

## Wu Mi's Educational Thoughts and Practice During the Period of the People's Republic of China (PRC)

LI Minyan<sup>[a],\*</sup>; CUI Yanqiang<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>[a]</sup>Ph.D. Candidate, Faculty of Education, Southwest University, Chongqing, China.

<sup>[b]</sup>Professor, Faculty of Education, Southwest University, Chongqing, China.

\*Corresponding author.

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### Abstract

As an educator who regarded education as his life, Wu Mi made a great contribution to the development of the education of new China. This paper lays emphasis on the investigation of Wu Mi's educational practice during the period of PRC, as well as on the expounding of the quintessence of Wu Mi's educational practice and thoughts in allusion to then situation of education through reading up historical materials.

**Key words:** Wu Mi; Educational thoughts; Educational practice

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### INTRODUCTION

In educational circles, research on educational thoughts has been done endlessly by educators, including presidents and academic deans of colleges and universities who once took executive positions in educational circles, as well as education officials who once worked in governmental agencies. The contributions to China's education made by these elites can never be denied; but meanwhile, those educators who stick to their teaching posts silently also have pondered over the overall planning and the development trend of China's

education and have endeavored to apply their rational thinking in teaching practice; with their wisdom, they have promoted the development of China's education. Wu Mi belongs to such a kind of educator. During the period of the Republic of China, he engaged himself in the preservation of China's traditional culture and made a great contribution to the establishment of China's comparative literature. Besides, he cultivated several dozens of scholars who were knowledgeable, had a thorough knowledge of both China and the West and owned high moral character such as Qian Zhongshu<sup>1</sup>, Wu Qichang<sup>2</sup>, Ji Xianlin<sup>3</sup> for China; Wu Mi's role in the establishment and development of China's contemporary academy can never be overlooked.

Wu Mi (1894-1978), whose personal name was Yuseng and who was from Jingyang, Shannxi, west China, was a classical scholar and educator who was knowledgeable and had a thorough knowledge of both China and the West. In his lifetime, he concentrated on pursuing knowledge and was tireless in teaching, striving to spread all his knowledge and the thoughts of Chinese traditional culture in university campuses and the position where culture is spread on his own. He once worked in 12 universities in twelve colleges and universities as a

<sup>1</sup>Qian, Z. S. (1910-1998). A famous writer and researcher on China's literature of modern China, who once scored an achievement in ancient Chinese poems and lyrics and language and culture, with *Fortress Besieged*, *Notes on Literature and Art* and *Limited Views: Essays on Ideas and Letters* as his master works.

<sup>2</sup>Wu, Q. C. (1904-1944). A famous literary historian in China, who wrote a lot and did scholarly research in his lifetime extensively, with *A Study on Zhi Xi's Works*, *Yinxv Shuqi Jiegu* and *the Academic History of Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties* as his main works.

<sup>3</sup>Ji. X. L. (1911-2009). A famous linguist, classical scholar, Buddhist scholar, historian, educator and social activist in China, as well as an internationally-famous master of Orientalism, with *Analects of India's Ancient Language*, *Collation and Annotation on "Journey to the West in the Great Tang Dynasty"*, *A History of the Oriental Literature and A Research on the Oriental Culture* as his main works.

teacher, and once worked in colleges and universities as a part-time teacher. In April, 1949, accompanied with the rumbling sound of firecrackers in Wuhan, Hubei, central China, Mr. Wu Mi, who was 50 years old then, left Wuhan and arrived at Chongqing, Southwest China at the same night, thus opening his new chapter during the period of PRC and devoting his last 28 years in his lifetime to the education in the southwestern area. After arriving at Chongqing, he once worked in Mianren Faculty of Literature, Xianghui College, Chongqing University, Chengdu Normal University and so forth successively as a teacher. At last, he stopped over Southwest Normal University to teach there, cultivating numerous education talents for the southwestern region. Of course, he could not avoid the tide of the revolution that swept turbulently when he devoted himself to the education of new China after China's liberation. The nation's interference with and pressure on education provoked Wu Mi's sensitive nerves time and again, making him tread on eggs when he was in his new post. Different cultural identities and educational concepts made Wu Mi go far gradually away from the policies of new China. In the end, he became a firm and persistent bronze statue, with the dignity of a scholar, standing in the world and guarding traditional culture, for which he had a passion.

## 1. WU MI'S EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE DURING THE PERIOD OF PRC

Before China's liberation, Wu Mi realized his own ideals of education through lecture rooms in colleges and universities and academic circles. Similar to his education experience before China's liberation, Wu Mi's education in China was also conducted through two aspects, namely lecture rooms in colleges and universities and giving lessons privately. He devoted his energy, which was limited, to the cultivation of education talents for the country, without reservation. In his last 28 years, Wu Mi imparted his methods of scholarly research and academic viewpoints to the studious students who aspired to preserve Chinese classic culture and make contributions to the education of the PRC.

