

# The Internationalization of University:

## From an Ethical Perspective

### INTERNATIONALISATION D'UNIVERSITE:

#### D'UNE PERSPECTIVE MORALE

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**Abstract:** The ethical spirit of Modern university is threefold. In the first place, due attention is paid to the educatee's development. Secondly, notice is paid of the advance of the society form establishing and leading the ethos, the time spirit and the social values. Thirdly and finally, it is concerned with the improvement of human civilization by creating knowledge, selecting knowledge, initiating knowledge and applying knowledge. From an ethical perspective, we could discover the five typical characteristics about the internationalization of university: culture exchanging, culture comprehending, accelerating common development, seeking harmonious development and creating the collective value to humankind. Meanwhile, we can find four negative factors to the ethical spirit of Modern university in the course of internationalization, that is, dissymmetry among international students fluxion, imbalance among international culture exchanges, asymmetry of world education market occupation and utilitarianism behavior.

**Key words:** university, ethics, internationalization

**Résumé:** L'esprit éthique d'université Moderne est triple. Premièrement, L'attention due est prêtée au développement des apprenants. Deuxièmement, L'attention due est prêtée aux avancées de la société de l'établissement et l'entraînement des ethos, à l'esprit d'espace et aus valeurs sociales. Troisièmement et dernièrement, l'évolution de la civilisation humaine est concernée par la création de connaissances, la sélection de connaissances, l'initiation de connaissances et l'application de connaissances. D'une Perspective morale, nous pouvons découvrir les 5 caractéristiques typiques sur l'internationalisation d'université: échanges culturelles, compréhension culturelle, accélération du développement commun, recherche du développement harmonieux et création des valeurs collectives pour l'être humain, ce qui nous permet de découvrir 4 facteurs négatifs à l'esprit éthique d'université Moderne au cours de l'internationalisation, soit, la dissymétrie parmi les élèves international students fluxion, déséquilibre parmi les échanges culturelles internationales, l'asymétrie du marché d'occupation éducation et des comportements de l'utilitarisme.

**Mots clés:** université, éthiques, internationalisation

## INTRODUCTION

At the agriculture age regarding land as the basic resource of development, the university is outside the society; at the industrial age regarding capital as the basic resource of development, the university is at the edge of the society and at the knowledge-based economy age regarding knowledge as fundamental resource of development, the university is in the center of society. Despite the fluxion of the university's

position, one controlling principle persists: the university always seeks the good and regards the good as it's vital value. With the appearance of the internationalization of the university in the 1960s'; it expanded its concern with the society from the national race to all mankind as a whole. These changes and the ethical characteristic hidden behind these changes are very illuminating and inspiring to the internationalization of university in china.

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## 2. THE ETHICAL SPIRIT OF UNIVERSITY

Far from serving a pure educational function, the university, as a social organization, becomes a symbol of culture and shoulders a broader function as to inherit, develop, study and create knowledge. The initial underlying function of the university lies in education, the targets of which are persons. Thus, the university has a more intimate connection with human culture.

Ethics, as a human-specific property, has an inextricable relationship with the human existence. By the role of reflection of human existence, ethics pays respect to personal choice of value in society and promotes the morals behavior about person and mankind by cogitating to them.

The university is the home town for the human spirit. From the Middle Ages up to today the spirit of the university always lies in the concern with the human beings and the society.

The university education fixes its attention on the unfolding, the opening and the growing of life and exhibits ethical concern to life by cultivating individual person and improving the quality of life. To reveal the human morals is the most important duty for the university education. By this duty University constructs the good and seeks the good. It also helps person to go after the value of life. With the freedom and liberation of humankind as its ultimate objective, the university education sings highly of the personal value, morals, and individual liberation and seeks the harmonious coexistence between humankind and nature. .

As the lighthouse in human spirit world, the university guides the time spirit and coagulates the ethos by introspection and critique on the realistic world. Also by this the university questions the value of life and society. Academy Studies and scholarly communications make university a learning headstream and university becomes the primary cradle and headspring for advanced culture. The first-class ideas, science and technology, philosophy are always produced, developed spread in the university. This, to certain extent, makes the university become the culture pioneer in society. The university spirit plays a significant role in guiding society, holding people together and agglomerating nation. Besides it brings positive influence to human on the thinking mode, ideas, values, and behavioral criterion.

