

Cut-In Time of Historical Research of Chongqing Friends High School as Famous Historic School

—Problem about Value Orientation of Textual Research on School History

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Abstract

Chongqing Friends High School has experienced four periods of school-running. The first period is “Friends school-running period” which is the start-up period of Friends High School. The second period is “Private Chongqing Friends High School period” when it becomes famous historic school in China. Discussion about school-founding time is inseparable from school-running thought. To employ the method of re-establishing value orientation of school history research, the study of Friends High School history seeks formation process, shape, connotation characteristics, practical experience, internal vitality of school-running thought and educational thought of famous century-old Friends High School in Chongqing.

Keywords

Friends High School, Famous Historic School, Yang Fangling, Textual Research, Value Orientation

1. Introduction

Chongqing Friends High School was founded in the late nineteenth Century. In the middle and later periods of the Anti-Japanese war, it reached heyday and its education quality was excellent in comparison with 50 private middle schools in Chongqing at that time. At present, Friends High School history researchers emphasis on textual research on school-founding time without school-running thought, which they clear the value goal of textual research. In fact, the study of school-founding time is inseparable from the essence of school history research.

Without value orientation, discussion about school-founding time is a school history activity that is just textual research for textual research's sake. This article should re-establish value orientation of research of Friends High School history, and make great efforts to explore school-running thought and educational thought of famous century-old school.

2. Question about Textual Research of Value-Free Founding Year of Famous Historic School

Reading the Oral Autobiography of Hu Shi thirty years ago, I was surprised Columbia University Professor Tang Degang was familiar with oral history writing skills and His written language expression was fluent and elegant, moreover I admired persistence and boldness of his personal ideas. Tang Degang is Hu Shi's last but best student. In the 1980s known as the time of ideological emancipation in new China, Hu Shi was a master of modern Chinese academic in the twentieth Century and was respected in academic circles. Unexpectedly, his proud student directly criticized his propensity for textual research in the oral history. Mr Tang thinks, with his sinology foundation, scholarship of Chinese and Western culture, talent and diligence, Hu Shi could have reached a higher "peak value" of academic realm and had bigger "volume", but he became a master of "half-book". In the period of the May 4th New Culture Movement when Hu Shi became famous, he was trying hard to get some individual textual research on the history of Chinese culture. So he was away from the successful academic path, unconsciously gave up the time opportunity for achieving in personal ideological work, and even in his old age he indulged in elaborating on pioneering contribution in the initial stage of Chinese modern academic. Hero recalls with nostalgia. Mr Tang especially doesn't understand that his teacher was still obsessed with historical textual research in his old age.

When I read the Oral Autobiography of Hu Shi again at the beginning of the new century, I began to have a new understanding of deeper meaning of Mr Tang's criticism on his teacher's mania for textual research. Textual research is hard work in philology for historical research and worth practicing for life. As personal interest, textual research is more understandable. Mr Tang is not satisfied with his teacher's historical textual research without clear value goal, because this is not helpful to solve the historical problem. It is like constructing a historical building, which focus onauthenticity of documentation such as stone, tile, woodetc., and entirely be indifferent to the historical building's whole structure, construction style and space use function. It is not engaging in the construction industry but becoming a material supplier. As a great sinologymaster, Hu Shi moves away from design and construction of sinology building. It is a drawback of his mania for textual research, which students can't compliment.

We make textual research on the specific time of founding Friends High School in Chongqing. What does this have to do with Hu Shi's mania for textual research? For school, the time of founding Friends High School is a problem of school history that should be resolved. There are many problems in school developing. What is position of school-founding time in school history research?

This problem is roughly reflected in the Chongqing Friends High School 120 Anniversary Series, but the Friends High School History (Mao Baoquan, 2014) in the series is the crux of problem domain of school history research. The book can make our understand that Friends High School, as famous old school in China over 100 years, has basic condition of really famous historic school in China, which is long history of school-running and is unique.

Famous historic school is the school “that has good tradition of school-running, high quality management concept, advanced management level, excellent teachers and students, high enrollment rate, good social influence and popularity, relatively high parents’ satisfaction, and which many parents and students dream” (Luo Shitan, 2015). The definition of famous historic school, which educational history researcher gives, is neither scientific nor comprehensive, because it lost the history of school-running!

The Friends High School History divides school history of more than 120 years into four periods: 1) Friends school-running period, 2) Private Chongqing Friends High School period, 3) Chongqing Fifth High School period, 4) renaming renaissance period. School-running period when Chongqing Friends High School becomes famous historic school in China, is “Private Chongqing Friends High School period” rather than “Friends school-running period”, “Chongqing Fifth High School period” and “renaming renaissance period”. There are certainly school’s own efforts and special opportunity given by the times. The problem of school-founding time exist “Friends of society school-running period” which is weakly linked to core value orientation of school-running for school history research. It is inappropriate to make “friends of society school-running period” focus of school history research intentionally. It is completely untenable to need textual research on school-founding time simply, to emphasis on clearing the value goal of textual research (without school-running thought) for school history research. The fundamental reason is that discussion about school-founding time is not separable from the essence of school history research. Without value orientation, discussion about school-founding time is a school history activity that is just textual research for textual research’s sake. This is one of problem which famous historic school history research is mostly castigated in Chinese educational field at the moment. Why is it?