### 1.1 Joys and Sorrows in the Lecture Rooms in Colleges and Universities

The lecture room in colleges and universities is a position which Wu Mi had stuck to for several dozens of years. Valuing education, he thought that the function of education lied not only in disseminating culture and continuing civilization, but also in the cultivation of "human", which was an achievement that should be scored throughout the ages. Wu Mi's arrival at Chongqing was the time when many things waited to be done in China. At first, Wu Mi worked as a professor in Xianghui College and Mianren Faculty of Literature, where Wu Mi got small amount of salary and "enjoyed poor board and

lodging" (Wu, 2006, Vol.1, p.11) for both the two schools were private schools, which were short of money. Thus he led an unprecedentedly uptight life there. In October, he gave lectures in privately-run Baiwu Faculty of Literature in Baisha County, Hunan Province. Later, through the introduction of Professor Shao Zuping, he was employed by Zhang Hongyuan, principal of Chongqing University to work as a part-time professor in the Foreign Languages Department of Chongqing University, where he taught "Europe's History of Literature" and "British Novels". Since April, 1950, Wu Mi worked as a full-time professor in Chengdu Normal University, where he taught "Selected British Prose" to the freshmen and "The World's History of Literature" to the sophomores and the juniors and worked as a part-time professor in Chongqing University; meanwhile, he taught as a volunteer teacher in Xianghui College and Mianwen Faculty of Literature. In October, 1950, Chengdu Normal University and National Women's Teachers College were merged into Southwest Normal College, where Wu Mi still worked as a professor in the Department of Foreign Languages of the new college. Since then, Wu Mi's life, career and even his own life was tied closely to Southwest Normal College.

Wu Mi once taught in the Department of Foreign Languages, the Department of History and the Department of Chinese Language and Literature successively in Southwest Normal College. During this period, the amount and the span of the courses he opened were striking, which sufficiently indicated his solid foundation of the studies of Chinese ancient civilization as well as his familiarity with Western culture. In the Department of Foreign Languages, he taught History of British Literature and Selected British Prose. In 1953, Soviet pattern was popularized nationwide at top speed; China learns from Soviet in aspects such as economy, military affairs, education and so forth. Under the policy of "leaning to one side", Russia took the place of English in China, and the Department of Chinese Language and Literature of the college abolished English and opened and gave priority to the course of Russian. Although Wu Mi had a good command of English, French, German and Latin, he had no knowledge of Russian. Therefore, Wu Mi indeed had no lessons to give the Department of Chinese Language and Literature then. He, who regarded teaching as living motivation, formally applied to teach in the Department of History of Southwest Normal College at that time, teaching the compulsory course "The World's Ancient and Medieval History" to the freshmen of the Department of History and the sophomores of junior colleges. Later, he taught Ancient History of the World to the junior and senior students of the Department of History; these students were from other departments originally and changed their majors later. In October, 1954, the Department of History organized a group to do research in the teaching of the world's ancient times and the Medieval Period;

Wu Mi acted as the group's leader till 1958. The courses of this teaching and research group included "Ancient History of the World", "Medieval History of the World" and "Ancient and Medieval History of the World". For the meantime, Wu Mi organized the group to hold a regular meeting every week, in which he, together with the teachers inside the group, wrote teaching materials, discussed courses' arrangement, investigated students and did other things related to teaching. During the school year between 1956 and 1957, Wu Mi, though in the Department of History, he indeed gave no lessons in the whole year. Since 1957, Wu Mi taught the optional course "World Literature" to the junior and senior students of the Department of History, opened the course of "Foreign Literature" for the Department of Chinese Language and Literature, and taught "Selected Readings in the World's Famous Literary Work" and "The World's History of Literature" to the teachers who were in the class for further studies. In October, 1958, because of the "Great Leap Forward" in the educational circles, because a large number of students dropped courses, and because the young teaching assistants marginalized him, Wu Mi had no lessons to give the Department of History. What's worse, the young teachers interfered with his teaching and academic business compulsively; having lost the freedom on teaching, he could not endure these pressure and oppression, and was permitted to turn to work in the Department of Chinese Language and Literature after his repeated requirements. In the Department of Chinese Language and Literature, Wu Mi mainly taught Foreign Literature and An Introduction to Writings in Classical Chinese, and taught Selected Readings in Classical Literature Works to junior students by taking the place of Mr. Zheng Siyu, who fell ill then; besides, he also took charge of the work of annotating Selected Classical Literature Works and the work of educational reform. In the end of 1962 when the college enrolled advanced student, Wu Mi concentrated his energy on the cultivation of the teachers who aspired after further studies on foreign literature, opening courses such as Selected Readings in Classical Literature Works, A Global History, English, The World's Famous Literary Work, for advanced students; among these courses only English was a required course and all other courses were opened by Wu Mi as a tutor for his advanced students; in addition, Wu Mi taught Jiang Jiajun alone Latin, French and German. In 1964 when the socialist education movement began, Wu Mi was told that he needed not teach in this school year, during which time, he just gave two specialist lectures (four hours in total) to all the young teachers of the Department of Chinese Language and Literature. Since then, Mr. Wu Mi, who regarded teaching as a part of his life, had never stepped on platforms to give lessons any more.