University serves society directly with its intellectual and artistic products. Furthermore it could constantly bring up and transport excellent academicians for society who would transmit advanced culture and radiating ethos. The culture and value system formed by the University spirit has direct, indirect and ongoing significant influence on the spiritual values of the whole society and leads the direction of cultural and spirit building in society. All

this contributes to the content of national spirit forms a new one on the same pace to the time spirit. Just for these reasons the top-ranking universities always become the developmental sign in each country, for example, the Oxford and Cambridge colleges to Britain, the Berlin University to Germany, the Wisconsin thought and the Hopkins idea to U.S.A., the Beijing University and the May 4 spirit to China.

University carries out the developmental duty to human society by creating, selecting, inheriting and transferring, applying the knowledge and culture. Brubeck the United States higher education philosopher deemed there are two philosophic bases to university about its being: epistemological reason and political reason. University expresses rational thought to mankind by its duty towards knowledge. The knowledge's exploration leads human from unknown kingdom toward the known one continuously and human would gain the freedom and dignity in this course. The knowledge's exploring, filtering, inheriting, transferring and applying not only express the respect to human predecessors, the duty towards our offspring but also embody the moral duty, ethic cares and respect between generations. The knowledge's application is propitious to all generations; for one thing, it brings comfortable condition and environment to human in the present age for their survival and development rely on it, for another thing, it activates and opens out the knowledge's value and sums up rules and lessons about the knowledge's application, by grasping which the new generation's life would be better, happier and more brilliant.

Along with the mankind development, recognizing good, seeking good, insisting good and obeying good become the foremost element and the most basic value in the ethics spirit of university.

## 3. ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS ABOUT UNIVERSITY'S INTERNATIONALIZATION

The internationalization becomes the most remarkable phenomenon in the 21st century. It covers many fields just as politics, economy and culture etc. The most obvious characteristics of internationalization is across the race, the nation and the civilization. It requires every country to open up to the world and obey the rules which are recognized in the international community. By the acute competition and close cooperation as well, the international politics, economy and culture will be developed collaboratively.

The internationalization appears and develops due to the frequent international trade and economical cooperation. From the end of the 19th century, the capital surpassed the fence of one country to search market for development in the world, and till the end of

the 20th century it gains a very rapid development. Global economy interacts and blends in all aspect, for example resource allocation, production, circulation and consumption. Global economy becomes an organism that could not be dis severed. (Wu Yi-kang & Huang Ye, 1998)

An obvious feature about globalization of the world economy is the appearance of a series of international economy organizations, like WTO, the United Nations, World Bank and IMF. Besides United Nations and all kinds of consultation between governments, active non-government transnational organizations are playing an important role in economic sphere all over the world.

With the economic globalization, the spirit intercourse and products globalize too in the world countries. "All nations' intellectual and artistic products become public property. National one-sidedness and limitation could not exist today, so world literature is beginning to appear in many nationalities and in many areas." (1972) Every conceivable specialized organization about international education is coming forth endlessly. Bilateral and multilateral cooperation are on the increase. Higher educational internationalization and university internationalization become a new tendency.

There are many different viewpoints about higher educational internationalization and internationalization of university in academic fields. The main ideas include international contents within the course; international fluxion among the students and scholars who are connected with international training and research; international technical assistance and cooperation and international academical exchanges. (Zhao Zhong-jian, 2001)

By analyzing the internationalization of university as international social phenomena from the ethical view we can discover many important characteristics: cultural exchange, cultural comprehension, collaborative development, harmonious development and creation of shared values.

By careful observation and analysis of the world after cold war from a cultural view, Huntington found that global politics was reconstructed along with culture. The nation's standpoint and their standard in cold war have been changed sharply. Besides seeking for power and wealth, cultural partiality, cultural commonness and cultural difference can influence nation's behavior too. Greater cooperation formed between nations in politics and economy which have the affiliation in culture. International organizations that were established on the cultural common ground just as EU were more successful than the one which had the different culture. So Huntington drew a conclusion: Magisterial mode about political and economic development changes according to culture. Confrontation or cooperation on the national behalf lies on commonness or otherness in their culture. In future, international conflict would be coming from groups or nations which have culture clash.

(Huntington, 1998) On the one hand university is the main institution of a nation in culture innovating and culture coming down; on the other hand it is the guardian of national spirit and time spirit. For this reason it plays a particular role in accelerating cultural communion, cultural understanding and cultural comprehension between nations whose culture are different. To illustrate, "research center of Chinese-American culture" (founded by Nanjing University and Johns Hopkins University) is promoting communion and research effectively in national culture between China and U.S.A. Internationalization of university is a bridge to communion and learning between national cultures and world civilization.