3. Understanding and Positioning Problems about Value Orientation of Famous Historic School History Research

Domestic researcher said that the lesson of unknown value goal of school history research is that one of the common characteristics of famous historic schools is to “have rich cultural heritage”, which is a school’s precious wealth. However, “improper understanding and positioning of value goal of famous historic school may bring a heavy burden.” (Wang Guofang, 2014). Because cultural inheritance of famous historic school must have a premise which is to understand history and culture of school clearly. On the basis of school-running, school rationally comb its own cultural history constantly, and at the same time properly

expand from the two aspects of thought and practice, so it is possible to inherit well. “Improper understanding and positioning of value goal of famous historic school may bring a heavy burden” may be the most realistic for researchers of history of Chongqing Friends High School with early experience of church school. It is a long-run task to consult, collect, sort out, research, publish, propagandize material of school history, and certainly it is also a purgatory-like and upgrade process that famous school’s cultural inheritance and development must go through in theoretically. Because famous school’s education history is not all about making people feel bright and decent.

When I read the first volume of General Chongqing History edited by Zhou Yong, I noticed famous historic school, “Friends High School”, which was firstly raised in the second part “Church’s Invasion and Its Characteristics” of the third section “Expansion of Foreign Church Power” of the second chapter “Invasion of Western Political Forces” of the second book (1876-1918). “When the western missionaries came to China, their religion and cultural activities were linked. Before Chongqing port-opening, there were only a few monasteries established by Catholicism, which trained religious clergy. Great changes took place after Chongqing port-opening. During this period, a large number of schools were established, which were dominated by imparting scientific culture and spreading western civilization. American Church established Qiuqing High School, Qiming primary school in Chongqing, and British Church established Friends High School, and French church established Chongqing French School. [...] Although the direct purpose of establishing schools, hospital, etc. by church is not to invade China, but to get closer to more Chinese in order to spread western religion. But for its objective effect, on the one hand, it plays a role in spreading science and civilization; on the other hand, it trains a group of slaves who serve for imperialist’s aggression. To reach that imperialist make overall thorough aggression against Chongqing, Sichuan, and adverse effects of foreign religion in history of Chongqing, Sichuan, I can’t help thinking that church cultural activities objectively belong to the part of imperialist’s aggression against China.” (Zhou Yong, 2014). In the above, there are not clearly pointed out the school-running time of famous church school in Chongqing. Because it is really not necessary to see the difference between the school-running time and the period of imperialist’s aggression from the national position.

From 1892 to 1918, it is a term of church school-running of Chongqing Friends High School. The first chapter of the Friends High School History is “the background of establishing Chongqing Friends High School”, which cites Brief History of the Communist Party of China that great man makes famous thesis on the subjective and objective role of imperialism’s economic aggression, and simply interpret that Chongqing port-opening really impact on Chongqing education development. It is sober, objective and scientific standpoint of value. It is because of collecting, reading and researching material of school history, that the author of the Friends High School History finds that the religious and cultural communication activities of foreign churches in China are actually very complicated in history. Chongqing Friends High School that is a British church

school established by Protestantism Friends, has close relations with Adam Davidson, Robert Davidson family. Subjective wish of school-running is more inclined to do charity education in international cultural exchange and fear, follow, practice educational law. In the period of Friends High School established, it is brewing up that Protestantism Friends don't care difficulties and obstacles of infrastructure projects start from scratch, inconvenient traffic that people cross river and climb mountain, sudden trouble of funds lack, etc., and insist on establishing school outside the mother city of Chongqing, where is under Wenfeng Pagoda in Zhenwu mountain of the Nanshan Scenic Area for today. The school motto of Friends High School, which was revised by President Yang Fangling, is "Going on a long journey, one must start from a short step, and climbing high, one must start from low" (行远自迩, 登高自卑). The school motto is a refinement of understanding of school-running law, a learner's consciousness of learning subject responsibility, and a deep admiration of President Yang for early school-running of Friends High School, which can be also realized at once.

When reading the preface to Kunming First Middle School History Preface, we deeply think and chew the words that "to pay attention to the compilation of school history is neither conformity to the public nor textual research which is just research for research's sake. The fundamental purpose of research is to seek school-running thought and educational thought of famous century-old school." (Zhao Candong, 2014). This is the most concise and comprehensive interpretation of value orientation of school history research, which is famous historic school Kunming First Middle School.

In a word, the advantage of famous historic school is real "history" of school-running. To summarize the advantage of Friends High School accurately is to seek formation process, shape, connotation characteristics, practical experience, internal vitality of "school-running thought and educational thought of famous century-old school" Friends High School in Chongqing. The internal vitality is that Friends High School adapt to the times and social changes, and constantly reflect the ontology law of education culture, and innovatively lead and promote the sustainable development of school. The explanation of "development situation of the period of Private Chongqing Friends High School" in the Friends High School History, I should say, largely reflect its famous process, especially formation process, characteristics and specific school-running experience of President Yang Fangling's educational thought. It is a special discussion activity which is away from the existed research production of century school history of Friends High School and hopes to be single-minded in textual research on the question whether Friends High School was established in 1892 or not. Can we really clear the value goal?