## 1.2 Teaching Students Privately

As an educator, Wu Mi's zeal in teaching was always incomprehensible to ordinary people. Unlike Chen Yinke, who secluded himself from the world negatively, Wu Mi took the utmost care to give guidance on several dozens of students in both learning and morality in his study after China's liberation. Unwilling to accept the fact that the sagacious thoughts, culture and education and characters of our country's ancestors had annihilated with the wind, he tried to carry forward "the broad benevolence of religions, the truth of morality, the instructions of the ancient philosophy of Western countries and the grace of Confucianism" (Wu, 2006, Vol.1, p.119) though teaching these students to contend against the stereotyped lectures on decrees in colleges and universities. He desired that he could finish a classic work researching the culture of Confucianism and Taoism while giving lessons to his disciples, and hoped that he could find a person who could impart the cultural essence he mastered, in case that the culture of Confucianism and Taoism that had been handed down for more than two thousand years would perish from the hands of the people of this generation.

Though Wu Mi's residence in Southwest Normal College was narrow and small, it was still called at by some students, like the Tengying Hesheng Lodge (Chinese: 藤影荷声之馆; meaning a lodge where there were shadow of vines and sound of Lotus) inside Tsinghua University. Wu Mi accepted any student who was industrious, studious and right-minded. Most of these students have a certain foundation of the studies of Chinese ancient civilization, and desired to learn "all aspects of the knowledge of China" (Wu, 2006, Vol.2, p.26) by taking Wu Mi as their master. Treating these students as his bosom friends, he never put on the airs of a professor, but discussed academy and love amiably and equally with them; he often recalled his experience in his youth and gave them directions aimed at their doubts. Wu Mi imparted the methods of doing scholarly research to them, and taught the students in accordance with their aptitude. He was strict and responsible for his teaching. With regard to the students who had a weak foundation and who entreated him to teach them English, he always took great pains, without feeling bored, to teach them from pronunciation, which is the most basic knowledge of a language, with an aim to lay a solid foundation for the students. He always opened his door wide for learners. Be the learners rich or poor, they could always receive directions from him as long as they could concentrate on studying wholeheartedly, were fond of literature, were keen on ancient Chinese prose, or were enthusiastic about learning English.

Through communicating with his students, Wu Mi knew their cultural attainment and hobbies very well, according to which, he shared what he learned, what he felt, what he read, what he heard and what he thought about as well as his direct or indirect life experience in his lifetime with his students, in expectation that these

could benefit them to some extent. Having transcending basic cultural knowledge, his teaching also included the humanistic care he gave the young generation and the spiritual influence he exerted on them. Wu Mi demanded that his students should form a good life habit, that they should devote their mind to what they do, that they should learn what they were interested in after they finished the political learning and did the labour service required by the unit, and that they should positively fulfill various work required by the school so as to achieve excellent results, only after which should they develop their own interests. Wu Mi taught them that as a young generation, they should establish ambitious ideals, and that they should make large-scale and across-the-board plans on their life and academy, and should not waste their life in trifles muddle headedly. As to conducting themselves and handling affairs, Wu Mi required that they should be kind-hearted persons of integrity, and should not deceive others or be conceited, that they should avoid indulging in empty talk, and that they should maintain their independent and noble and unsullied personality, so as to stand proudly in the world. He reminded his students that they should check erroneous ideas at the outset, be cautious and meticulous, come down to earth, and realize the goals step by step, and could not build castles in the air.

## 2. THE FACTORS INFLUENCING THE FORMATION OF WU MI'S EDUCATIONAL THOUGHTS

The period from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to early 20<sup>th</sup> century was a crucial transition stage for China's higher education to transform from the model of traditional Imperial College (in feudal China) to modern colleging system. During this period, universities and various technical colleges were established from place to place; and they cultivated a multitude of excellent talents for China. Meanwhile, the providers and the educators were fumbling and fighting in educational practice; according to the political and economic status in quo, and on the basis of combining China's traditional school-running model and the advanced school-running experience and educational concepts of foreign countries, they formed innovative and closely linked school-running concepts and educational thoughts. And Wu Mi, who was once bathed in the breeze of Western style higher education, formed a particular set of thoughts on higher education naturally under his special education background.