Internationalization of university plays a very important role in bringing up persons with international knowledge and international eyeshot. It is an important means to higher education's modernization for all countries. It emphasizes the higher education opening up to the world, international academic exchanges and international academic cooperation. Their contents include more international intercourse about scholars and students between countries, more international communication about science, culture and technology between universities. As a result it would have more appealing effect on teaching, scientific research and international cooperation. In this course students would be edified by native traditional culture in university and at the same time learn other nations' advanced culture. This could help students to expand cultural visual field, form international eyeshot and shape global cultural idea as well. Furthermore, it could help students to learn languages, expressional capacities, international convenance, and knowledge which they would need in communicating with other nation's culture. Lastly it would accelerate world peace and development profoundly. Internationalization of university cultivates outstanding men for the future. Above all they love peace and they love nature. In short international higher education is the one that advocates international understanding and world comity. (Zhang Ying-qiang, 1999)

The final target about internationalization of university is to establish "peaceable culture" all over the world. In "peaceable culture" different cultures, values and beliefs would respect and accept each other. It would push the world to develop pacifically and jointly. Besides "international cooperation", "education of international comprehension" could promote the internationalization of university. It will be an important means for the internationalization of university. So some scholars say "Internationalization should be a new function for university in the era of knowledge economy". (Tang Yu-guang, 2000) Along with the global integration, negative factors, such as multinational production, criminal organization, drug ring and terrorist violence are also booming. International community faces more and more common, transnational problems. Some of them even influence

human survival, for example the gap between rich and poor, war and violence, accretion of population, drug crime, environmental deterioration, meager resources and major diseases etc. More expectations have been anchored to university to solve these cosmopolitan problems.

As the peak in the system of education, university is developing lushly through seeking esoteric knowledge, for instance innovating learning, tracking front line of the world culture, science and technology. Seeking for esoteric knowledge has no nation's borderline all through the ages. Cosmopolitan problems are objects for research in university. University undertakes social expectation and ethical duty by reason of it is an intellectual platform in human society. It has conditions to find means to researching and solving cosmopolitan problems. In line with information society and the era of global economy, it is a common understanding that knowledge and science should be shared by people all over the world. The internationalization of university indicates human's care to existence quality and common living environment. The essence of it is that human begin to seek better happiness and benefit about moral, religion, knowledge, rationality, technology and substance.

The internationalization of university is a kind of exchanges and cooperation across the race, the nation and the civilization in higher education. It is strengthening a new important trend about creating common value which is based on looking for wholeness and dependability in international community. "Generic consciousness" is consolidated among humankind today by this historic trend. World interest and cosmopolitan moral are coming into people's eyeshot. Association and cooperation among universities of different countries were expanded greatly both in extent and depth. The internationalization of university points to cultural understanding and mission about solving vital issues which associate with all human beings. This translates the possibility into reality that establishes a new relationship on sharing rights and creating value tougher between countries or different nations. The relationship would express general demand, essential intention and common will about mankind. It strikes deep roots among generic relation, generic nature and generic need.

#### **4. REFLECTION ABOUT INTERNATIONALIZATION OF UNIVERSITY FROM THE ETHICAL VIEW**

The internationalization of university is becoming an important trend in the development of world higher education. Education is a sort of transferring forms for human culture. It was diffused by language originally, and then it depended on letter, now it is making use of

computers. Today Education conquers the barrier of time and distance. As a result, knowledge and information can be spread abroad instantly. Attributable to the fourth new technological revolution, which arose in the 90's twentieth - century, globalization has been accelerated profoundly both in extent and depth. The revolution also pushes development of world economic globalization greatly. The demand of international talents and solutions about global problem is gathering along with the development of economic globalization. Foundation of virtual campus and university whose education depends on network opens the door to extension of international course. The internationalization of university might be developing faster and faster.

At the same time, according to the claim of WTO in *General agreement on service and trade*, its members must open national service market (include educational service) to the others step by step through stagewise negotiation. China has officially joined WTO in November, 2001. Since then China became a component in world trade market. Joining WTO means that China should participate in international economic, cultural cooperation and communion with a positive outlook. China must strive for survival in world market; development in international competition and cooperation through catching up the trend of international economic, cultural development.

It is very necessary that we should turn over to think about internationalization of university sharply from the ethical view because of challenges and circumstances which Chinese higher education might have to face. Joining WTO should bring a series of changes. Firstly, international course of high education will be pushed rapidly. Secondly, talented persons, knowledge and resources will flow impetuously. Thirdly, communion and cooperation about information and technique will be selected widely. Lastly, competition between nations and regions will become more intense.

