizens who have international vision becomes not only the fundamental driving force to the development of higher education in China, but also a new challenge for setting goals of the Chinese Higher Education.

II. Analysis of the concept of global citizenship

What does mean a concept of global citizen? There are many common and consistent definitions of this concept in academia, but because of the different perspectives of the researchers,

³ Yu Gobin, “How to build a new international order in the era of globalization”, *Research of Social Science*, Vol. 25, No. 5, 2004, p. 24.

⁴ Jennifer Massey, Jeff Burrow, “Assessing the Experiences of Participants in Queens University’s International Exchange Program”, *Student Affairs Services Association*, Kitchener, Ontario 2009; retrieved on April 5, 2011 from <http://www.queensu.ca/studentaffairs/assessment/presentations.html>.

there are still many differences in the concept. From the comparative analysis of the concept below, we can easily see where the similarities and differences are.

Firstly, global citizenship is an integral part of the larger concept of globalization of world citizen doctrine or world citizen governance. What philosophy the term 'world citizenship governance' reflects is: transferring from national governance to regional governance. This is a new kind of regionalism or a strengthened global civil society. To make a good governance of such a new globalized society, it is necessary to have a set of complete 'normative structure' that could maintain the new world order values. Richard Falk called it as global democracy or humane governance that is established on the foundation of the research of 'human society' in Polanyi.⁵ Obviously, this globalization of world citizen doctrine not only emphasizes the role human society plays at the global level but also the formation of global norms.

Robert Kaplan expounded his different view of the concept of global citizenry. In his view, such global citizenry is, 'the world in which people can have any countries' passport, or their business income can give them easy access to many countries, while the unique stakes held by any one of them are becoming less'.⁶ In other words, the global citizenry does not bring any benefit to government, voters or regions. The Atlantic Council for International Cooperation believes that global citizenship has three dimensions: (1) it is a way of understanding: to understand how the world works, links between our own lives and those of people throughout the world; (2) it is 'a way of seeing – social justice and equity, other people's reality, diversity, interconnectedness, and the way people can make a difference; (3) it is a way of acting – exercising political rights, critical thinking, and challenging injustice'.⁷

⁵ Richard Falk, *On Human Governance: Toward a New Global Politics. A Report To The World Order Models Project*, Polity Press, Cambridge 1995, p. 6.

⁶ Robert D. Kaplan, *Imperial Grunts: The American Military on the Ground*, Random House, New York 2005, p. 364.

⁷ Margaret Brigham, "Creating a global citizen and assessing outcomes", *Journal of Global citizenship & Equity Education*. Vol.1, No.1, 2011, p. 16.

Oxfam Canada's view is that the global citizenship should contain the following seven areas: (1) 'is aware of the wider world and has a sense of their own role as a world citizen'; (2) 'respects and values diversity'; (3) 'has an understanding of how the world works economically, politically, socially, culturally, technologically and environmentally'; (4) 'is outraged by social injustice'; (5) 'participates in and contributes to the community at a range of levels from local to global'; (6) 'is willing to act to make the world a more sustainable place'; (7) 'takes responsibility for their actions'.⁸

The president of the Centennial College of Applied Arts and Technology in Canada Ann Buller pointed out from the perspective of higher education that colleges and universities should educate students to become global citizens, because only such a student can (1) 'Better appreciate the role they can play in addressing challenges in the world today'; (2) 'Be equipped with the critical thinking skills necessary to work together in today's multicultural and multinational business environment'; (3) 'Learn about the global issues of our time'; (4) 'Show compassion for people in our community and other communities'; (5) 'Take action to improve our lives, our community and the global community'.⁹ From the above definition, although there are some controversies in the details about the definition of the concept of global citizenship, some consensus have been achieved in a broader sense. For example, one would have a global vision, not only concerning about the affairs of his region and his country but also considering the affairs from global perspective; one need form some internationally recognized core values and use them to manage global affairs; one would take positive action to change the social reality and make the global environment increasingly positive. In a nutshell, the global citizens brought up by higher education need to have a global vision and core values, actively participate in global affairs, and be responsible for their behaviours.

⁸ Margaret Brigham, "Creating a global citizen and assessing outcomes", *Journal of Global Citizenship & Equity Education*, Vol.1, No.1, 2011, p.16.

⁹ Ibidem.