### 2.1 Foundation of Profound Learning Inherited by the Family

Born in a feudal family, Wu Mi was nurtured by traditional Chinese literature and since childhood. He lived in a period when the feudal dynasty was declining and democracy was arising. At that time, under the

background of reform, great changes took place in economics, politics and thoughts in the society of China. Thus, it was inevitable for a new ideological trend to exert influence on him. When young, Wu Mi once studied in the old-style private school, where he receive the old type education on the Three Cardinal Guides and the Five Constant Virtues and on The Four Books (*The Great Learning, The Doctrine of the Mean, The Confucian Analects, and The Works of Mencius*) and The Five Classics (*The Book of Songs, The Book of History, The Book of Changes, The Book of Rites and The Spring and Autumn Annals*); therefore, concepts such as obtaining knowledge by investigation of things, maintaining an upright heart and cultivating one's moral character took a deep root in his heart. Besides, his father Zhong Qigong was often out throughout the year, and subscribed to many kinds of cutting-edge magazines such as *New Novels*, a monthly magazine, *Shanghai Pictorial*, and *Xinmin Series Newspaper*, as well as some newly-published novels such as *Deep Hatred, Odd Things Witnessed Over Twenty Years, The Travels of Lao Ts'an*, "Exposure of the Official World" and so forth, all of which exert a subtle influence on Wu Mi's spiritual growth. After being admitted to Shaanxi Hongdao Tertiary School, Wu Mi received Japan-style education there; teachers from Japan implemented militarized management on them, and many teachers who upheld new learning also had a certain effect of enlightenment on them. The knowledge Wu Mi acquired at this time was mixed with that was new and that was old. New learning and old learning, Chinese and foreign languages, tradition and modernity, and Western knowledge and Oriental knowledge overwhelmed him without his defence, which made him immersed in China's doctrines of Confucius and Mencius and the enlightenment of Western culture. After being admitted to Tsinghua University, Wu Mi spent six years in this university, where most educational systems, teaching materials and teachers were from America, during which time, he received the education of standard Western learning. And it was in this university that his thoughts and characters developed unceasingly and that he grew into an ambitious youth.

### 2.2 The Influence of School Education

Wu Mi's whole lifetime spanned three periods, namely the late Qing Dynasty (1616-1912), the Republic of China (1912-1949) and the PRC. His whole life was inundated with national chaos caused by war and political unrest. In the meantime, he lived in an age when "old learning" was declining and Western civilization was being introduced into China, and was becoming increasingly popular. What he faced was not only dynasties' change, but also an age when Chinese traditional culture was undergoing bold changes under the influence of the world's civilization. What he received was the education mixed up with traditional elements and Western elements;

he was influenced by traditional Confucianism as well as Western style modern schools. In his childhood, he was enlightened by the successors of the Guan school (a school of Neo-Confucianism), and later he was admitted to Tsinghua University, a preparatory school for students to study in America.

In September, 1917, Wu Mi, who was pretty ambitious then, finally landed at the opposite bank of China, for which he had earnestly longed for, and thus he started a new learning life. When studying in Virginia University, he laid a solid root of literature and history for himself, which to a great extent laid his academic foundation and expanded his academic horizon. And when studying in Harvard University, he made the acquaintance of persons such as Mei Guangdi, Chen Yinke and Tang Yongtong, who became his intimate friends and exerted a deep influence on his life. Every day after attending regular classes, they learned from one another mutually, and thus these friends had a far-reaching influence on Wu Mi. Recommended by Mei Guangdi, Wu Mi formally acknowledged Professor Bai Bide as his master, who was a leader of the literary criticism movement aimed at America's New Humanism? Under the influence of Bai Bide, Wu Mi seemed to see the hope of carrying forward Confucianism. He accepted some propositions advocated by Bai Bide on philosophy of life, educational concepts and literature theories. Thus he realized the inheritance and mutual intelligibility of the cultures of at all times and in all over the world, and that to save China from subjugation and ensure its survival, Chinese must penetrate into Chinese and Western cultures, assimilate the quintessence thereinto and then put the quintessence into practice.

I can be said that Wu Mi's reception of instruction was closely related to the declining of traditional education in modern times, and he realized deep that in current China, what was most fashionable and popular was not the traditional education of Confucian ideology. And that traditional education and Confucian culture, which were deep-rooted in the minds of Chinese, was faced with great crises. It was beyond doubt that the New Culture Movement (around the time of the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement in 1919) in the ascendant pushed Confucianism to the margin of academy. New humanists took up the position of academy, while most of the outstanding students "were unwilling to learn literature and history or do scholarly research, but wanted to learn subjects that were called practical, so as to engage in patriot movements and do service the society" (Wu, 1999, p.53). However, during the two years when he studied with Bai Bide as his master, he was influenced by new humanism, and realized profoundly the importance of inheriting and carrying forward traditional culture. Wu Mi was clearly aware that "once the quintessence of Chinese culture is lost, it would impossibly be recovered after dynasties' change. And once the characters are destroyed, throughout the country

will not be able to express their ideas. If things go on like this, the nation will be in peril."<sup>4</sup> It can be said that it was these factors that prompted Wu Mi to advocate that "the quintessence of Chinese culture must be carried forward and Chinese and Western cultures must be integrated" and to call for traditional culture education.