The amount of the students studying abroad in 1980, relative to that of the 1960, rose from 245 thousand to 977 thousand. Till the end of 80's of the last century there were one million and 200 thousand people who went abroad for studying or learning. One million and 600 thousand foreign students were studying in 50 host countries in 1995. About two over three (66.4 percent) of them were centering at six countries: America (28.3 percent), Britain (12.3 percent), France (8.2 percent), Japan (3.4 percent), Russia (4.2 percent) and Germany (10.0 percent). Developing country was the main exporter of student. The first three continents in student sending were Asia (497 thousand and 8 hundred), Africa (197 thousand) and Latin America (87 thousand and 9 hundred). The main countries were China, Korea and India, Morocco, Nigeria, Mexico and Brazil. (Chen Yu-kun, 2001)

It will be observed from these figures that the transnational flow of academicians in world scale is

faster and faster. But some nations will be facing with challenge of running off in mental resources for a long time. It is caused by international fluxion of academicians. The asymmetry of international fluxion in Internationalization of university shows imbalance of cultural exchange between nations. Developed country is importer. On the contrary developing country is exporter in the fluxion. It goes against equity in cultural exchange, besides it obstructs the formation of "generic common value" between different nations. Developing country must cultivate its native stronger cultures by developing modern value of traditional culture. They should coordinate traditional culture and then to initiate the study of application and modernistic translation about traditional culture. Wholehearted support should be offered on policy and finance to competent specialists in joining international scholarly organizations. By this they would become international VIP and take a share in constituting rules of games about international scholarly organizations. They should also make native university more competitive in the world and help them qualify the standard of the best international universities. Through these methods, the transnational flow of academician in world scale will be brought into equilibrium gradually.

Internationalization of university and prescripts in WTO advanced the development of transnational higher education and modern media. The development enables university to run education in foreign countries and remote education. At present, the general trend of higher education is that developed country bases solely on exporting and developing country bases solely on importing. America is the supreme exporter of higher education in the world now. (Chen Yu-kun, 2001)

Education market, especially higher education market is facing with the danger of being carved up in developing country. If the imbalance of intelligence flow might cause asymmetry of cultural exchange between different nations, the imbalance of appropriation about native educational market would give birth to cultural hegemony likewise. As the center of intelligence and culture in society, university has very profound impact on society because the objects of education in university are the growing and unshaped lives. Opening branches in developing countries of universities in the developed country would bring profound influence to the former. The influence is greater than the one which is caused by students flow from developing country to developed country. Its culture and concept would melt into men's daily life in developing countries. This is a phenomenon of unidirectional influence in International cultural exchanges.

In the near future, it will happen in china, so we

should prepare countermeasure at the first opportunity. Active pushing Chinese university to enter orbit of international development is better than passive waiting for university of developed country's coming. Openness of our university should be strengthened at the present time. Following advice would be conducive to bring China's university more in line with developed country's university, for they are the feasible means for constructing top-ranking international university. Firstly, it is to establish educational idea, aim, content and the goal of training that faces the world. Secondly, it is to establish international courses. Thirdly, it is to retain excellent foreign educational management and administrative experts. They will accelerate the reform of Chinese university by their advanced educational ideas and educational thought. Fourthly, it is to invite high-class scholars from famous universities in the world with an open eyeshot and expansive mind.

Globalization of capital and market is filled with utility ration. Developing along with development of world economic globalization, internationalization of university is corroded and affected by utilitarianism ever and again, such as the false diploma, incursion of bad educational resources whose aim is only profit and economic income, fraudulent study abroad the purpose of which is to cheat reputation instead of mastering knowledge. All these are caused by instrumental rational defilading rational of value. Competition could not avoid in internationalization of university. Intention of the competition is to achieve cultural comprehension, cultural cooperation, cultural boom and cultural development. It also assumes responsibility of arousing attention about human common destiny and realizing ambition of harmonious coexistence and harmonious development between different nations and countries. These moral missions which are assumed by internationalization of university would not be realized if we indulge these utilitarian conducts.

As the center of multicultural exchange and multicultural blending in modern society, the modern university has a great responsibility in native culture exploitation, foreign culture introduction and culture innovation. If native culture inheriting and transmitting is a natural duty to university, introducing and importing distillate of foreign culture is an acquired mission to it. Internationalization of university helps people to establish globalization consciousness and international ideas. It could improve social opening up, and broaden cultural visual field to the members of society. Ultimately, it would promote universal comprehension and common value in the world. Therefore, human society would develop harmoniously and healthily with it.

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