4. Draw Lessons from School History Research Path of Domestic Famous School with a Hundred Years of Cultural Inheritance

In the middle and later periods of the Anti-Japanese war, "Friends High School

reached heyday, and its education quality was excellent in comparison with 50 private middle schools in the urban area of Chongqing at that time. Chongqing Educational Journal records that ‘in order to encourage private middle school to run school in 1943, Chongqing Education Bureau selected the 8 excellent middle school such as Nankai High School, Friends High School, Qinghua middle school, Shuren middle school and so on, and after made the Compendium of Middle School Seminar and Organizational Rules again.’” (Mao Baoquan, 2014). In the later periods of the Anti-Japanese war, Chongqing’s selecting excellent middle school should not be educational circles’ dictatorial conduct. Since Chongqing was the wartime capital of the national government, government behavior of Chongqing Education Bureau had not only regional significance, but also national and international significance in special times in special region, which is well worthy of diligent thinking of Friends High School history researchers and other domestic researchers in famous historic school.

In recent years, the research of famous historic school history published a lot of high quality academic achievements around the country. “The common feature of famous historic schools is to have rich cultural heritage.” The rich cultural heritage of famous historic schools mainly benefit from its long history of spirit culture inheritance. School-running concept and educational thought of famous historic schools have generality as well as unique individuality. Chongqing Friends High School was born out of Friends church school and became one of the examples of national government’s education during the Anti-Japanese war, which can hardly do without the school’s vigorous culture inheritance. To propose and form school motto of Friends High School should be a core clue to its culture inheritance. In the period of Chongqing Fifth High School, the clue of culture inheritance was hidden in the practice of school-running according to the reason of history. It was just then that Friends High School’s main building (schoolhouse, auditorium, Yi Lan hall, democratic corridor, school gate, school clock, playground, etc.), library collection, natural landscape such as Wenfeng Pagoda, legends and so on retained the famous school’s historical and cultural tradition in a quiet way.

Experiences of school-running of famous historic schools often coexist with lessons. School history research often be so confusing. The cultural context of famous historic school is constant and has vitality of innovation and inheritance. So what is real form of the cultural context? How are we to know it? Researcher cautions that famous historic school’s historical and cultural tradition through the formation of long-term development is historical precipitation of school-running concept and educational thought, the school’s “soul”, and “spiritual home” which educational psychology of teachers and students may depend on. It has powerful functions of uniting the whole school so as to cohere as educational power. However, when famous historic school has cultural heritage which general school can’t be acquired, it should timely refine and establish the theme of school culture construction; otherwise, school culture construction can follow nothing, and then lose the soul of school existence and development.” (Zhao

Candong, 2014). What the researcher caution is to “lose the soul of school existence and development”, which actually is the famous historic school’s historical and cultural tradition gave up completely. In my opinion, Friends High School’s urgent matter of constructing system of school culture is not to construct system of institution, teaching and distinctive campus cultural activity, but to focus on “renaming renaissance period” of Friends High School, move with the times, identify cultural construction goal in accord with the core values of Chinese socialism, rely on the research of Yang Fangling’s educational thought, “refine and establish” cultural construction theme of Friends High School.

Perhaps, the research results of Shanghai famous historic school ten years ago are also worthy of careful study. The researchers in Shanghai cultural circle generally formulate “Shanghai famous historic school” as “Shanghai famous historic and cultural school”, emphasize creating condition of famous historic school in Shanghai, and summary its unique “historic and cultural” heritage. It is certainly worthy of careful study to Chongqing Friends High School history research now. Chongqing port-opening is almost 10 years later than Shanghai, but there are some similarities between the two cities about “climate” and “soil” of the birth of their famous historic schools. Before opening, they basically followed feudal imperial examination system to school-running; after opening, church school brought “new atmosphere, new style, new features” which Chinese traditional academy has never had, and in early time of opening, the first church school was possible to develop into a famous historical school. With the same period, some private school, which used modern educational idea of church school, taken cultural heritage as their own duty, and aimed at new learning value, later became famous historical school. Shanghai famous historic and cultural schools’ unique feature of school-running and effective practice of school management, which formed in history, are still alive today such as 1) “careful selecting of talented person of management as president”; 2) “clear goal of school-running and rigorous scholarship”; 3) “school curriculum with individuality”; 4) “practical teaching materials, light homework loads”; 5) “attaching importance to music, sports and art, focusing on balanced development, special vertical grouping in favor of student growth” and so on (Ma Lianfang, 2007). How similar it is to President Yang Fangling’s school-running experience elaborated in the book “the Friends High School History”! President Yang managed Chongqing Private Friends High School for 25 years.

To recap briefly, Chongqing Friends High School history research now draw lessons from school history research path, emphasize exploring school-running thought and educational thought of Friends High School, particularly creating condition of Friends High School in Chongqing and summary its unique historic and cultural heritage.

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