### 3. WU MI'S EDUCATIONAL THOUGHTS

After China's liberation, Chinese universities, in light of the command of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), followed the example of Soviet, set up some majors and set up academic departments according to these majors, making every subject more professionalized and more practical. Such a kind of reform went against "well-informed and refined" education, which was advocated and pursued unceasingly by Wu Mi and his cotemporary educators in their early years. He got so angry that he put forward his advice in different levels of meetings; it was a pity that Wu Mi's sincere advice was an adverse current, which was regarded as an irresponsible act of sabotage to socialist construction. The department where Wu Mi was in was also revising content such as the teaching programme according to national requirements, aimed at which, Wu Mi put forward many counter advice, to which the teachers of the department attached no importance. Wu Mi exclaimed that "Today's education and literature, publicity of knowledge and politics and orders had been more and more incorrect and vague and general after being revised, which would stop only when China's characters were rooted out by the world's civilization." (Wu, 2006, Vol.4, p.20)

#### 3.1 The Education Purposes of Universities and Colleges

In the eyes of Wu Mi, higher education was totally different from secondary education and vocational education. Secondary schools are to teach students basic knowledge; they are preparatory schools for universities and colleges. Vocational schools are technical schools that are established for the cultivation of students of specific professions. However, universities are not technical colleges, not even vocational schools, but academic institutions that bring up people who have great learning; they lay emphasis on the research of profound academy and on the digestion of the knowledge of relevant departments. The purpose of universities lies in the cultivation of all-round persons who "have extensive learning and can extract the essence", who enjoy high humanistic quality, and who can apply their knowledge freely in the vast sea of learning, but not "vocational" or "technical" talents. In universities, fundamental knowledge such as natural science, philosophy and classic studies of Chinese ancient civilization should be imparted.

<sup>4</sup> Wu, M. (1922). On the New Culture Movement (4<sup>th</sup>).

In learning, we should master a universal method of academic research, and we should explore the rule and theory of everything we learn, with an aim to acquire “flexible knowledge”, which is impartial. The talents that universities cultivate are well-informed and refined cultural workers, who should, in terms of knowledge, have a wide scope of knowledge and be able to do research on profound knowledge, and who should, in terms of personality, have great ambition and elegant inclination. From his point of view, the acquisition of knowledge is the premise of human beings’ integral elevation, and persons who are well-informed and refined are bound to realize the improvement of their cultural quality, and reach an elegant state. A wide scope of knowledge just represents the external energy of education, while elegant inclination based on a wide scope of knowledge is the internal energy and manifestation of education. Even a teacher-training school should impart extensive, profound and elegant knowledge. Only the young people who have been trained like this are qualified to teach in platforms like persons such as Qian Zhongshu, Ji Xianlin. Knowledge is not isolated; all knowledge is related inherently. Wu Mi held that it was extremely wrong for an undergraduate who was going to be a teacher to just study the teaching materials of secondary schools so as to adapt to his future teaching work. Not only should he learn the textbooks, but also he should at least have a thorough knowledge of the cultural and historical background of his own country and foreign countries and should read more ancient and modern masterworks with an aim to increase his knowledge and improve his temperament and broaden his horizon. Graduates who abandon the learning of other knowledge will be unqualified to shoulder his future teaching work.

### **3.2 One of the Tasks of Universities Is the Inheritance of Human Culture**

In a letter written by Wu Mi to Li Bingning, his follower as well as his friend, he warned him of two things. The first thing was that though Western literature got the brush-off at present, like useless knowledge, but “all the knowledge we acquire in our lifetime is really of worth...we should be confident and treasure what we have learned. In some day when the government has time to give consideration to this, ordinary people will make progress in culture and this kind of knowledge will be bound to attract attention. Therefore, at the time of dynasties’ change, we should preserve what we learn with patience and seek to make progress every now and then, in an effort to render service to repay the government and the people.” (Wu, 2011, p.370) The second thing was that Chinese classical culture was underappreciated then, and ancient books and records had been destroyed by burning or sold out as waste paper. “No people is willing to preserve or purchase books on Western literature, philosophy and the science of history. However, at some