3. Time mission of higher education

3.1 Globalization of higher education as the call of times

Globalization of Higher Education is in full swing, which is a new scene that is worth being recorded in the history of world education. Under such condition, as the tide of economic globalization may constantly advance, the trend of globalization of higher education is also bound to develop in an irresistibly vigorous way. The world has never been so closely connected as it is today. Mutual understanding, support, communication and dialogue have never had such realistic value as before. The world is changing, so one who does not understand the ‘outside world’ is unable to truly understand his/her surrounding world, and one who does not learn from others is too close to his/her own space for development. Globalization of higher education is the product of the trend of the times. It is telling the world that mankind not only have to know more about the outside world, but also give the ‘outsiders’ more chances to know and understand the local values and ways of thinking. University should be the place where people can learn and understand the world. Students need to be exposed to different philosophy of education, taking opportunities to feel the charm of other cultures in person and experiencing different developmental states of these cultures. At present, there are about 4 million students studying abroad and it is expected that this figure will be doubled to 8 million by 2025.¹⁰ The reason why so many people want to leave their home countries to study abroad is that they would like to broaden their horizon of globalization, to grow into a qualified person with rich knowledge and global perspectives. Only with sufficient supply of such workforce can a country hold a strong position in the globalization of economy, and to withstand fierce competition in the complicated and changeable international community.

However, some people questioned whether higher education can really be ‘globalized’. An American university

¹⁰ Wang Jiabo, “Examine the globalization of higher education”, *China Academic Humanities and Social Science Information Network*, 08-25/2011, p. 1.

president claimed that the globalization of higher education has the potential to threaten America's prosperity in the future. This idea that considers one's own interests only reveals some tint of 'Cold War mentality'. A university president in India complained 'Smartest Indian students who are supported by the Indian taxpayers eventually go for the embrace of American education'.¹¹ Obviously, this is such a shortsighted stance that he cares and protects the national interest of India only, and fails to see the roles played by these students in the internationalization of education in India in the future. The trend of internationalization of education is inevitable, but the education sector in some countries concern that the globalization of higher education will bring some negative effects. Americans are deeply worried about 'American universities are being overtaken', 'developing countries will catch up'; Indians are anxious about the brain drain, and about educational resources shared by others; Chinese are worried about the fact that colleges cannot bring up top creative talents, that it is difficult to attract high-quality talents to China to teach, and that we lack the ability to attract outstanding students. All these concerns reflect the challenges that the globalization of higher education is facing to some extent.

In short, the globalization of higher education is still a new thing. On one hand, it would bring a strong shock to traditional education philosophy, and on the other hand, it may promote a variety of ways to speed up the process of globalization of higher education. This is an indisputable fact, which has become the first ticket to allow the country walk into the global society of knowledge economy.¹²

3.2 Global citizenship cultivation as the core objective of higher education

Since globalization and internationalization of higher education has become an era call, the objectives of higher education should be properly reviewed and rectified with the times. However, the objectives of Chinese higher education

¹¹ Ibidem.

¹² Teng Xing, "Globalization and Higher Education Idea Innovation", *China Education Daily*, 11/04/2000, p. 4, http://paper.jyb.cn/zgjyb/html/2013-12/30/content_336715.htm?div=-1.

do not seem to be set in that sense. Although relevant documents issued by the Ministry of Education also mentioned strategically that higher education should be adapted to the need of globalization development, it has not yet proposed any specific measures at the level of actual educational practices. In many occasions, the laggard existing framework would confine the proposals of new ideas to solve actual problems. Today, we need to think about the development of higher education in China on the basis of globalization, following the laws of education proved effective in both Eastern and Western education systems. As China is making endeavours to revive and to act as a responsible country, higher education surely has a responsibility to help its young generations to develop their sense of globalization, build leadership qualities and foster their abilities in cross-cultural communication, so that they will be able to stand out in the fierce international cooperation and competition. Only in this way, a new generation of Chinese young intellectuals could have a voice in the global interaction. Otherwise, China has to follow the track of others for its future development.

The concept of university should return to the nature of education, setting how to improve the citizens' quality as the top priority. Universities need to develop high-quality global citizens, which is an inevitable process of social development. Not all students can become political leaders, academic authority, business tycoons, but quality higher education can make them nice children and responsible husband or wife at home, friendly neighbours in communities, qualified employees at workplaces, competent civil servants in government agencies, and thoughtful, capable, and visionary international talent at international arena. With such quality, regardless of where they work, they can become helpful people to community. Globalization of citizenship education is an advanced educational philosophy. China today still lacks massive civic awareness; moreover, it lacks the awareness of the importance of education of such high quality citizens. I think, at national level, the globalization of higher education should consider China's actual condition and develop high-quality global citizens top down. Firstly, the state should formulate relevant legal provisions; secondly, appropriate changes need to be made

regarding educational goals: to develop high quality citizens able to contribute wisdom and talent to mankind; finally, the university should focus on this goal to design specific educational activities.