day when the present ethos disappears, the government and the people will certainly seek these kinds of books, and men of letters must regard them as treasure.” (Wu, 2011, p.370) We can imagine the degree to which Wu Mi felt distressed at the destruction of ancient books in that age and worried about the breakage of Chinese traditional culture. Wu Mi knew clearly the grace of Chinese characters and profundity of Chinese culture, and he firmly believed that the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius were good remedies to save China. Therefore, he hoped that universities were the places to preserve and carry forward human beings’ spiritual culture heritage. He thought that it was not enough for China to cultivate persons who could adapt to the development of the age, who have much knowledge and who can devote themselves to national construction; while seeking development, the nation could not just look forward blindly, and abandon the excellent culture accumulated in its long history. Therefore, we need universities to fulfill the function of preserving and inheriting culture. Just like what the philosophical thoughts of philosopher such as Socrates and Plato and the cultural works popular in the world is the spiritual wealth of the whole world, the works, thoughts and the classic culture accumulated through thousands of years are China’s glorious moral, religious and cultural heritage. And the most reliable institutions that can preserve and carry forward these heritages are. Academic institutions like institutions of higher learning. Hence, he fell into a great rage when he got from newspaper the news that the State Council would implement the policy of employing pinyin [formally Hanyu Pinyin (汉语拼音), the official phonetic system for transcribing the Mandarin pronunciations of Chinese characters into the Latin alphabet in China and Singapore] instead of Chinese characters; he even argued about this with others in meetings time and again. Wu Mi talked with Xiao Ruihua on the advantages of Chinese characters over Western words, and he thought that if the reform committee of Chinese characters carried out simplified Chinese characters compulsively, and took latinized pinyin as the ultimate goal, “the whole Chinese culture will perish as a result of the extinction of Chinese characters!” (Wu, 2006, Vol.2, p.137) When the State Council changed the names of various provinces and counties into those with little strokes, he thought that “today’s rulers of the country act willfully on everything without any idea of history; they are unaware that the names of mountains and river and prefectures and counties are tied up with ancient and modern academic culture, so once they are changed, they will become confusing, beyond people’s comprehension and textual research, and what’s worse, Chinese people’s feelings would have nothing to rely on, for once the old names are abandoned, though we still live in China, are we just like barbaric negroes in Africa?” (Wu, 2006, Vol. 6, p.332)

And Wu Mi thought that though the written form of modern Chinese could be popular and he appreciated those novels and new poems in such a form, writings in classical Chinese and complex Chinese characters could never be discarded due to the popularity of the written form of modern Chinese, for writings in classical Chinese are not lifeless characters, but the carrier of Chinese spiritual culture, and they have general value, like general English words, which are used both in newspaper and business. Besides, he thought that reading is to read the sublime words with deep meaning revealed between the lines in books, and to experience our ancestors' different thinking in life, in the society, in the nation and in the politics. Wu Mi thought that classic ancient books and records are the crystallization of the spiritual culture of scholars of the past, which recorded the political and humanist ideals of the philosophers and the historic changes of ancient China, and "the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius are really the standard of politics and education, as well as the good remedy to everything" (Wu, 2006, Vol. 3, p.307), which are of great pedagogical meaning to later generations and which should be understood by all the citizens of our country, especially the students who major in literature, history and philosophy in universities. Therefore, he advocated that "classical Chinese should never be abolished, and classic works must be read". He felt deeply worried that Chinese would be unable to read books and documents written in classic Chinese such as *The Records of the Grand Historian* and *The Book of Songs* after tens of years as a result of the popularity of the written form of modern Chinese. And the one and only method of succeeding ancient books and classics is employing old professors who are erudite and informed, and encouraging them to impart all they learn in their lifetime to students who cry piteously for knowledge, for "at present scholars and teachers left by the dynasty who have both Chinese and Western knowledge, new and old knowledge are available and they should be paid for teaching. After some years, the sources will be cut off, and there will be no more models, at the time of which, we have nothing to do but practice paces and shibboleth; at that time, we will not know what is the so-called education and knowledge?" Although Wu Mi was regarded as a conservative because he was carrying forward classical culture, he "knew clearly the value of the essence and treasure (spirit and material) of the civilization at all times and in all over the world, and wanted to preserve it at any country and in any age, to the benefit of the world and human beings, but not myself." (Wu, 2006, Vol. 1, p.352)

### 3.3 "Tutorial System" Should Be Employed in the Cultivation of Postgraduates

Wu Mi also aired his opinions during his participation in the cultivation of postgraduates and young teachers. Since September 1961, Wu Mi acted as the full-time tutor of persons like Zeng Wanfeng and Jiang Jiajun, during

which time; he took the initiative to perform his duties, prepare lessons, give lessons and correct homework with care and caution, and required their students to be earnest in their learning. At that time, the school stipulated that all the postgraduates must graduate in three years, and laid emphasis on the fundamental training of their majors. In addition, according to the policy of the Ministry of Education, the school, to increase the postgraduates' knowledge and improve their teaching level, arranged a multitude of courses for them, with the result that the postgraduates had no time to study by them and do self-examination. On the basis of his own learning and teaching experience, he put forward some advice to improve the situation.

First of all, in terms of enrolling postgraduates, the school should enroll those college graduates with some academic foundation, for only such a kind of student can benefit from the road of doing research on profound learning. Secondly, he thought that the purpose of cultivating postgraduates is to improve their capability for scientific research, and to train their researching thought while increasing their knowledge; it is very necessary to give them time to study by themselves and do self-examination. In the course of "Selected Readings in Writings in Classical Chinese", he "criticized that postgraduates should not have too many classes, and they should do research freely; they should not do too many plans, but should do 'self-examination' frequently." (Wu, 2006, Vol. 6, ed., p.210) He called for the imitation of the cultivating system of ancient schools. In a symposium attended by nine aged teachers, who were specially invited by the general Party branch of the Department of Chinese Language and Literature, Wu Mi "reiterated the tutor system that I desired, slightly like that of Oxford, and the whole teaching faculty of the Department of Chinese Language and Literature should be subdivided to acts as tutors to give instructions to students." (Wu, 2006, Vol. 1, p.220)

It is more right to do this on postgraduates. He thought that to cultivate excellent postgraduates better, the school should make the students choose some professor as their tutor freely according to their own interests and academic foundation. In terms of their methods of research, they should lay emphasis on self-study, and the function of professors lies not in giving lessons, but in giving instructions to students. Professors should help students to choose their research directions according to their hobbies and interests and to do thinking training; the students and the professors should converse freely. But professors should not just be the machines that infuse knowledge, but should fulfill the function of enlightenment during students' learning process; they should give instructions to them according to the students' research interests, should schedule cultivation for them, should introduce the books they should read to them, should systematically

impart what they have learned to students so as to strengthen their academic foundation, and should give comprehensive and well-organized instruction on their learning methods.

### **3.4 Teaching Freedom Should Be Respected and Educational Independence Should Be Guaranteed**

Wu Mi often complained in his diary that educational problems and even everything of the country, be it of small or great importance, must be dealt with according to the standard of Soviet; both students and teachers were measured by a uniform standard, the textbooks could only take the books translated by Soviet as models, and the teaching materials from Soviet, be they high or low quality, suited for China's teaching or not, were regarded as reference materials after they were translated into Chinese and were taken as the chief source for formulating China's textbooks and teaching programs. Thus, China's traditional characters and books were abandoned. In addition to this, Wu Mi was often forced to fill in the forms issued from various institutions and schools, at which he felt deep distressed; he thought that it was not a difficulty for him to teach and handle affairs in such an age, and what vexed him deep was that he needed to make various trivial plans, and accept the narrow examination from the outside world. To Wu Mi, all of these were things taking a lot of trouble and needing great efforts, which affected his teaching life severely and made him suffer unspeakably.

The Department of History, which Wu Mi was working in, organized several teaching research groups. These groups had meetings regularly and discussed about teaching content; they made teaching programs together, and were responsible for the cultivation of young teachers and teaching assistants; class hours were determined by the teachers inside the group together through discussion and the preparation of lessons were supervised by young teaching assistants. Such kinds of practice could guarantee that every teacher gave lessons according to the teaching program of every major. What's more, the teachers could exchange experience during the meetings, could popularize new teaching methods, could conduct mutual criticism and authentication, could lead on research work and could cultivate postgraduates and young teachers, who lacked teaching experience. However, where there are advantages, there are also disadvantages. These practices limited the teachers' freedom of giving lessons and working enthusiasm. The young teaching assistants followed closely the national policies, and were ready to accept the stipulation of Soviet pattern, having no right to speak in their teaching. What's worse, the aged professors who were of noble character and high prestige and who had more solid academic foundation were marginalized, and were sometimes required to reflect in classes whether they had given lessons with the viewpoints of historical

materialism and class viewpoints, whether displayed viewpoint of bourgeoisie, whether they stood up for scientific truths, and whether they criticized old history etc. The pressure from the teaching assistant, the students and the school made Wu Mi cry to heaven: When he read the teaching opinions from the students, "I burst into anger after reading these. There seemed to be two millstones crushing my body, one above my body and the other beneath it; stranded between them, I could not run for my life."

Wu Mi could not act on his own in the teaching content and methods; coerced by two persons whose names were Fu and Xing respectively, he received absolutely their instruction, just like the mules pulling a cart are dragged by spiral shells with three tips, making the cart run in disorder.

Wu Mi could not help but apply to resign the post as a main lecturer; however, "the dean just no allowed this, and ordered that Wu Mi must be the main lecturer." (Wu, 2006, Vol. 2, pp.318-320)

Thus, while the nation lost the autonomous right in education, the teachers lost their freedom in their teaching, and the students lost the freedom to learn. "Taking Soviet as the standard, all have broken away from characters and books. Alas, how can 'academy' exist? And how can 'education' exist?" (Wu, 2006, Vol. 2, pp.286) He was frank to say that in his own academic ideas, there are things that can be changed as well as things that cannot be changed in any case, and he would not yield to change those ideas that he was unwilling to change even he was killed. If he could not give lessons without changing those ideas, he would stick to his own beliefs and give up giving lessons even he suffered endless pain. But he still hoped that he could catalog Western books for the library and collect and edit Chinese and Western materials with his knowledge and strong points.

As a matter of fact, as to the problem that education should be under whose management, Wu Mi thought about it when he was young. He thought that China's sovereignty on education must be in charge of Chinese, but could not rely on foreign influence; we could not indiscriminately imitate foreign mode and experience. China's long history and academic culture are beyond foreigners' apprehension and reach. The experience from a foreign country may have good effects in that country, but just like the fact that a tree transplanted may be not adapted to the natural environment and climate of the place where it is planted, the experience from foreign countries may not conform to China's national conditions. Therefore, the pattern from foreign countries cannot take effect in China; on the contrary, it may do fatal damage to China's academic culture, which has been deposited for thousands of years. And if the sovereignty on education is stolen by foreigners, what China will face is not only the fact that our country's sovereign rights will be surrendered under humiliating terms, but also the fact that China's academic foundation,

which has been in continuous succession for thousands of years, may be destroyed on one day.