At university level, we have to advance with the times, and make constant innovations. To develop high-quality global citizens, colleges and universities should conduct in-depth thinking and explore possibilities of reform in the following areas:

3.1.1. To foster global citizenship, globalization awareness and intercultural communication competence, teachers need to go ahead. Chinese traditional higher education emphasizes more on what students learn, but ignores how they learn. European and American teachers indoctrinate less in class, but inspire students to independently discover and solve problems; Chinese education concerns more about what students think while the foreign education focuses more on how to think. Chinese model of course content and curriculum is basically uniform while foreign model has more varieties and introduce different approaches to students. The sameness in education results in great disadvantage, so that students are not flexible and sceptical enough; Chinese teachers pay more attention to who our students will be while foreign education pays more attention to how to be somebody.

3.1.2. Educational goals need to be strengthened so that globalization of citizenship education can be push forward through discussion and regulation. Students as high-quality global citizens can devote wisdom and intelligence, become energy for the country, and contribute to mankind.

3.1.3. Refining the core values of traditional Chinese culture which has a global significance, analyzing core values prevalent in today's world, forming the core values of the era of globalization through the exchange of Eastern and Western culture. When he was interviewed by "Science Times" reporter, Yang Yuliang, the president of Fudan University once said that in this new world it is a very important issue that what kind of mainstream values should China establish and introduce to the whole world. We have to think about what things are of universal significance in China, then introduce China's cultural charm to the entire world.

This requires universities to assume greater responsibility which other social institutions cannot afford.

3.2.4. Vigorously promoting Chinese universities' strategy of 'going global', running schools and universities jointly with foreign universities, helping the world understand China more, and giving Chinese scholars chances to understand the world better at the same time. In 2011, at the University President Global Summit and the Fifteenth Principal Annual Meeting of University of Pacific Rim Universities Union, the Minister of Education Yuan Guiren pointed out that the development of higher education in China is inseparable from the world, and the prosperity of the world's higher education also needs China's participation and contribution.¹³ The president of Fudan University Yang Yuliang said after the summit while answering the interview of the journalist that

The most important issue is how to make the world people, including scholars, willing to come and understand Chinese culture, so that they could understand and know more clearly how Chinese people consider questions. As a result, the entire China's international environment, including the future of the world will be full of harmony instead of conflicts and dangers.¹⁴

During the conference dedicated to 'The 25-year China-U.S. educational exchange', convened on November 10-11-2003, Levin, the President of Yale University, said in his keynote address that '25 years ago, Deng Xiaoping opened the door to China; today, to maintain this opening-up, we must expand personnel exchanges between universities, deepen cooperation in all institutions and work together to educate global citizens for the future'.¹⁵ He has the longest term of office in American Ivy League school, and is well known for his innovative spirit and effort in advocating globalization of higher education. Yale University has

¹³ Hao Jun & Sun Chenhui, "Universities' Challenges and Mission in the Era of globalization", *Science Times*, 2011 <http://news.sciencenet.cn/htmlnews/2011/5/246806.shtm>.

¹⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁵ Richard Levin, "Cultivating global citizen for the future", <http://www.xttop.com/sz/24575.html>.

exchanged with China over one hundred years. Today, Yale has more than 50 academic cooperation projects in China. The 17 departments and faculties of Yale have established a cooperative relationship with 45 universities, government agencies and research institutions in 16 cities of China. Levin made it clear that 'for the United States, to understand China and to strengthen exchanges with the Chinese people and its institutions has a great significance. This is because China has a huge population, an important position in the international politics and a huge economic potential'.¹⁶ Levin also clearly understood that

For such a University as Yale, China's importance is also reflected in: the civilized achievements which have stretched from the ancient age is the endless source for scholars who are seeking a comprehensive understanding of the human condition to pursuit knowledge and obtain inspiration.¹⁷

In conclusion, the globalization of higher education is in ascendant and it drives human society entering into a new era of development. All-round cooperation and exchanges between different cultures and nations are increasingly strengthened. Cultivating international talents who are rooted in the local culture yet have a global vision, has become the era demand for higher education in every country in the 21st century. To promote the globalization of higher education, we need to consider the situation and advance with the times. Only in this way could Chinese higher education cultivate real high-quality citizens with a global vision.

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¹⁶ Ibidem.

¹⁷ Richard Levin, Cultivating global citizen for the future. <http://www.xttop.com/sz/24575.html>.

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