### 3.5 Education Should Lay Emphasis on the Cultivation of Students' Morality

Wu Mi wrote in a letter to his respected teacher Bai Bide in 1923 that "since I returned to the country, China's situation became from bad to worse. And the country is facing an extremely severe political crisis; the country is beset with troubles internally and externally, to which I feel helpless; but I just feel sad about the facts that the countrymen have degenerated to such an extent, and that our moral characters endowed by the history and traditional virtues have nothing left in today's countrymen. I believe that unless the thoughts and moral characters of China's populace are reformed totally (through miracles and great efforts), it is hopeless for China to take a new lease of life whether in politics or economics." (Wu, 2006, Vol.1, p.171) Certainly, Wu Mi would not pin his hope on miracles, but would devote himself to such a kind of work, in an effort to create a better China. He desired that education could impart knowledge to the mass, and could promote the mass's moral characters on the basis of spreading cultural knowledge.

Wu Mi thought that education was independent of politics; it is the beautification of the morality of human beings and the one and only good remedy to lift the overall level of our nation's morality; it should not be regarded as the political propaganda or attacking tool of political parties. As an educator, Wu Mi laid much emphasis on the ethic function of conserving our human nature, cultivating our morality, saving the nation and helping us to administer affairs; therefore, Confucianism and new humanism's propositions of improving the will of the people and advocating moral construction were always conveyed in his educational thoughts. Wu Mi inherited the educational thoughts of traditional Confucianism, held that the education of the rules of conducts was of key importance, and pointed out that the essence of education lies in "learning for ourselves" and "teaching students to be men of worth". He advocated to dispel the base part in human nature and cultivate the noble part of human nature through personal moral cultivation, so as to foster ideal personalities, only on the basis of which, can they shoulder the important mission of improving the society. He thought that now the government and schools were more inclined to infuse ideology into students, but paid less attention on educating them well. And the right and wrong disseminated by today's schools were all measured by "Marxism-Leninism and the thoughts of Mao Zedong, the principles of the Communist Party of China, the system of Soviet Russia and the decree of the people's government of China. Those who submit will prosper those who resist shall perish. The government decree and school education just force people to transform themselves, making teachers and students

young or old and the populace male or female adapted to such a model. The attitude is extremely severe and the method is exceedingly mechanical. They do not take into account the greatness of ancient and modern world, the profundity of history and culture, and the complexness and unpredictability of human nature, but just make people submit through coercion." (Wu, 2006, Vol. 1, p.171) If the guiding function of education on moral cultivation is ignored, and education is just regarded as the tool of political discipline, the students cultivated under these policies must be self-concerned, bad-tempered to others and haggle over every penny. Such a kind of people may be good at using political means; as "excellent students" with strong class nature, they obey socialist education, the doctrines of Marxism-Leninism and the moral standard of communism. However, this kind of students may be based on their thoughts, behaviors, characters and morality, and the morality of the sages and men of virtue in the history will go with the wind.

Similarly, he placed great hope on numerous students. In daily work and life, Wu Mi noticed that the school usually measured students' effort level according to the time they spent in learning; what's worse, it laid more emphasis on students' marks than on their morality, giving very little consideration to the principles of conducting themselves. In view of this, he hoped that students should not learn for acquiring high marks, obtaining a diploma and seeking fames in the society, but should accept the edification of universities, which are places with strong academic atmosphere. Students should understand the truth through reading, learning and professors' instruction that "learning is for us and students should be taught to be men of worth". He thought that education was not only to cultivate students' ability of "handling affairs and doing scholarly research", but also to help students to develop students' interest in and form the habit of self-cultivation, so that they enjoy noble moral characters, while noble moral characters and nice habits are more important than the ability of handling affairs and doing scholarly research. Therefore, Wu Mi, from beginning to end, adhered to and practiced "well-informed and refined" education, paying more attention to the cultivation of students' moral characters while guiding them to the broad sea of books.

After learning Wu Mi's whole life, maybe we would lament that he was born at the wrong time, that he was wealthy in knowledge but could not put it to good use, and that he was ambitious but his ideals were always suppressed by earthly power. From Wu Mi's point of view, his original pursuit would not be swayed no matter he was understood by the society and others or not. Although he felt afflictive that he had no bosom friends to cooperate with, he had cardinal principles of righteousness and was persistent on his own road of education. In today's educational circles, the words and expressions such as humanity, being well-informed and

refined, universal knowledge and the inheritance of the studies of Chinese ancient civilization were mentioned by people time and again, while the aged who regarded these as their worldly ideals and untiringly struggled for this nearly one hundred years ago had gone far away from us. In Wu Mi's lifetime, he sought truths, stood aloof from worldly success, and carried with the dignity of scholars even when he passed away.

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